

Westwood Farm Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110747
Inspection date	29 January 2008
Inspector	Lorraine Wardlaw
Setting Address	Community Centre, Downsway, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 6SL
Telephone number	01189 429865
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Registered person	The Trustees of Westwood Farm Community Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Westwood Farm Community Pre-school opened in 1965 but moved to its present premises in 1975. It operates from Westwood Farm Community Centre in the suburb of Tilehurst, on the outskirts of Reading. The pre-school is run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents, and it serves children from the local and surrounding areas. It is registered to provide care for 26 children aged from two years to under five years, although it is the groups policy to accept children from the age of three years. Currently there are 44 children aged from three years to five years on roll, all of whom receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions or for the whole day. The pre-school is able to support children with learning difficulties/disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school is open during school term times, on a Monday to Thursday from 09:10 to 11:40 and from 12.40 to 15.10. Lunch club runs between these sessions from 11.40 to 12.40, to enable children to access full day care. In addition to these sessions, the pre-school runs a separate 'four plus' session on a Tuesday afternoon and a PE session on a Friday afternoon for those children aged 'four plus' to prepare them even more for school. Ten members of staff are employed to work with the children, which includes the supervisor and the two designated lunch club staff. Three staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Level 3. The

pre-school encourages new and unqualified staff to access training to gain a qualification. The setting has close links with the local primary schools and receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's physical development is well planned; staff compensate for the fact that there is limited use of the outside play area during inclement weather. Children skilfully balance and walk unaided on the low balancing beams, jump across the beams and show confidence with their climbing skills on the 'A' frame which is set up as an integral part of the play session. They make movements with their bodies to songs such as the 'hokey cokey' as they listen and sing to the familiar 'sticky kids' songs. Children in the 'four plus' group access a well planned, weekly PE session which focuses solely on developing their physical skills and dressing and undressing. Children use cutters and tools with the play dough and writing and painting materials, but children's use of scissors and other small tools are restricted to the adult directed activities. Every year children have a visit from the mobile dentist where they learn about good dental hygiene. Children can access water throughout the session and towards the end of the session they enjoy milk or water and a light snack of fruit or biscuit, which is provided by parents. Parents of the lunch club children receive a letter about providing a healthy lunch box for their children. Children regularly wash their hands and know the importance of not spreading germs; they wash their hands before cooking activities, before eating and after using the toilet. Staff provide a clean environment for children and, during the session, clean work surfaces, eating areas and toilets with antibacterial cleaners to ensure cross contamination is minimised. Children wear indoor shoes to ensure the floor surfaces remain clean. Children's health is safeguarded because the staff vigilantly give those children that need medication the required dose and keep thorough medication and accident records. Parents are swiftly informed if there are any cases of infectious illnesses at the pre-school, such as chicken pox, and staff are strict on the 48 hour rule with regards to children who have sickness and diarrhoea.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe during their time at pre-school. They play in a welcoming and stimulating environment where their art work and photographs are displayed around the room on colourful display boards. Good security is in place to ensure children do not leave the premises un-accompanied; there is a door alarm on the main door and a foolproof system, involving passwords, is in place at collection times to ensure that children leave with designated adults. Visual safety checks are completed before the children arrive in the morning and good written risk assessments are undertaken when children undertake outings such as to 'build a bear'. Staff respond swiftly to any risks identified; such as when the floor was exceptionally slippery, they briefly close the pre-school and use more mats until it is less hazardous to children. However, a detailed, annual written risk assessment on all areas used by children is not currently undertaken. Children learn and are able to repeat the 'safety rules' of the pre-school such as not going into the kitchen, not running in the play room or climbing in dressing up clothes. Should they forget these rules they are gently reminded by the adults. Children regularly undertake fire drills and new staff are familiar with the procedure. Children have plenty of space to move around safely and are able to play with good quality, safe and age appropriate

toys. They are safeguarded from possible abuse by staff who are all trained in child protection and by a management committee who puts a high emphasis on this training. Staff are able to confidently follow the local procedures, but do not currently record existing injuries to children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily at pre-school and are confident to independently select play activities from the well laid out, stimulating environment. For example, a child spontaneously puts some paper up at the easel, paints a picture and then goes to the second easel, puts up more paper and paints another picture; others show curiosity as they observe items on the nature table and hold the shell to their ears, while others explore the sand or use the 'actimo' beads with the frame. Children are greeted positively by the staff with whom they build strong relationships and with whom they sometimes seek out to play and be with. Those few children who are unsettled receive lots of cuddles and adult attention to ensure they quickly make the transition from home to pre-school. Children speak with excitement and enthusiasm about the fun activities they love to do at pre-school such as cooking. The 'four plus' group enjoy walks in the local area; they make traffic observations or look out for shapes in the environment using their clipboards to record what they see.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because overall practitioners have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and provide children with an effective learning environment. Staff engage the children in lots of learning in the routine and across all aspects and areas of learning. They plan a good balance of adult led and child led activities and experiences around themes which are flexible and can be adapted and linked to children's ideas and interests. Suitable curriculum plans are clearly written, which the staff follow, but with learning objectives linked to the early learning goals, instead of the stepping stones. Although the written plans do not currently, cover differentiation, most of the experienced staff are able to adapt activities to the needs of various abilities of the children attending. Effective systems are in place to observe and monitor children's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and this information is used by the key workers and staff team to plan the next stages in children's individual learning. This is either implemented, incidentally, during the free play session by the key workers or in more 'focus' teaching when children access small groups, such as a small group story. However, this 'focus' teaching is not supported by any written plans, which in turn can be used by the newly appointed staff as well as the experienced staff to move children on more rapidly in their developmental progress.

Children engage easily in conversations with adults and are confident speakers; however, during adult led activities staff do not always introduce new vocabulary to children or explore the meaning of new words. Children can recognise their names through good routine tasks and are aware that the print in the environment has meaning such as the 'closed' sign on the house or 'hand washing' sign near the water bowls. They enjoy listening to stories in either a small group or large group, handle books independently and use books for reference such as finding a recipe in a book. Children have good opportunities to practise their emergent writing; they independently access the writing table to make marks, are encouraged by an adult to write their name on their picture, copying from their name card, or make marks on the 'appointment' slip, during role play in the doctors surgery. Children are starting to form recognisable letters of their name. They are making strides in their mathematical development because staff weave

maths into a lot of the routine and their play. For example, children who are having fun stacking small shapes onto their fingers are encouraged to count how many they have, compare them to the amount the adult has and say who has the most. Many children can count confidently some beyond nine and can recognise and write numerals; this occurs during registration when the children count the children by pointing and adults in the room and use a pen and wipe board. Children problem solve, without knowing, during their play. For example, a child tells the inspector there is a number three displayed on the play house because only three children can go in the house. They count the one person in the house and confidently tell the inspector that two more can go in. Children love to sing number songs using their fingers such as 'ten fat sausages', practically taking two fingers away each time. They explore different textures as they search the shredded paper and name two dimensional shapes such as triangle and circle. Children explore the properties of dry and wet sand and learn about 'living things' through growing projects such as the bulbs in the pre-school's garden. They are developing a good sense of time through regular discussion about the days of the week and completing the cloth calendar. Children have opportunities to build and design with recyclable materials such as when they create a castle or small model village. Some children are able to confidently use the mouse on the computer clicking it several times to match up colours on a 'Pingu' programme; those who are unsure are given good support by the adult. They are asked to predict how many clicks they need to match the colours across the middle. Children are able to use all their senses and take part in lots of learning during well planned cooking activities. For example, when the children excitedly make small fairy cakes they comment that the butter looks like ice cream and that they can smell the other cakes cooking. Children love the involvement; they count and crack the eggs into a cup, weigh and add the ingredients into the bowl and recall what ingredients they used. They learn that if you mixed blue and yellow food colouring the mixture will turn green.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show they are confident and self assured and operate very independently in the pre-school environment. They understand the codes of behaviour and are not afraid to tell others; for example, a young child tells another child at the easel they need an apron on if they are going to paint. They demonstrate good behaviour which is promoted through the staff giving them praise and encouragement and being positive role models. Should any instances of in-appropriate behaviour occur it is dealt with in a sensitive way by staff and if need be stickers are used as incentives. Children play well together developing good relationships with their peers, learning to share and take turns; at the small worlds mat children play harmoniously together and with the duplo they take turns in making a pretend cake, re-enacting their earlier cooking experience. Children are encouraged each year to think of others that are less fortunate than themselves; at Christmas they collect presents for the charity Children And Parents Together (PACT) and collect ink cartridges for guide dogs for the blind. Children are respected by staff who are understanding and sympathetic to their varying needs. Good systems are in place to ensure all children are fully included, and practitioners work well with parents and outside agencies, where appropriate, to ensure they are fully able to meet every child's individual need. For example, children who have learning difficulties/ disabilities have a one to one, pre-school assistant which enables them to make strides in their developmental progress. Curriculum planning incorporates different religious festivals, such as Diwali and Eid which increases children's understanding of other cultures and respects those children that attend who have a dual language. For example, parents bring in food for children to taste during the celebration of Eid. Children's appreciation of all people in society is also promoted through the dolls they

play with, the dressing up clothes, books and posters that are on display. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff build strong relationships with parents because they are friendly, approachable and communicate regularly with them about the children's care and education. There is an open door policy which means that parents feel relaxed about coming into the pre-school at any time. A thriving, supportive, voluntary management committee, made up of parents underpins the group. Parents receive an informative prospectus which covers all areas of learning in the curriculum and the care aspects of the pre-school. The groups policies, planning and other information is on display in the foyer, but the complaints policy needs updating. Parents receive regular newsletters which update parents on issues such as, staffing, trips and new equipment bought with the fundraising money. Staff effectively link the learning to home through various activities; they encourage the children to bring in items for the topic table, such as when a child brings in a bowl with circle shapes on it. Also the pre-school's 'travelling bear' often goes home or on holidays with the children and parents are given a 'parents page' of activities they can choose to do at home. Children in the 'four plus' group have the option of taking home worksheets to complete and are part of a lend a book scheme. Staff share the children's assessment records formally with parents, twice a year, which ensures that they can follow their child's developmental progress and celebrate their achievements. Staff talk about the children's 'next steps' in children's learning with parents during these parents evenings and/or informally when they come into the pre-school to drop off or collect their child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled at the pre-school; they benefit from the well organised environment which the staff set up and from a well organised management committee who have clearly defined roles. The dedicated staff team have a clear sense of purpose and their deployment is good, ensuring that children are well cared for. High staff to child ratios are kept which ensures that children have good supervision. Records are well up to date, complete and available for inspection, but some of the policies need updating. Unqualified staff are encouraged to attend early years training and all staff attend short courses to update their knowledge and skills. A recruitment and vetting procedure is in place which ensures that only suitable people are employed to work with children. However, the suitability health questions need to be more rigorous. New staff complete a sound induction programme which means they are quickly able to carry out their work.

Leadership and management is good. The supervisor, who leads by example, ensures that there is consistency of practice through informal monitoring of the positive teaching that takes place at the pre-school. Staff work well as a team, have regular meetings and are involved in the planning. They discuss and evaluate the educational programme offered to ensure that all curriculum areas are covered and the children's learning objectives are met. Good support is given to new staff who are given guidance on how to complete their key children's assessment records by the experienced staff. Staff regularly undertake self appraisals and look at publications such as practical pre-school to develop their practice. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school were required to ensure that all accident forms are signed by parents; there is now a strict procedure in place to ensure that all accidents are signed by parents which has a positive impact on the children's health and safety. They were also requested to review accident and medical procedures to include informing Ofsted of any serious health issues affecting children in their care. These procedures were reviewed and updated to show it is the designated health and safety officer or the supervisors responsibility to inform Ofsted of any care issues affecting the children. The setting were also required to review the child protection policy to include informing Ofsted of any allegation made against the pre-school or a member of staff; this is now included.

At the last education inspection the pre-school were requested to support children's understanding of books, that print is read from left to right and top to bottom in the English language and that books can be used to find information. Children now use books for reference because the setting links books with the children's play activities. For example, children have a book about trains on the small worlds mat for them to refer to if they wish, during their play. Labels have been made and are displayed around the room, which the children are aware of. The pre-school were also requested to extend children's opportunities to use writing for a variety of purposes. This takes place mainly in the role play area where children have writing materials and notepads to write 'shopping lists' or a 'prescription'.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- update the complaints procedure and the suitability of staff procedure
- ensure children's existing injuries are recorded and a written annual risk assessment is undertaken on the areas used by children

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop children's written focus activities; ensure they are informed directly from their assessments, cover the stepping stones as learning intentions and differentiation for all ability children
- increase children's opportunities to learn new vocabulary and to use a good variety of tools

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk