

Sutton Valence Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127665
Inspection date	15 October 2007
Inspector	Vanessa Wood
Setting Address	The Parish Rooms, Chart Road, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3AW
Telephone number	01622 844759
E-mail	
Registered person	Sutton Valence Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Sutton Valence Pre-School opened in 1981 and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents. It operates from two rooms within Sutton Valence Parish Rooms in the rural area of Sutton Valence, close to Maidstone. The pre-school takes children from the immediate vicinity and surrounding villages. The group has access to their own enclosed outdoor area.

The pre-school is open five days a week during school term times only. Sessions are from 09:15 until 14:45. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 30 children aged from two years to under five years at any one time. There are currently 55 children on roll of whom 27 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

Ten pre-school members of staff work with the children. Nine members of staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications and four members of staff are taking additional training.

The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a spacious environment where they learn the importance of good personal care. They have a clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after messy play, after using the toilet and after touching the pets. Staff have up to date first aid certificates which ensures they can deal with any emergency. Good systems are in place to record accidents and any medication that is given. Project work teaches children the importance of healthy eating and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a snack which includes food such as toast, salami and fruit. They have the choice of water or milk to drink. However, children are not given independence to pour their own drinks or prepare their own food. Parents provide a packed lunch for children who stay all day. The good outdoor play area provides children with the opportunity for play in the open air in most weather conditions. They enjoy riding around the road system and playing in the play house. Indoors children's physical development is promoted as children use the large slide and enjoy dancing in time to music.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to move round freely in the spacious environment. They can independently access all areas of the pre-school and outdoor area. There is a very good range of resources and toys which are checked regularly to ensure their safety. Many resources are stored in containers at children's level so children can easily self select their play materials. Staff complete yearly risk assessments of the premises to ensure all potential hazards are made safe. They complete visual risk assessments every day, but there is a problem with storage of the adult size chairs, storage of large items for cleaning the hall, and the floor to the toilet area has not been put down. However, children are supervised at all times and the high ratio of staff to children and effective staff deployment helps to ensure children's safety. Children learn how to keep themselves safe as staff remind them not to obstruct the fire exits in case they need to exit the building quickly. There are effective fire safety precautions in place and children and staff are familiar with the emergency plan. The child protection policy is in place and understood by staff which protects children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed and confident within the setting because the staff create a welcoming environment. They arrive happily and are warmly greeted by staff who know them well. Staff offer a great deal of individual attention and engage children in good quality conversation as they play, extending their use of words and encouraging children to think about what they are doing. Children choose their own activities confidently and play cooperatively in extended role play. They benefit from a very good range of resources and activities. In addition to the resources available inside there is planned play in the outdoor area, such as the road system and play house. Children also enjoy handling the two pet guinea pigs as they learn to nurture and take care of their needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. This means children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff undertake detailed observations on children's development. This information is shared at staff meetings when all staff contribute to the activity plans to ensure children's individual needs are met.

Children are eager to learn and move freely from one activity to another. They show an interest in numbers and enjoy playing with the compare bears as they try to make the scales balance. They learn to use the computer for number and word games. Children enjoy sharing books informally in small groups with interested adults in the book corner. A library system is in place for children to take favourite books home to share with their family. However, learning is not extended by using additional resources and reference books to reinforce learning. Children develop good levels of self-esteem as they select their play resources and learn to take care of their own needs, but at times staff do not promote children's independence sufficiently. For example, during snack time children do not learn to pour their own drinks and are not involved in preparing food to eat.

Staff support children's understanding of technology well. They tell children how to use a camera and show them how to put in the new battery to make it work. Children's understanding of the natural world is promoted as they learn to grow carrot and parsnip tops and bring in things from home for the nature table. Their learning about animals is consolidated through caring for the two pet guinea pigs. Staff extend children's learning with nature walks around the local area and by arranging for people from the community to come and talk to the children. Visitors to the setting include the fire officer, lollypop man and someone from the Gardeners Association. Children enjoy exploring texture, colour, shape and form. They take part in many craft activities, such as, making a mobile for Halloween. Play dough is readily available and children can paint freely at every session. Musical instruments are provided for children to experiment with making sounds and children enjoy role play opportunities which are varied and interesting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to understand their own needs and those of other people because staff treat them with respect and show them that they are valued. Children learn about the wider world as they take part in different festivals that are planned throughout the year. Staff work closely with outside agencies to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They receive any necessary training to ensure they are able to meet children's specific needs and the routine is adjusted to ensure all children are able to participate fully. Children behave very well. They benefit from meaningful praise and clear direction. They learn to take turns and understand the simple rules of the group. Children are considerate and supportive towards the younger ones, offering assistance when needed and ensuring they are included. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive clear information about the setting and are able to join the committee and become involved in the running of the pre-school. Questionnaires are undertaken to ensure parents views are taken into consideration and to ensure parents are receiving all the information about the pre-school. As a result, any areas not fully understood by parents have been clarified. Parents regularly attend coffee mornings when they are able to talk to staff and this strengthens the partnership with parents. However, staff do not hold formal sessions when they can fully discuss children's progress with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children play and learn in a spacious and secure environment where they are well looked after by an experienced and qualified team of staff. An effective key worker system is in place to support children including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff know the children well which ensures children feel secure and confident. The staff continue to develop their practice through attending further training to enhance their knowledge of child care and learning. All the policies and procedures required for the safe and effective management of the pre-school are in place, although some lack clarity. Organisation of areas that provide information to parents can be muddled and needs updating to ensure information is clearly displayed.

Leadership and management are good. Staff work well together and they are supported well by the committee. Committee members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff meet together regularly to discuss areas of weakness and how to address these. Clear communication between staff allows them to provide a well balanced programme of education to meet the individual needs of children attending.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were seven recommendations. To ensure water for hand washing is of an appropriate temperature. To consider how children wash their hands after craft and to display the Health and Safety Poster. To ensure all accidents are recorded correctly and to ensure stacked chairs do not pose a safety hazard for children. To review and update some policies and procedures. To ensure training has been undertaken to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

All recommendations have been met. A new toilet area has been built and the temperature of the water can now be regulated, although the flooring in this area has not been completed. Children now have easy access to the toilet area and can wash their hands in the basins provided after craft work. The required Health and Safety poster is on display. All accidents are correctly recorded and each entry is confidential. Adult sized chairs are still stored in the hall and staff have considered the best ways of managing these to ensure children's safety. They have decided that each stack of chairs should consist of no more than four chairs. Policies and procedures have been updated but these are not all in one place and sometimes staff have difficulty finding the policy needed. One member of staff has undertaken the training to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There were two key points to consider from the education report. To provide opportunities for children to learn mathematical concepts, especially calculation and problem solving throughout the session. To give children more opportunities to choose their play materials.

Staff have purchased more equipment such as books and cards which are displayed on the walls showing cardinal and ordinal numbers. They now provide more equipment, such as the compare bears and a large soft dice to help calculation. The key worker files and planning sheets have been updated so staff can keep a close watch on every aspect of mathematical development. Staff have changed the way they work to ensure children are given more independence to choose their play materials, although this is still an issue at some times during the day.

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.

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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):

- ensure a thorough risk assessment is completed on the building before children attend
- update areas that provide information to parents and ensure all policies are clear and in one place

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):

- provide children with more opportunities to be independent and allow them to be fully involved in everyday activities
- make more use of resources to extend children's learning, particularly their emerging writing, reading and maths skills
- develop a system to ensure parents are fully informed of their children's progress along the stepping stones.

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