

Perham Down Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	146001
Inspection date	02 November 2007
Inspector	Carol Readman
Setting Address	Cachy Buildings, Swinton Barracks, Perham Down, ANDOVER, Hampshire, SP11 9LQ
Telephone number	01980 603527
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Registered person	Army Welfare Service
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?

Perham Down Pre-school opened in 1980. It operates from its own building consisting of two playrooms, an entrance hall and offices. The pre-school is in Perham Down near Tidworth, Wiltshire, and is part of the military establishment there. Perham Down Pre-school serves the local military areas and nearby villages.

There are currently 26 children aged from three to five years on roll. This includes 20 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 13.30 each morning Monday to Friday.

There are seven members of staff working with the children. Of these, four have relevant early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about a healthy lifestyle. They learn good hygiene routines such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating. They know they must wash their hands 'in case they are dirty'. Staff are good role models, taking care to wash their hands before mealtimes and check that children have washed their hands. Staff use effective procedures to help prevent infection and update their practice in line with current health and safety advice. For example, they spray anti-bacterial fluid on cloths and not tables to help protect children from developing breathing problems. The staff teach children about using different coloured cloths for cleaning. For example, children know they use pink clothes for cleaning toys and large play equipment. This teaches children good hygiene principles and helps them to learn how to minimise infection and cross infection. The tables and table clothes at the setting are cleaned before food is served. However, during lunch the children are allowed to put food on the table. This does not teach children good practices in handling food. Each room has information informing staff of who is trained in first aid. This ensures that minor injuries, bumps and grazes receive appropriate, effective treatment.

Children receive healthy snacks of crackers, soft cheese and fruit each day. Children are able to choose milk or water to drink at snack time. At other times children are able to access drinking water. They pour water independently, with staff reminding them to pour small amounts carefully and then pour some more if they are still thirsty.

There are very good opportunities for children to enjoy an active outdoor lifestyle. There is a daily outdoor play session for all children and other opportunities for children to choose to play outside. Children enjoy riding bicycles and play cars around the large outside area. They play football together or dig in a tray full of earth to find conkers. This helps develop large muscle skills. Children have plenty of opportunities to master control of pencils, paintbrushes and scissors. These activities help develop small muscle control and are well supported by adults.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents receive warm and friendly welcomes from staff when they arrive each morning. Parents help children to find their pegs, hang up their coats and find their names to register. Children quickly find their friends and the toys that are set out for them. The rooms are well laid out so that children can move around safely. There are areas for quiet reading, messy play, role play and maths. The computer is shared between the rooms. Staff keep the kitchen area gated so that children cannot enter this area unsupervised.

There is a wide range of toys and play resources. Daily checks and cleaning rotas ensure that the setting and resources are in good, clean and safe condition. Children benefit from a varied and stimulating play environment. Children learn to put away toys at tidying up time. For example, children put away the airport before lunch time and get out books to look at before they go home. Sufficient, suitable child-sized tables and chairs mean that all children can sit to play, read books or eat in comfort.

Safety is a high priority at the setting. Written risk assessments and a daily checklist ensure that children can play in safety. Very good reviews help to improve safety. For example, the

wooden stepping stones are receiving a non slip covering to ensure that children can use them safely. Staff greet children at the main door and ensure they are safely handed over to parents at the end of the session. The premises are secure and children cannot leave the setting unsupervised. Children learn good safety routines such as queuing up to use the swings in safety and taking care when riding around in the outside area. Staff have good knowledge of child protection issues. Information showing referrals procedures is available to all staff in the setting. This safeguards children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at this pre-school. They arrive happy and wait eagerly for staff to open the doors so they can enter and start playing. Staff use their expert knowledge of child development to ensure extremely high levels of learning through play. This means that children achieve very well in all areas of development. Children enjoy selecting and exploring resources. They use new skills they have learnt to very good effect. For example, children learn to operate the mouse to complete computer games with their friends.

Children play in a stimulating environment where they share their ideas freely with staff and other children. All at the setting play together particularly well. Staff and visitors join in with children, enjoying looking for conkers, joining in highly amusing group sessions or landing model aeroplanes at the airport. Children are keen to involve others in their play and learn as they have fun. Staff support and extend learning at every opportunity. For example, as the children play on the computer, staff use open ended questions to extend the children's thinking and learning.

Staff's excellent understanding of how children develop and their understanding of each child's stage of development means that children are confident to try out new skills. For example, children make shakers using recycled materials then race over to other staff to proudly demonstrate their new instrument. The genuine praise they receive helps foster children's confidence. Staff genuinely value every child at the setting. They offer constant warm praise to encourage children and ensure that children's achievements are freely acknowledged. Expert management of handing out weekly awards means that children learn to encourage praise and celebrate with their friends. All freely celebrate success and achievement.

Children are captivated and inspired by skilled staff who quickly seize on the ideas of the children and modify activities to include these ideas in their play. This leads to highly enjoyable experiences that all take part in. Staff praise each child for being so clever in thinking up new ideas or making up new rhymes. This enhances children's confidence and self-esteem. There are excellent relationships between staff and a strong sense of trusting others. For example, during a music and movement session children more reserved at the beginning lost their inhibitions and joined in, laughing and having a good time. Soon what had been a game of sleepy bunnies was sleepy crocodiles with all jumping up and 'snapping' with their arms gleefully. The very skilful involvement of the staff means that all develop very high levels of confidence, self-assurance and self-esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Practitioners deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum very well. They teach with skill and confidence. As a result, children have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to learn and practise new skills. For example, they make up

new verses during a music and movement session. This encourages the development of thinking skills as they have to think of relevant actions for the new animals they include, such as the snapping jaws of a crocodile by using their arms. Staff seize opportunities for spontaneous learning with great enthusiasm, joining in and encouraging other children to follow. Fun activities help children become confident, happy and very settled. Children at the setting feel able to offer their own ideas as they know staff will listen and respond. Free flow play encourages children to become self-assured and work well with others.

Children take part in a wide range of appropriate indoor and outdoor activities. Staff extend activities in order to challenge children and help develop their skill and knowledge. Children concentrate well to complete activities. For example, children playing on the computer persevere until they complete the tennis game. They respond well to questions and are keen to tell about what they know. They proudly show visitors circles they have drawn and talk about round and square shapes. Physical development is a very strong area at this setting. Children have extensive opportunities to develop large and small muscle skills as they play outdoors or take part in fun music and movements sessions indoors. They practise using smaller muscles as they paint and draw. Children help to learn to care and maintain their own environment as they clean large apparatus outdoors and tidy up around the setting. They enjoy making their own music, using shakers they have made themselves. Staff are skilful at involving children in using their imagination. In the garden, toy animals 'look out' from a tree. Staff use these 'critters' in the 'critter tree' to fire children's imagination and develop stories about the animals. Children have good opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities that help them develop in all areas of learning. As a result, they make good progress towards early learning goals given their capabilities and starting points. However, staff do not always make meaningful observations to assess children's starting points appropriately. This reduces children's opportunities to reach their full potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff know the children very well and are careful to support the individual needs of all at the setting. All children are fully included in the setting. Staff make use of valuable information about the children obtained from parents and combine this with observations made about each child to promote children's wellbeing. Staff ensure that children are listened to and play a full part in the setting. Each week there is a reward ceremony to celebrate children's achievements. Children clap warmly as their friends receive awards. Staff praise all the children. This makes all the children feel valued and special. They develop an appreciation of others in a diverse society through books and resources that promote positive images of age, culture, gender and disability. They learn to be kind and considerate as they take turns in handing out plates and cup at snack time to their friends. Children learn good manners, thanking others.

Experienced staff ensure that children with learning difficulties and disabilities receive a high standard of care. They work closely with parents to ensure that children's needs are correctly identified. They work with other professionals to devise and implement individual plans for children. Staff take care that all can take part in activities to help all feel valued and part of the setting.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn to understand their feelings and explain to others why they are happy or sad. They show wonder as they talk about the life cycle of butterflies and find conkers whilst raking up leaves. They reflect on what they see and talk to others about shared experiences, such as going 'trick or

treating' at Halloween. They understand about what is right and wrong and apologise if they are inconsiderate. They enjoy the company of others at the setting, sharing play and chatting during snack times. They learn about the lifestyles of others in meaningful ways.

Children behave well. They know what is expected of them and are aware of the 'golden rules' and routines of the setting. They help staff tidy up and help their friends find crayons for drawing. They benefit from the good role models provided by the staff, who promote a positive and calm atmosphere. Children relate well to each other and are learning to work harmoniously with others. For example, one child collects and distributes the plates and cups at snack time for all their friends at the table.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the open, warm welcome that families receive. Parents are given detailed information about the setting and the Foundation Stage curriculum activities. Before the child starts, staff meet with parents to gather information about the child. This means that parents are able to share what they know about their child's achievement and interests. There is an 'open door' policy and parents know that they can access their child's records at any time as well as being invited to meet with the children's key worker. Parents have opportunities to share more information about their child and gain first hand experience of what their child is learning at the setting when they come into the setting on the parent rota. Children take books home from the setting each day. This, and a newsletter, give parents the opportunity to share in their child's education and extend their child's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised to care for children. The manager and staff work well together to ensure that children's care is enhanced by an efficient and effective organisation. The clear operational plan, ensures that the sessions run smoothly and children benefit from the stable routine. All required policies and procedures to promote the welfare and care of children are in place and implemented, requiring only one minor revision. The manager and staff have a clear vision and aims for the provision to offer high quality childcare. The provision is successful at making sure that the outcomes for children are positive. The childcare practice is very effective and the setting has a strong commitment to improvement and strives towards providing the best possible care and education.

There are robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure that children are protected and cared for by adults committed to the wellbeing of children and supporting their development. Good use of the environment and careful deployment of staff contributes to a good healthy, safe and enjoyable experience for all the children. Staff ensure that all are free to play in a warm and caring environment where all participate fully. Children really enjoy their time at the setting, taking part in stimulating activities and experiences and having fun.

The leadership and management is good. Very good working relationships between staff and the manager mean that they work together to enhance the development of children. As a result, children thrive at the setting. There is a good focus on education with long, medium and weekly plans in place to bring about good outcomes and progress towards early learning goals for children. Staff deliver a broad based curriculum, making very good use of their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They make detailed observations of the children. However, children's records are not always accurate portraying their achievements so the next steps for children's learning are not always appropriate. This has an impact on the children as

it reduces opportunities for them to reach their full potential. The manager identifies areas for improvement and she and the staff are proactive at finding and implementing solutions when weaknesses are identified. Staff and the manager work together as a team and share their expertise. The setting is led by a competent and experienced manager who makes very good use of experienced staff to help develop appropriate, detailed planning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to make a number of improvements. They were asked to ensure that registers are completed to show the times when staff and children are present. New registers clearly show the arrival and departure times of staff and children. This improves children's safety in the event of an emergency.

The setting was asked to improve staff's knowledge of equal opportunities and ensure all staff have an appropriate understanding of the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Staff have attended training to develop their understanding of equal opportunities and the manager plans to extend this with further training. The setting has an appointed Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator who works with the area co-ordinator to ensure that children with learning difficulties and disabilities are correctly assessed. She works with staff to help them identify needs in line with the code of practice. This improves the identification of children's individual and special needs and ensures that all have equality of opportunity.

The setting was asked to improve opportunities to investigate, explore and be challenged in their play. Staff provide a wide range of opportunities for exploratory play. Children investigate a variety of everyday objects such as feathers using magnifying glasses to study them. They explore and investigate their environment, raking up leaves and finding conkers as they dig in earth filled sand trays. Children move rooms as they make progress towards early learning goals. This ensures that they are appropriately challenged. Children play in a rich learning environment where improvements have meant that their learning is enhanced by improved opportunities to investigate, explore and experience appropriate challenges.

The setting was asked to improve toilet facilities. New child sized toilets and low wash basins have been added to improve facilities. This improves children's ability to use toilets independently and manage their own personal hygiene.

For nursery education the setting was asked to ensure that planning was clear and that it indicated what children were expected to learn from adult led activities. The manager and staff now have clear long term, medium term and weekly plans that all understand. Sheets to use with adult-led activities state the desired outcomes for children and staff evaluate the children's learning.

They were also asked to increase parents' opportunities to be well informed about their child's learning and to share what they know about their child. The setting now holds family learning days and parent afternoons so that parents have access to their children's records. They make it clear to parents that there is an 'open door' policy and parents may look at their child's records or come and speak to staff at any time. Parents are asked to fill in a profile when their child starts and are given parent observation slips to complete.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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

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 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 that children follow good hygiene practices with regard to handling food.

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):

- ensure that observations and children's records are accurate and used to highlight the next steps in children's learning.

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