

The University of Reading Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148691
Inspection date	09 October 2007
Inspector	Joanne Graham
Setting Address	Employees Social Club, 2 Earley Gate, Whiteknights, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 6AU
Telephone number	0118 9268988
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Registered person	University of Reading Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of 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?

The University of Reading Pre-school registered in 1989, but has been open for 30 years. The pre-school is managed by a committee of parents. It operates from the Employee's Social Club at Earley Gate and uses the large hall. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open every weekday from 09.15 to 12.00, term time only. There is a fully enclosed outside play area for the children to use.

There are currently 34 children on roll and these include 26 children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The pre-school caters for children of staff and students of the University and places are also available for local families with no University connection. The setting has provision to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs five staff, of whom two hold a level 3 qualification and one is working towards a level 3 childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to understand simple good health and hygiene practices because staff promote these well and are good role models. The children know they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating snacks. Independence is supported well through providing suitable resources such as steps to reach the adult sized sinks, liquid soap, tissues, hand paper towels and easily accessible bins to dispose of these easily. Staff ensure children access a clean environment which is a suitable temperature. They wipe the tables before children use them for snacks and make sure children have plenty of opportunities for fresh air and physical play. This supports their wellbeing.

Children are suitably nourished and have easy access to drinking water. Snacks are healthy and children enjoy finding their own 'ticket' to join the sociable snack time. Children's dietary needs and religious requirements are met as staff are fully aware of these and ensure all persons preparing and serving snacks have this knowledge. This information is also detailed on the child's snack 'ticket'. This promotes children's welfare.

Children are treated appropriately if they have an accident as some staff on site hold up to date first aid training and the first aid box is easily accessible. Accidents are recorded with sufficient detail, parents and staff sign and confidentiality is maintained. There are facilities to record medication administered and incidents, supporting children's wellbeing.

Children take part in regular physical activity both indoors and outside, boosting their development well. They access the secure garden and frequently take part in music and movement session. They use large equipment such as climbing apparatus, rope ladders and climbing nets to develop their balancing skills and enjoy throwing and catching beanbags. They follow and match movements to the instructions from staff and the DVD. They sway from side to side, grow tall stretching upwards and curl their bodies as small as they can. They do this with increasing control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. Staff transform these effectively so they are welcoming to children on their arrival and offer access to the necessary facilities and range of activities. Children stay safe as staff assess and minimise most potential risks. Staff monitor the entrance to the premises, sockets have covers and the garden is secure. Staff deployment supports children's welfare and they are attentive especially when children use the climbing apparatus. However, the apparatus is situated on grass and staff have not carried out a risk assessment to highlight probable risks. Children and staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire because these are regularly practised. Children learn to keep themselves safe, through good supervision and sensitive reminders. They sit down when eating or drinking and know to tidy up around themselves to avoid trip hazards. However, they do run inside and staff do not always monitor this effectively.

Children use a wide range of toys and equipment which are developmentally appropriate and suitable for their ages. Staff organise the indoor and outside space well, allowing children to move around safely, freely and independently. There are clear procedures for outings that

ensure children's safety. Parents give prior written consent, ratios are lowered and a small first aid kit and mobile telephone are taken. Staff are aware of child protection policies and understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Staff receive clear information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse and all have relevant training. This supports and safeguards children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are secure, confident and happy within the interesting, fun and stimulating environment. They have opportunities to explore a broad range of resources both indoors and outside, which support their learning well. All children are eager to learn and confident to try new experiences. They especially enjoy programming the Pixie toy to make it move, exploring the sand and water and making sounds with the musical instruments. Staff support activities effectively, asking questions to encourage the children to think. This helps to move the children's learning forward. Children achieve well as staff have a good understanding of early years guidance, such as the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Staff plan varied, appealing and exciting activities, which are developmentally appropriate.

Children are beginning to form relationships with their peers and staff. They work along side one another in co-operation and often invite and welcome staff into their play. Staff skilfully offer appropriate support and intervention to develop and support their play. For example, one staff member finds a tray to help the child carry the play food back to the cafeteria from the snack table. Children develop and increase their independence skills. For example, most children carry out their self care skills and confidently self select their chosen activities. The small focus group activities are well planned and implemented helping the children to achieve whilst having fun. Children join in with enthusiasm and some children particularly enjoy re-enacting the story of the Three Pigs using puppets.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the stepping stones and children's individual learning levels once they start attending the setting. Staff visually assess children's development levels once they start at the setting but do not utilise and record parent and carers' first hand knowledge of these prior to children starting. Activities and resources are appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the children who attend, well planned and fun. Staff ensure children's individual learning needs are respected and use these to inform future planning. Staff organise the session to give children different and varied opportunities, although children become unfocused and disinterested during registration time, limiting these potential learning opportunities. Children are interested, keen to participate and have choices. For example, they chose if, and when, they want to play in the garden, explore the malleable resources such as sand and dough, paint, build or look at books. They have good access to toys and activities laid out inside and outdoors and the staff skilfully incorporate the curriculum and learning opportunities into both areas. Children demonstrate developing concentration skills and participate at activities for extended periods.

Children are polite to each other and are beginning to form strong relationships with their peers and staff. Most confidently leave their main carer and settle well to tasks and activities and staff sensitively support children where appropriate. Staff frequently give praise and encouragement to help build children's self-esteem. Children ask and answer questions displaying a confident air that they will be listened to and their responses and requests are valued and

taken note of. Children enjoy stories and handle books with care. They are able to predict stories and identify main characters, such as the Big Bad Wolf. Opportunities to mark make for purposes relevant to play are available throughout the setting. For example, children draw lines in the sand, press holes into the dough and draw and paint with confidence.

Children use number in everyday activities, for example in songs and rhymes and when indicating the Mobilo rocket is ready for blast off. Many of the younger children can count to five and older children to ten and beyond. Many children recognise and name simple shapes and colours and staff introduce positional language into their play. For example, when using the programmable toy. Children have opportunities to use a variety of construction resources to help develop their design and making skills. Their physical development skills benefit from using equipment such as the swing boat, climbing using the rope ladder and joining in action rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the setting. They feel settled, happy and comfortable and staff promote inclusion well. Children's individual needs and differences are valued and respected contributing to them feeling secure. Staff have a good knowledge of children's family context and increase the children's feeling of belonging when they participate in conversations about the children's home life. Staff have a broad knowledge of caring for children who speak English as an additional language and who have learning disabilities. Staff work well to provide consistent care to support the children's needs. For example, having visual aids informing children of routine changes.

Children learn important social skills such as sharing, turn taking, listening to others and respecting their views. They enjoy each other's company and treat each other kindly. Their behaviour is satisfactory and at times is good. However, children lose interest at registration time causing their behaviour to deteriorate and some children regularly run inside. Staff do not consistently manage this behaviour to establish acceptable boundaries. Staff increase the children's understanding of right from wrong. They respond to gentle reminders to care for the environment, the pre-school's resources and one another. For example, tidying away the toys and equipment.

The children have opportunities to learn about themselves, each other, the local community and the wider world through planned activities, celebrating different festivals and outings to local places on the University campus. Children access a wide range of resources, which depict positive images of race, culture, disability and gender. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is good and this contributes to children's wellbeing in the pre-school. Staff actively seek views from parents about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis through out their time there. Parents complete home observation sheets once every term, which staff use to inform future planning needs. Staff ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing, through daily verbal exchanges. This promotes continuity of care. The parents' committee support staff in providing an exciting learning environment for the children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy, settled, secure and enjoy their time in the setting because staff offer good care and attention to their needs. They benefit from experienced staff who are very caring. Staff ensure children are supervised at all times, that ratios are maintained throughout the sessions and children are never left unsupervised with persons not vetted. They work effectively as a team. Clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating, well-balanced and smooth flowing programme throughout the session. Staffing work patterns does mean that on some sessions there are not fifty percent qualified staff in attendance, although one member of staff is currently working towards a suitable qualification. The supervisor and deputy hold a level three qualification. The committee and management actively support and promote staff training and development. Staff organise the area to encourage children to self select. However, the layout of the room contributes to some children losing focus during free choice time.

Leadership and management are good. The committee and staff regularly assess the provision and positively strive to improve and develop areas of weakness. For example, they have newly introduced a staff appraisal system. Staff are committed to attending further childcare training and development courses. This helps them to reflect, monitor and improve the quality of the care and education they offer to all children. All legally required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and wellbeing is in place and confidentially maintained, although some lacks necessary detail. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting had recommendations to improve management of specific documentation, ensure the first aid box contains the correct items and that the garden is secure and children are unable to leave the setting unsupervised. The first aid box is easily accessible and contains the correct resources. One staff member is now responsible for maintaining these supplies. Staff carry out and record health and safety checks outside before the children use the facilities. They check the gates are secure and are vigilant when supervising to ensure the children remain safely inside the garden area. This promotes children's safety and wellbeing. Although documentation has the relevant information about the regulator and contains necessary detail, children's attendance times are not accurately recorded if different from the normal session times.

At the last nursery education inspection the points for consideration have been addressed. Children benefit from having more opportunities to develop their skills in construction and hand eye co-ordination with free access to the appropriate tools. Staff promote children's understanding of mathematical concepts in planned craft activities. Children name colours and shapes, count the buttons on the teddies pyjamas and use the programmable toy. Staff use their observations and written evaluations well to inform future planning to accommodate individual learning needs. This benefits all the children in all areas of learning. Staff verbally discuss children's developmental needs with parents prior to them attending the setting and parents complete the observations at home sheet on a termly basis. This helps to encourage parents to share information about their child's learning progress at home.

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):

- complete a thorough risk assessment and minimise potential risks to children when they access the large climbing apparatus in the garden
- make sure all staff effectively manage all children's behaviour to maintain consistency and establish acceptable boundaries
- continue to ensure staffing attendance maintains qualification requirements and ensure children's arrival times are accurate.

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):

- assess the organisation and how to engage children's attention during registration time to increase learning opportunities
- devise and implement a system to obtain information from parents about their child's developmental stages when first entering the setting to ensure activities are developmentally appropriate to individual needs
- re-evaluate the organisation of the room layout to prevent the children losing focus during free choice time.

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