

Vernon Preschool Play Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY231123
Inspection date	03 March 2008
Inspector	Karen Pretty / Emily Alderson

Setting Address	29 Vernon Road, Bow, London, E3 5HQ
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Telephone number	020 8981 7516
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Registered person	Vernon Preschool Play Group
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Sessional care
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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Vernon Pre-School is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of local people and parents of children at the pre-school, past and present. It opened in 1983 and operates from a single storey building in the Bow area of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The building consists of two playrooms, a kitchen, an office, children's bathroom and an adult and disabled bathroom. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open from 09:30 to 12:00 and 12:30 to 15:00 Monday to Friday, during term time only. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 27 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. Children primarily come from the local community and children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs two members of staff who both hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is currently working towards a recognised Quality Assurance Scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children attend a setting which has some satisfactory health and hygiene practices. Nappy changing facilities are sound as staff use a nappy mat which is disinfected after each use. Staff prepare snack daily, they clean the work surfaces, wash their hands and wash the fruit and vegetables. However, children's snack is prepared first thing in the morning and left out on the table for the whole session. In addition, children do not wash their hands prior to touching the food, therefore, cross-infection is not always minimised and children's understanding of good hygiene practises is not fully promoted.

Children receive appropriate care when they are ill or have an accident because staff are trained in first aid and the setting has a stocked first aid box readily available. If children have an accident they are well cared for and their accident is recorded in the setting's accident book. However, parents do not always sign the book to acknowledge the entry. The setting record any medicine given to children which parents give prior permission for. However, the setting does not seek written permission for emergency medical advice and treatment. Consequently, children's well-being in a medical emergency is potentially compromised. If children become unwell during a session parents are contacted and asked to collect them. Staff sit with children keeping them comfortable until their parents arrive. They are advised of the length of time they should keep their child at home via the setting's policy.

Children's physical play experiences are well promoted because the setting ensures that children are given plenty of opportunity for physical exercise. The children can freely access the outdoors daily during the sessions. The garden has a safety surface on the floor and children have a range of resources available to them.

The setting provides the children with healthy nutritious snacks. They include a variety of different fruits and vegetables such as oranges, apples, cucumber and celery. They also have pitta bread, hummus and yoghurts amongst other things. Snack is a rolling snack and is left on a table for children to freely access during the session along with water and cups. Any food provided is according to children's individual dietary needs as detailed on their registration forms and in line with parents' wishes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The environment is welcoming for children, parents and carers as the walls are brightly decorated with children's art work making it an inviting setting for all. Staff warmly greet children on arrival helping them to settle quickly. The space is organised so that children have access to one large room which is divided into a lino area for art and craft, a carpeted area which is sectioned into a role play area, book corner and has child-sized tables and chairs. Children also have access to a secure outdoor area. All resources are stored in low level drawers for children to help themselves. The setting allows children plenty of space to freely move around both inside and out.

The settings arrangements meet health and safety guidelines. All staff contribute to minimising the hazards and reducing the risks to children. The setting have risk assessments in place which look at all aspects of the setting both inside and out. On arrival at the setting staff ensure that

fire doors are open, plug sockets are covered and the outdoor area is free from any litter or hazards. The setting have effective systems in place to manage entry into the provision. Parents arrive at the backdoor, they ring the bell, staff attend to them and leave the door open until all children have arrived. Children remain safe as the inner door is closed. Once all children have arrived the backdoor is locked to prevent any unauthorised visitors into the setting. Children are learning about safety through discussions with staff, for example on how to use scissors safely.

In the event of a fire children are protected; staff have clear written evacuation procedures and practise it with the children. The fire drills are logged and comments made to enable staff to improve the procedure. The setting take precautions and have a fire blanket in the kitchen, smoke alarms fitted and fire extinguishers readily available. Children are safe when they are on outings as staff have carried out risk assessments of the route and the destination. Children are asked to hold hands with staff and on some occasions parents accompany their children to help support them.

Children are protected because staff understand their roles and responsibilities regarding safeguarding children and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Two members of staff have accessed the training and they have lots of literature to guide and support them, along with all the relevant contact numbers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive at the setting happily choosing an activity to play with and saying goodbye to their parents. It is evident that the children have formed positive relationships with staff and other children as they enjoy playing together. The resources are accessible to all children in low-level drawers clearly labelled with words and books are nicely displayed. Children know where things are kept and freely access the resources to support their learning. Staff participate in children's activities sitting beside them, helping and supporting them. This especially helps when children are trying new activities as staff act as role models encouraging them to have a turn. Children are positively rewarded through praise which increases their self-esteem helping them to feel good about themselves. As a result children are confident and happily ask staff questions. Staff provide the children with a range of activities supporting all areas of their development and learning. In addition to the activities offered at the setting children are also taken on outings which further adds to their learning experiences. They visit the library, park and have termly outings to the zoo and museums amongst others. Children under three years of age are positively supported as staff plan activities using the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have an adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn to provide a sufficient range of activities and play opportunities based on the six areas of learning. Planning identifies specific activities and resources within each area of the room on a weekly basis. However, this short term planning currently has no system in place to clearly identify appropriate stepping stones against each activity or resource, therefore, staff are not sure what the purpose of planned activities are or what children are expected to learn from an activity. Furthermore, no focussed activities are carried out to enable staff to evaluate what children have learned or consider what can be improved or developed next time. Lack of specific learning objectives and adaptation means

that children may not always be offered appropriate challenges to ensure they make progress and remain interested. Staff use open-ended questions to encourage children to become involved in activities. There is an appropriate balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities throughout the session and children are confident to access resources to extend those initially provided by staff or develop their own interests. An assessment system recording children's progress through the stepping stones is in place based upon general observations of children's play, however these observations are not always effectively linked to stepping stones or evaluated to identify next steps, nor are they used to inform future planning.

Children develop a sense of self-worth when proudly taking responsibility for given tasks such as putting on and fastening their own coats before going outside to play. They form good relationships with each other and play together well, interacting and negotiating with appropriate staff support. Most children are confident communicators, they are eager to speak during whole group activities and offer their own contributions during the story time when identifying characters in the book or when deciding what clothes the monkey needs to wear on the weather chart. Children are encouraged to mark-make with set-out resources during planned activities and have free access to writing resources within other areas of the room to allow them to practise and develop their early writing skills.

Children listen and respond to stories in a whole group and sometimes access books independently during the session to develop their enjoyment of books. Staff encourage the children to identify and count numbers out during sorting activities and they are beginning to develop some simple problem-solving skills. Children enjoy joining in with number activities such as counting out cotton reels on their strings, with some children confidently responding to 'how many left?' or being able to follow the pattern. Children explore capacity during planned activities with water and sand; they have frequent opportunities to engage in exploring and investigating other materials to develop their natural curiosity, such as jelly, cornflour, shaving foam, pasta and play dough.

Children enjoy having regular opportunities to operate simple everyday programmable equipment, such as tills and telephones. The group does not currently have a computer but children visit the local 'ideas centre' to use computers and develop basic skills using the mouse. Children design and build using construction kits such as 'Duplo', magnetic shapes and train sets. They explore change, for example, while looking at the weather during group time or when they hatched eggs in an incubator.

Children enjoy using their imagination based on their own experiences while using the role play area and the dressing-up clothes. They take part in regular planned craft activities giving them the opportunity to explore their own creativity. Children have planned opportunities to use musical instruments and they enjoy joining in with their favourite songs and rhymes such as 'walking in the jungle' and 'I dig my garden'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are all included and their differences acknowledged because the staff value each child's individuality. Time is spent either as a group or on an individual basis talking to the children allowing them time to share their experiences. Children's self-esteem develops as they see their work and photographs proudly displayed on the walls. Activities and resources are presented to the children for them to freely access they are therefore able to decide how they want to spend their time. At some points of the session they also have free access to the garden and

can choose whether they want to go out. Older children can access the toilets by opening the inner door, however, smaller children cannot access the toilets without asking a member of staff for help. This impacts on children's independence and limits those who are unable to verbally communicate such as children with English as an additional language. Children are learning about diversity through planned activities. Past activities have included celebrating Chinese New Year. The setting have children attending from diverse backgrounds and value this by asking parents to contribute to the activities. Parents have brought in different foods to share with children and one of the dads made baskets to show the children, he came into the setting to talk to the children during group time. The resources positively support diversity.

The setting have in the past cared for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting has a special education needs co-ordinator whose responsibility is to observe the children, working closely with them to meet their needs. The staff have the appropriate paperwork in place and link with early years and other professionals to support the children. Children understand appropriate behaviour because staff explain the consequences of their actions so that they are able to learn. Staff are all consistent with their approach to behaviour and follow the procedures outlined in the policy. They praise positive behaviour and encourage children to share and take turns. Children are learning right from wrong and show concern for others through the use of effective strategies which are implemented by all staff, for example praising children's helpfulness and kindness to others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet their individual needs and ensure that the child is fully included in the setting. Parents are asked to fill in a registration form which gives the staff vital information about their child to enable them to meet their needs inline with parents' wishes. Parents are able to read the policies and procedures at the setting. They are asked to complete an 'all about me' book about their child. It provides the setting with further information about their child, for example likes and dislikes, what they enjoy doing at home, favourite stories and songs amongst other information. This information will help the staff to settle the child by providing activities of interest to them. Parents are also involved in activities and sometimes help at the sessions. Staff communicate with parents on a daily basis at the beginning and at the end of each day. They also have a notice board in the entrance which provides them with further information. Parents are informed about how to make a complaint via the setting's policy and the displayed information.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive clear information about the Foundation Stage in the setting's prospectus and via the information displayed on the notice board. They are informed about the curriculum plans through medium and short-term plans which are also displayed. Parents can talk about their child's achievements at any time, the key person system enables parents to discuss their child's progress with somebody who is knowledgeable about their individual needs and current stage of learning. However, they do not have regular opportunities to share their children's records of achievement or make ongoing contributions. Children's starting points are discussed with parents and information is provided this is used to informally define initial individual educational needs within the Foundation Stage. Therefore, children's learning is enhanced through this positive working partnership.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are safe as they are cared for by individuals who have been vetted and are cared for by staff with a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. The play leader and deputy are qualified to level three in early years and are currently considering further qualifications. Individual members of staff are trained in specific areas such as safeguarding children, first aid, special needs, health and safety amongst others.

Children are well cared for as the setting has a clear understanding of the National Standards and their responsibility to comply with the conditions of their registration. The setting operates on the correct adult-to-child ratio and staff deploy themselves to meet the needs of the children. The team work well together communicating throughout the day and sharing the daily tasks. Children's well-being is promoted by organised records. Policies and procedures are in place and are reflected in practice. Children's records are stored accessibly and confidentially in the office. A daily register is used to record the times of arrival and departure.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Staff meetings are beginning to effectively involve all staff. The play leader and deputy share responsibility for curriculum planning, yet time is not taken to share this together or with other staff, volunteers and students, this would ensure a cohesive style is used and all staff understand what children are expected to learn and their next steps. Therefore, due to these issues and the areas of development raised within the quality of teaching the group still need to work further to ensure they become effective in the monitoring and evaluation of nursery education. Staff have appraisals to identify their strengths, weaknesses and areas for professional development. All staff value the support provided by the local authority and generally reflect on this advice to improve their practice. The group share information with the local school to ease children's transition into the school.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the pre-school was required to ensure that Ofsted's details are included in the complaints procedure and seek advice regarding the fire exit door at the front of the premises. The complaints policy has been updated and Ofsted's details are included within the procedure. The setting have added a latch to the fire door which is kept locked during the sessions preventing unauthorised access to the building.

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

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- review the routines regarding snack time to minimise the risk of cross-infection and promote children's health
- request written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice and treatment
- ensure all entries in the accident book are consistently signed by parents
- enable all children to promote their independence in all areas of the setting, with regards to freely accessing the toilet.

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):

- identify clearly how short-term planning is linked to stepping stones and introduce focussed activities and evaluation to show what children have learned
- indicate how observations of children's learning are used to inform future planning, therefore providing children with sufficient challenge and ensuring activities meet specific needs of particular children
- devise and implement a system to encourage parents to frequently access their children's developmental records and make ongoing contributions
- ensure systems are in place to effectively monitor and evaluate the provision of nursery education.

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