

Ecclesall Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300789
Inspection date	13 September 2007
Inspector	Trudy Scott
Setting Address	Room 2, Ecclesall Parish Hall, Ringinglow Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S11 7PP
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Registered person	Ecclesall 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?

Ecclesall Pre-School has been operating for over 20 years and is owned and run by a voluntary management committee. It operates from a parish hall in Sheffield. The children's accommodation comprises of a play room with toilet and kitchen facilities. There is a fully enclosed area and garden for outdoor play.

The pre-school is registered to provide sessional care for a maximum of 30 children from two to five years at any one time. There are currently 53 children on roll. All children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. It opens on Monday to Friday from 09.15 to 11.45 during school term times.

There are seven staff who work directly with the children. Of these, four staff have early years qualifications and one is working towards a relevant qualification. The setting receives support from an early years teacher from the local authority and a development worker from the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA). The group has achieved a quality assurance award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and good hygiene is well promoted by staff in the setting. They conscientiously follow hygiene routines and monitor the premises during the day, to ensure all areas are clean and well maintained, reducing the risk of infection. Clear, detailed information about infectious illnesses and exclusion periods is provided for parents, to further protect children from the spread of illness and infection. Children learn good hygiene practice as staff talk to them about keeping healthy. For example, they know why they should cover their mouths when coughing and the importance of washing hands after handling mini-beasts.

Children enjoy nutritious snacks that include a variety of different foods, such as rice cakes, cheese and fruit, with drinks of milk and water. Staff remind children about the importance of regular drinks and usually have drinking water readily available. Staff make sure they meet children's individual needs, such as dietary requirements and health care by finding out from parents as much as they can about their children's care. They make the pre-school as accessible as possible for all, for instance, seeking training when necessary to administer life saving medicines, such as insulin and adrenaline.

Regular opportunities for active play contributes to children's overall good health and physical development. Children develop coordination and control of their bodies in a good range of activities. For instance, they skilfully manoeuvre wheeled toys around cones and construct with large materials outside, and participate energetically in obstacle courses and action rhymes inside. Children's hand-eye coordination is successfully fostered and they show increasing control using a range of tools and equipment, such as scissors, construction and mark making materials.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in secure, welcoming premises where staff have high regard for their safety. Staff vigilantly monitor the controlled entry system, conduct risk assessments on all areas of the provision and take action to minimise potential hazards. Authorised visitors and parent helpers are given clear guidance of their role in keeping children safe, for instance, what to do in the event of emergency evacuation. Children learn to keep themselves safe because staff introduce safety issues through stories and everyday play activities. They ensure children receive reasonable challenge in a safe environment by observing them as they explore and giving appropriate support. For example, staff watch as children ride bikes they have tied together, guiding them to ride in the same direction, while staying close by to assess potential danger.

Children enjoy a good variety of safe and suitable toys and play materials. This includes attractive resources with positive images of different races, cultures and abilities, used as part of everyday play to promote children's appreciation of diversity. Children make choices about their play as resources are placed where they can see and reach them easily. Staff use what they know about the children through observation and participation in their play, to provide toys and equipment that are stimulating and interesting. This ensures children want to play with what is available.

Staff have secure knowledge of child protection issues and keep up to date with the latest guidance and information from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. A programme of training and good support from the child protection coordinators ensures all staff understand their roles in protecting children and know what to do in the event of child protection concerns. This ensures children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and content in the pre-school. They come in excitedly, eager to get on with the day's activities and events. A child who has only recently started attending tells the inspector, without prompting, 'You know what? I like this pre-school.' Children who are a little unsettled on arrival are gently comforted by sensitive staff and given the attention they need to feel secure. Staff help children to socialise by closely observing them as they play, so that they know when to interact to support children in making relationships. For instance, staff know which children do not always easily engage with other children and suggest shared activities to promote friendships. Throughout the day, there is a good balance of children engaged in solitary play, children working in groups and others receiving support from staff. Relationships between children and staff are warm and positive. Children confidently get on with their play, reassured by familiar adults who stay close by. For example, a child becomes absorbed in making a complex structure with building blocks, occasionally looking to the nearby staff. She beams with pleasure as the adult shows enthusiasm for what she has built, giving lots of praise.

When playing indoors children make decisions about their play by selecting independently from the very good range of activities provided. Activities and resources, such as sand, water, creative materials, construction and role play are available most of the time during the free play session, which means children can return to favourite activities and build their skills. They have a lot of fun playing outdoors in planned activities, such as caring for plants and painting on a large scale and actively enjoy other freely chosen activities. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' to ensure activities are appropriate and achievable for all the children. For instance, children explore paint in many ways, according to their different stages of development. Some children mix colours, others cover all the paper, while some paint clearly recognisable objects.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff have secure knowledge of the early learning goals and use this well to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The indoor environment is carefully planned to provide children with high quality experiences and resources that stimulate their interest and motivate them to learn. For example, children become absorbed in hospital play, using lots of language as they take on the different roles of doctor, nurse and patient. Staff fully support their interest by asking them about previous experiences, participating in the play and providing resources, such as X-ray photographs and doctor's equipment. This helps children develop their imagination and increase their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children concentrate and persevere in freely chosen activities and generally sustain their interest in group activities, such as story time. Although, a small number of children do not always fully engage, occasionally distracting others.

Children are skilful communicators and use language well for a variety of purposes. They initiate conversations, ask questions, predict, remember past events and make their needs known. Their interest in reading is well promoted through good access to many lovely books. Children enjoy

listening to stories read by adults and frequently choose to look at books independently. They understand the different purposes of writing and have many opportunities to practice. For example, a child makes an appointment in the diary when acting out the role of receptionist in hospital play and another 'writes' about the patient. Mathematics becomes real in many everyday activities, leading to children developing very good skills in this area. They explore space, shape and measure when using construction materials, find out about capacity and volume as they play in the sand and water, and count accurately when singing number rhymes. Staff are on hand to reinforce children's learning and prompt their thinking. For instance, they encourage children to attempt simple problems, such as how much water is needed for the plants. Children's natural curiosity is supported through many good opportunities to explore and investigate. For example, children observe mini-beasts through a magnifying glass or test various materials with a magnet to find out what will stick.

Children learn through a thoughtfully planned balance of freely chosen and focused activities. However, routines and group activities sometimes interrupt children's play as children do not always have enough time to complete what they are doing. Staff work directly with children for much of the time, participating and interacting in their play, asking open-ended questions and listening to what they have to say. This ensures they know individual children well and respond effectively to their spontaneous interests. They make regular observations and complete assessments, recording children's progress through the stepping stones and planning informally for children's individual learning needs. Children with learning difficulties are very well supported to participate and enjoy the activities and experiences provided. This ensures they are fully included in the pre-school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have a strong sense of belonging as they are warmly welcomed in the pre-school. Staff find out as much as they can from parents about what is important to them and their children. They use the information to talk to children about familiar events and favourite people in their lives, helping them feel at home. Children know they are valued by staff who find ways to help them feel special and recognise their achievements. For example, children are told 'Thank you for bringing your mummy today' and 'I love those colours in your painting'. Children returning from absence are told 'It's nice to have you back' or 'I missed you yesterday'. Staff work well with parents and relevant professionals to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities, planning for progress and helping them make as much progress as they can.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are sociable and play harmoniously together. They follow the good role models of staff as they learn to care for others, showing consideration for each other's feelings. For example, children move up on the carpet to make room for others and take care not to break a child's model, when asked by staff. Children learn to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences in planned activities. For instance, children look in a mirror to compare their features when making portraits for a welcome display. Staff plan activities to effectively broaden children's experience of the local and wider community. These include inviting visitors from different cultures to share traditions and cultures to the pre-school and encouraging children to send postcards from their holidays.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Good quality information about the childcare and the educational provision is shared with parents in various ways. These include a regular newsletter, frequent informal chats, and opportunities to see and comment on children's

assessment records. Assessments include photographs and descriptions of their children's activities and experiences, providing a delightful and informative record of what children do and learn in pre-school. Parents are warmly welcomed and have many opportunities to share in their children's learning and build on what they learn in the setting. For example, parents are encouraged to stay and participate in daily play, see information displayed about the children's activities and receive information about continuing the learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the setting effectively supports children's care, learning and play. The person in charge leads a committed staff team that makes good use of self-assessment and evaluation to monitor and review their performance. Each member of staff has designated responsibilities for overseeing and promoting particular aspects of the provision, such as equal opportunities and health and safety. Staff conscientiously carry out their duties to ensure children are safe, well and happy. Good use is made of the available space and facilities so that children enjoy a balanced range of activities and experiences and make good progress in all areas.

A comprehensive collection of policies and procedures is in place and shared with parents so that they are well informed about the pre-school, promoting continuity of care for the children. Records required for the day to day running of the setting are stored securely on the premises. Although, some records, such as children's assessments are not readily available. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are followed to ensure staff are suitable to work with the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. Staff are well supported in their professional development with good access to further training. Regular team meetings and opportunities to share their knowledge with their colleagues ensure all staff work together to promote the aims for children's learning. Management and staff work cooperatively with other early years professionals, such as the advisory teacher and PLA development worker, to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and plan for progress. Recent improvements include the development of the outdoor area and garden and there are good plans in place to build on this further. This approach ensures the continuing development of the educational provision.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to improve child protection procedures by developing procedures to be followed in the event of allegations against staff. The child protection policy has been reviewed in line with current guidance and includes all necessary information, increasing the safety of children.

The provider was also asked to promote children's independence by giving more free access to resources and increasing opportunities for them to explore their own ideas. The environment is now organised to support children's independent learning with free access to a broad range of resources and activities. Children confidently make decisions about their play; they develop their own ideas and explore and investigate using a stimulating range of different toys and play materials. This contributes to the good progress children make towards the early learning goals.

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):

- review the storage of children's records so that they are readily available.

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):

- review the organisation of routines and whole group activities to take more account of children's individual interests and learning needs.

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