

Croston Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 502193 |
| Inspection date | 25 September 2007 |
| Inspector | Ann, Theresa Flynn |
| Setting Address | The Old School, Church Street, Croston, Leyland, Lancashire, PR26 9HA |
| Telephone number | 01772 601241 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Croston 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?

Croston Pre-School is a well established setting situated in the rural village of Croston. The pre-school is sited within the old school building just off Church Street and operates from Monday to Friday, term time only. The opening hours are from 09.15 to 15.45 Monday to Thursday and from 09.15 to 13.15 on Friday. The Tuesday session operates for pre-school children only.

The setting is registered under a committee for full day care for a maximum of thirty children from two to five years of age, only nine children aged two years can attend at any one time. There is a total of 57 children on roll, 27 of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting supports children with learning difficulties. There are eight staff employed, six hold relevant childcare qualifications and one staff member is employed as an administrator. The pre-school manager and one other staff member are qualified teachers.

Children have access to an entrance hall, large activity area, a quiet room, bathroom and a secure outdoor play area. There is also a kitchen, staff toilet facilities, storage areas and a staff room.

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from Sure Start.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a very good range of physical activities both indoors and outdoors, providing them with regular access to fresh air. They enjoy a range of resources including construction games, water, cars and diggers, a garage, a large container of compost and spades, rocking horse, various sized tree trunks for children to balance on, books, table for mark making, sand, ball and net, brushes to brush the floor and wheelbarrows. They enjoy dance sessions, planting flowers and bulbs in pots, walking to the woods and local high school, all of which helps to promote children's health, well-being and enjoyment.

Children stay healthy because staff follow good hygiene practices. For example, they clean tables for meal and snack times and children are reminded to wash their hands following toilet use and following craft activities.

Children are confident in explaining why hands need to be washed stating, for example 'to get rid of germs and to make them clean' one child explaining well how 'soap kills germs', which demonstrates children's understanding of hygienic practice.

Children are well nourished through the provision of healthy snacks, which includes a variety of fruits. Meal time provides a social occasion with children and staff sitting together. Children, however, do not have free access to drinks throughout the session, having to ask staff if they require a drink.

Staff promote children's understanding about healthy eating, by discussing with children healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables and by developing their understanding through topics and activities, which promote healthy eating.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure indoor and outdoor environment. The environment is bright and colourful, with children's work, posters and mobiles adorning the walls, all of which contribute to providing a welcoming and safe environment for the children who attend.

Many varied resources are available at child height, which children freely access, thereby providing children with many safe choices for their play. Space is well organised into planned areas within the playroom, which enables children to enjoy varied choices from a balanced range of continuous provision, both indoors and outdoors.

Children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe within the setting, by being involved in emergency evacuation practises. Children are kept safe on outings because they wear high visibility jackets and are supervised well because good staff to child ratios are maintained. Staff explain to children, within briefings about road safety and about platform safety when using the train, thus helping children develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe when away from the setting.

Children are well protected because staff understand the correct procedures to follow in the event of concerns about the welfare of any child in their care. Staff access child protection training and can access information regarding the safeguarding of children, which is displayed within the setting, thereby ensuring their knowledge is current and accurate, thus helping to keep children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Activities and opportunities provided for children are good. A varied, stimulating and interesting range of age appropriate resources and activities are available. These include areas of water play, sand play, craft activities, painting, puzzles, role-play and an area in which children freely access books. Children also enjoy experiences and activities, such as dance and a range of activities outdoors. All of which provides interest, stimulation and challenge to help children progress and enjoy their time at the setting.

Staff are well deployed offering appropriate support and guidance. The children initiate their own play within the role play area, socialising well as they discuss the foods they are to 'cook' in the microwave, which develops their social skills, language and imagination. Staff are available to offer support and guidance when necessary, for example, within the potato men activity, which helps to maximise children's learning experiences.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is followed for the younger children and activities are differentiated within planning to cater for the needs of all children who attend. Topics or themes are followed and the continuous provision links into the theme. For example, the harvest topic has apples and potatoes within the compost play and the story during story time is about harvest, which helps to enhance children's learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children benefit from the staff's sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and effective teaching helps children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are questioned and challenged by the staff, who ask appropriate questions to help children to learn at their own pace. For example, they ask children questions in mathematical terms, such as how many fruits in the story during story time. Staff also use spontaneous events to extend children's learning, for example, when showing children beans, staff talk about where they come from, how they are baked and then tinned, questioning the children about foods and which foods provide energy, all of which provides appropriate questioning to make children think and help them to learn.

Children are encouraged to be independent and are able to make their own choices for learning. For example, following story time children choose their own activities, they choose to play indoors or outdoors and they choose their snack during snack time, all of which help's children to develop their independence.

Children are developing confidence through appropriate praise and encouragement. For example, when they help to tidy up and when they return their tray's following snack time, when sitting well whilst waiting for story time and when identifying their own name from the various name cards, which helps to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Children are socialising well

as they learn to wait until their peers are in line before playing outdoors and learn to share resources when playing with the computer, thus helping to develop their understanding of how to share. Children's personal independence is developing as they access the hand wash basins themselves to wash their hands following craft activities and putting on their own aprons prior to playing in the water.

Children are developing their literacy skills as they listen to the sounds of letters and identify names beginning with those letters. For example 'J' for the start of a child's name. Mark making is available both indoors and outdoors as children access a well resourced mark making area indoors and are provided with opportunities to mark make outdoors.

They are developing their understanding of mathematics, as they count during the singing of 'one potato, two potato'. Opportunities for children to calculate are provided as they are asked how many pieces of fruit are required for snack time for the number of children present. Children count confidentially as they count the number of trains on the track and are beginning to understand about shape, space and measure as they lay themselves down in large open spaces outdoors.

Children's creativity is developing well through good experiences, such as painting, gluing, construction, tactile play including bread dough and shaving foam and imaginary play within the role-play area, which provides good and varied opportunities to develop children's creativity and imagination.

Planning is clear and identifies how all six areas of learning are to be delivered. Children's assessments and observations are used to inform future planning. Assessments and observations of the children are undertaken to ensure children are appropriately supported and challenged. The system of observing children's progress, clearly identifies the next steps in their learning and evaluations are effective because the learning objective clearly links to the evaluations undertaken.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing their awareness and understanding about diversity, through discussion and activities, such as topics involving Chinese New Year. Resources are available which reflect diversity, including books, puzzles and dolls, and children are made aware of others cultures by, for example, displaying letters in the mark making area reflecting various languages, thus raising children's awareness of the needs and customs of others.

Children are valued, included and have their individual needs met appropriately. Children's all round needs are catered for and all children are included within the setting. Staff work consistently with parents, carers and with other professionals to provide continuity of care and to aid children's development, thus working in the best interests of the children.

The behaviour of children is good. They accept and work with age appropriate strategies, praise and encouragement, to promote positive behaviour. For example, praise is provided to children when helping to tidy up and when they help at snack time, thus helping to develop children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately as they learn to take turns and share, for example, when using the computer.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children's individual needs are well met because of the good relationships which have been established with parents. Information is shared through written policies and procedures, daily discussions, newsletters and parents evenings, ensuring parents remain fully informed. Parents are involved with their children's learning by being invited into pre-school to engage in activities with the children. A home to pre-school link is developed through Rosie Bear who goes home with children to become involved in the children's home life and through the provision of story sacks, which children take home.

However, there is no system in place for seeking parents views about children's progress at home and parents views about the service provided are rarely sought.

Parents are well informed about the curriculum through booklets regarding a the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage, which provides good detailed information about how their children learn and progress, thus demonstrating the positive relationships which have been established with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Time and space is organised effectively so that children are able to independently play and relax within the setting. Children access varied resources both indoors and outdoors, which helps in promoting their all round development. Time is effectively organised to cater for structured, free play and meal times, therefore meeting children's individual needs.

Adequate procedures are in place for the recruitment of staff, who are trained mainly to Level 3 in childcare, two of the staff hold teaching qualifications and the setting employs administrative support. Committee meetings and staff meetings are regularly undertaken and staff spoke of receiving good support from the management team. Good staff to child ratios are maintained, thereby ensuring that children receive appropriate levels of support to help their individual developmental requirements.

Documentation is well maintained in line with the National Standards and therefore helps in promoting the safe and efficient management of the setting. Thus, the welfare and care of children is maintained. However, children's progress records are completed by staff at home, thus compromising confidentiality.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. There is a clear understanding by staff of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum and staff are clear on their roles, responsibilities and deployment areas. Curriculum planning is in place and is implemented, delivered and monitored by all staff. Monitoring of the curriculum is undertaken through regular staff meetings and helps to ensure the provision of nursery education is effective in helping children progress.

New staff are inducted and there is a formal staff appraisal system in place, through which staff identify their own training needs and access appropriate training as required, thereby helping to maintain the good service provided to children who attend Croston Pre-school.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection there was one recommendation raised relating to documentation.

The recommendation has received attention because the child protection policy has been revised to include the procedure should there be any allegations against staff and includes the contact details for social services and the police.

Due to the action taken the care and safety of children has been enhanced.

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):

- promote children's good health by ensuring drinks are freely accessible to children at all times
- ensure confidentiality of children's progress records is maintained

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):

- develop partnership with parents by devising a system for seeking parents views about their children's learning at home and for seeking parents views about the service provided.

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