

Steeple Bumpstead Preschool Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	650139
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspector	Lynn Clements
Setting Address	Village Hall, Bower Hall Drive, Steeple Bumpstead, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 7EX
Telephone number	01440 730082 Village Hall
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Registered person	Steeple Bumpstead Pre School Committee
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?

Steeple Bumpstead Preschool Playgroup, opened in 1997 and operates from a large modern village hall. It is situated in a residential area of Steeple Bumpstead village. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday 09.15 to 12.00 with an optional lunch from 12.00 to 12.30 during term times.

There are currently 33 children on roll. Of these 21 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local area. The pre-school has strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of staff. Five members of staff hold relevant qualifications. Three staff are currently training towards recognised early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Pre-school Learning Alliance, the local authority and the area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There are extremely clear and effective systems in place which enable children to develop their independence with regard to personal hygiene routines. New children learn the hand washing song which reminds them how to wash their hands thoroughly. Bright posters are made by the children and displayed in the toilet area, serving as good visual clues to the importance of preventing germs from spreading. Paper hand towels are used to avoid cross-contamination. All health related documentation is in place, this ensures that staff meet children's individual medical and dietary needs efficiently. All staff have completed first aid training. This enables them to provide good care for the children and deal effectively with any accidents. Any accidents occurring on the premises are recorded and shared with parents on the same day. Staff have also introduced a letter system to ensure parents not collecting their own child are still formally informed if their child has an accident during the session. Clear systems are in place for the administration of any necessary medication and staff access relevant training at the local clinic. This ensures children's personal medical needs are met and that they are well looked after by members of staff who know exactly what they are doing. A clear sick child policy is in place and implemented in practice to protect children from the spread of infection.

Staff take time to plan and prepare a host of exciting snacks for children. They enjoy snack time, washing their hands and waiting in anticipation to see what's on offer. They enjoy trying different types of fruit and all children serve themselves from the snack bar. They develop their personal independence further, as they spread toppings and make their own sandwiches. Children use single handed utensils with competence and control. They are provided with regular drinks, which they pour themselves, this ensures that no child remains thirsty. Children learn about healthy eating through topics, cooking activities, snack time discussion and growing fruits and vegetables on their recently acquired school allotment. Children sit together for snack and lunch, this is used exceptionally well by staff as a social occasion and a chance to further develop their personal skills. Staff have completed food hygiene training and exceptionally clear systems are in place with regard to food preparation and hygiene. This protects children from cross-contamination.

Children have excellent opportunities to engage in physical play. Staff are careful to plan opportunities everyday which enable children to run off steam and enjoy the fresh air. In bad weather, an area of the large hall is sectioned off to provide children with play equipment and apparatus on a large scale. Children use wheeled toys, bats and balls, helping to develop their hand-eye co-ordination. They show excellent spatial awareness as they negotiate pathways within the hall, classroom and while playing outside. Staff have a very clear understanding about the importance of physical play and activity, and how this ensures that children remain healthy. Children learn how their bodies move and thoroughly enjoy joining in music and movement or yoga sessions. They know that exercise is good for helping them to stay fit and healthy. All children are able to rest or be active according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The very good organisation of the play space along with thorough daily risk assessments of all child accessible areas ensures the environment remains safe and secure for children. Toys and resources are regularly checked and cleaned so they remain in good condition for the children

to use. The provision of excellent child accessible storage encourages children to extend their own play and learning at their own pace. Staff support and encourage children to care for their environment and play-space. Children tidy away after playing or tuck their chairs under the tables when they have finished to avoid creating tripping hazards. All children learn about the importance of doing things for themselves.

Children are supervised well at all times. Staff take positive steps to help them understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they practise fire escape routines so everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency. While out and about children learn about the importance of road safety. High visibility vests are used while out and about to help protect children from harm. Staff provide appropriate risks for children which helps them to learn how to keep safe through first hand experiences, such as using knives at snack time or cooking utensils and single handed tools during activities. Clear and safe child collection procedures are implemented in practice. This ensures children never leave with adults other than those agreed by their parents. Security systems are in place to prevent children leaving the building unescorted and visitor's identification is checked prior to entry to protect children from harm. A visitor record is maintained. Staff have sound health and safety knowledge and this is currently being developed through training courses.

Staff have completed relevant safeguarding children training and this is updated regularly. They have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures and how to make referrals to social services if they believe a child is at risk. Staff act in the best interests of the child at all times to ensure their welfare remains paramount.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely confident in the pre-school and in their relationships with each other and staff. They are greeted warmly by staff as they arrive each day. Staff take time to chat to parents and actively encourage them to participate during sessions. Children are very secure and develop a sense of place as they confidently hang up their belongings, return greetings to each other and move freely around the hall and adjacent classroom. Staff encourage free-flow play and investigation. Stimulating and exciting activities are planned and set up for children to investigate at their leisure. They negotiate small world and role play scenarios based on real and imagined experiences, busily re-enacting farm yard scenes. Children work confidently on their own or in small and large groups. They have great fun investigating natural and man made materials, such as gloop, paint, wool and a wide variety of creative media.

Children construct from a wide range of building blocks, train tracks and click together bricks. They are keen to press the buttons on calculators and computers to discover what happens and to develop their skills, as they negotiate the different programmes. Children communicate well sharing their ideas while they play and seeking out others to join in their games. Younger children are supported exceptionally well by members of staff who have developed clear systems in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This ensures that children under three years are supported extremely well. Children respond to new challenges by questioning and using their own initiative.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and how

children make progress through play, in all six areas of learning. They work with other professionals to develop their practice, such as the local authority development officer and teachers from their feeder primary school. Staff organise the pre-school to provide varied and exciting activities which promote the children's learning, decision making and independent skills. The outdoor play area is also used effectively to consolidate and develop the children's learning in different ways and on a larger scale than is possible indoors. Staff are very good at supporting children particularly in small group work. They know when to stand back and give children time to develop their own ideas. All staff are interested in what the children say and do and use positive methods to promote the children's good behaviour.

Key worker observations of the children at play are used to monitor progress and update assessment records. However, not all records are updated consistently, this impacts on the key worker's ability to plot progress over time and ensure good progress continues to be made. Records provide staff and parents with a picture of what each child is able to do. Key workers use the assessment records well to identify each child's next steps for learning. However, these are not used clearly to inform future planning. Staff ensure they provide a broad and exciting range of activities and experiences which encourage the children's interest, investigation and participation. The adaptation of activities to meet the needs of the less and more able children is planned well so that all children are challenged.

Children very much enjoy what they do and are able to sustain interest in a wide range of activities which promote their learning and develop their understanding. Overall, children are motivated and concentrate very well at activities which capture their imagination. For example, they design and create self-portraits using a variety of creative media. Children proudly seek out adults to show them their finished works of art. Staff use mobile boards which are wheeled into the hall to divide up the space, but are also used well to display children's creations. This enables children to develop a sense of achievement and pride in what they do, as they proudly show their parents and carers. Staff support this further using plenty of descriptive praise and encouragement which raises children's confidence and self-esteem. Children use their imagination to dance and move to music, sing simple songs from memory and develop their role play ideas. They enjoy sharing stories and use the pictures as clues to the text or to guess what may happen next. They develop their language skills as they share their news from home, chat about different activities or discuss what they want to eat at snack time. Children enjoy simple mark-making activities. However, everyday opportunities for them to use writing for a purpose are limited, for instance as staff write their names on their work.

Children form good relationships with each other. They clearly demonstrate their independent skills as they move freely around the provision making their own choices about what they want to investigate next. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of mathematical ideas and concepts. They explore and recognise different three dimensional shapes. They enjoy counting in their everyday play, for example, how many children are at the pre-school. They join in number rhymes and songs which helps them to develop simple calculation skills, as they add and subtract how many fingers they have left after catching fish alive.

Children make sense of the world around them through investigation and first hand experiences. For example, they observe the weather and changing seasons of the year. They explore the natural world, as they examine mini-creatures, such as worms, snails, ants and many more. Children learn how to care for living things when they plant seeds and watch them grow. They learn about the passage of time as they discuss what day of the week it is or what they did on their recent visit to big school. Children enjoy talking about what they are going to do at half-term but also get excited when staff tell them about the activities they have planned for

when they return. Children use computers with competence, negotiating programmes which help to consolidate previous learning. They enjoy baking bread and exploring different patterns as they make plaited loaves. Children take the initiative to be self-sufficient in their learning because they have very good access to a range of equipment and resources stored at their level.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children have a secure understanding of the wider society and different cultures. Staff introduce them to a diverse range of customs and communities throughout the world, during topics and discussions. Staff provide artefacts for the children to explore and examine. They develop their thoughts and ideas about the wider world as they use maps and globes with increasing confidence. Visitors to the setting include parents and carers who share their skills and resources helping to bring the curriculum to life. Staff work as a team to ensure there is no bias in their practice in relation to gender, race or disability. All children are treated as individuals and differentiation in activities enable all children to take part at a pace and level which suits them.

There are very clear and effective procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support for families is exceptional as staff take time to talk through their needs. Staff are proactive and adopt a multi-agency approach as they work closely with other professionals. Excellent procedures are in place for children leaving the setting and moving into mainstream school. Staff work closely with the receiving teachers to aid smooth transitions for children and their families.

Relationships are exceptionally good at all levels. Children are valued as individuals and they develop positive attitudes towards others. They learn to respect each other and share resources. They negotiate turn taking to ensure everyone has a fair chance. Children benefit from the consistent routines and a secure approach to their care. For example, they talk with each other and members of staff about being kind. They explore their emotions and staff validate positive behaviour using plenty of praise and encouragement which raises children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are willing to take part in activities without fear of failure.

Parents are respected and open communications both written and verbal take place regularly to support all children. Open mornings are organised to ensure everyone has a voice. These also provide good opportunities to discuss children's progress. Notice boards provide excellent information for parents concerning all aspects of the pre-school including relevant information about child welfare. Policies and procedures are displayed and shared with parents. Newsletters are sent out regularly encouraging parents to share their skills and experiences when helping during sessions. Children's needs are being met well because staff work closely with parents and carers which enables all children to achieve and provides continuity between home and the setting. Prior placement information is sought from parents and carers enabling staff to get to know children and plan for their individual needs. Information about the curriculum's offered are discussed with parents and further information is made available in the welcome pack. There is a clear complaint procedure in place to ensure that any concerns relating to the care of children are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is outstanding. Records of assessment are in place. Parents and carers have regular opportunities to come into the setting to view and discuss their child's records. They also take records home to add information and observations about their children's achievements at home. This ensures

that children are fully supported during their formative years. Parents are encouraged to share resources and join in activities. Information about the Foundation Stage is made readily available, helping them to see for themselves steps in their children's learning. Parents' views and opinions are valued by the staff. Both staff and parents work closely together to support their children during the formative years.

Staff are directly involved in children's learning and all children are included and treated with equal concern. Children learn to share and help each other. They encourage others to join in their games and make room for them at the snack table or activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust procedures are in place for the employment of staff and monitoring of volunteers to ensure children are protected from harm. An extremely clear operational plan is in place and a great deal of effort is taken to ensure it remains up-to-date. A helpful range of policies and procedures are in place which meet legislative requirements. These documents are shared with parents and implemented in practice to promote the safe management of the setting and provide positive outcomes for children. A clear system for registering children and members of staff is in place. However, the current system does not include recording times of arrival and departure, so that all children can be properly accounted for at all times to ensure they are protected from harm. Staff store records securely and confidentiality is respected at all times.

Children are cared for by staff who have a very good knowledge and understanding of child development. The majority of staff hold appropriate qualifications, whilst the remainder are currently working towards recognised early years training. Staff induction procedures are in place and ongoing appraisals are implemented to support existing members of staff. The organisation of the setting ensures that children are well cared for and staff encourage them to develop positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management of early education is good. Regular planning meetings are held to discuss the funded education programme. The provider and manager work with staff, drawing on their skills and interests and using this information effectively to organise appropriate deployment.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the provider has improved outcomes for children. All policies and procedures have been updated to ensure the safe management of the provision and protect children from harm. Staff have developed training with regard to equal opportunities and ensure there is no bias in their practice in relation to gender, race or disability. An action plan is in place detailing how the manager and other members of staff are updating and acquiring relevant training for their post.

Since the last nursery education inspection, the provider has addressed recommendations raised. Planning and assessment records have been developed to include learning objectives and identify children's next steps for learning. Opportunities for parents and carers to share in their children's records of assessment are in place enabling them to participate in their child's formative years. Staff have introduced activities which enable children to build on their

mathematical skills with regard to space, shape and measure, as they use positional language in their play, develop their understanding about different shapes and explore repeating patterns.

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

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):

- develop the current registration systems to include times of arrival and departure for children and members of staff.

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):

- continue to develop the current systems for assessment to ensure they are updated consistently so children's progress over time can be accurately plotted; develop the current systems for planning to ensure learning intentions are clearly based on observations of what children know and can do.
- develop opportunities in communication language and literacy enabling children to use writing for a purpose.

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