



Frypa Rascals Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203397
Inspection date	15 July 2005
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	Frypa Hall, The Fryth, Basildon, Essex, SS14 3PL
Telephone number	01268 281921
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Registered person	Frypa Rascals 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 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?

Frypa Rascals Pre-School is run by a committee. It opened in 1969 and operates from a large hall situated on the outskirts of Basildon, within walking distance of local schools and shops. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions times are Monday to Friday from 09:30 until 12:00 and on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 13:00

until 15:30. A lunch club operates from 12:00 until 12:45.

There are currently 39 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special needs or who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff of whom three, including the manager, hold early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Three staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because they understand simple good health and hygiene practices. They independently wash their hands after craft work and before eating. Children are consistently protected from illness and infection. There are clear written guidelines that cover the procedures in the event of a child being unwell. Staff have attended first aid courses and keep clear records of any accidents.

Children are well nourished. They enjoy snacks such as crackers, bread sticks and Scotch pancakes. Fruit is offered every day. Children and staff discuss how nutritious food such as fruit promotes healthy growth and development. Children can help themselves to fresh drinking water throughout each session. The staff ensure that they are aware of any allergies or dietary requirements so that children's individual needs are met.

Children are sensitively cared for during very hot weather. The staff are very mindful of the heat and ensure that children are protected against the sun when playing outdoors. Children wear hats and a gazebo is erected to provide additional shade. Fresh drinking water is readily accessible to children playing outdoors. Parents are reminded to ensure that children wear appropriate sun cream each day. However, lunch boxes are not appropriately stored to keep the contents fresh and cool during extremely warm temperatures.

Children enjoy physical activity and show great enthusiasm when invited outdoors to play. Children run and move confidently during games and activities. A wide range of physical challenges are offered so that children can practise and refine their skills using small and large equipment. The outdoor area is being developed imaginatively and is used throughout the year as an extended classroom. Indoor apparatus that allows children to balance, climb or slide is also provided.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe, welcoming environment. The hall is bright and spacious. Posters and examples of artwork are displayed for the children's appreciation. Children are able to freely select and use safe, clean play equipment. They freely move between outdoor and indoor activities. A great deal of thought has been put into the development of the outdoor area and further improvements are to be made during the summer of 2005.

Children's welfare and safety receive careful consideration. Risk assessment and daily checks ensure that all toys, resources and accessible areas remain safe for the children. However, the staff do not always securely fasten the doors leading to the outdoor area. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they practise emergency evacuation procedures and are reminded to walk indoors rather than run.

Children are safeguarded as staff are aware of their child protection responsibilities. A child protection policy is in place and the procedures are clearly displayed in the hall. The staff are vigilant regarding the security of the children as they carefully monitor any visitors who enter the premises.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are happy, settled and enjoy coming to the pre-school. Friendly relationships are formed with their peers and the staff team. Children can freely choose the activities on offer and initially they are curious and interested in their tasks. They participate in a variety of creative opportunities and show pride in their achievements. A range of themed resources and dressing-up clothes allow children to play purposefully within their role-play scenarios, for example at the hairdressers or the baby clinic. Children use the outdoor area confidently when developing their physical, investigative and exploratory skills.

The younger children are mostly confident and make satisfactory progress. However, staff are not yet using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan learning opportunities to support and encourage the development of the 2-year-olds that attend the pre-school.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All staff are developing their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are involved in planning and delivering the curriculum. They provide an acceptable range of activities linked to all areas of learning. Children acquire new knowledge and skills by completing tasks linked to themes and topics. However, at times staff stick too rigidly to the daily plans and are not spontaneous or flexible in what they offer each session. As a result alternative activities are not offered when children start to lose interest.

Children explore media and materials through colour-mixing, combining paint and textures and using collage materials. They are given some opportunities to develop their own ideas but craft materials are pre-prepared and children cannot readily select alternative resources. Children take great pleasure in singing and really enjoy using their imagination through dressing-up.

Children handle books carefully. They can recognise their names and clearly labelled displays help them to learn other familiar words. Although planned activities encourage children to practise their writing, there are missed opportunities for mark making within role play or for children to write their names on artwork.

Most of the children behave well and are busy and interested as they play. They count and sort animals and sing number rhymes. There are opportunities for children to measure with rulers. They enthusiastically water sunflower seedlings in the garden and observe how much they have grown. However, the older or more able children are offered insufficient challenge to sustain their interest, and opportunities to maximise children's learning and their mathematical skills are not fully exploited during and after snack time. Although the staff are evaluating individual activities they are not monitoring how effectively the sessions operate.

The children's progress towards the early learning goals is recorded by key workers. However, staff are not consistently dating their observations or using their notes to link each child's next steps to future planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident and play happily together. They respond well to the staff's expectations for good behaviour and have a clear understanding of the boundaries. They respond immediately and listen when staff need to gain their attention. Plenty of praise and encouragement is heard and staff sensitively negotiate any disputes between the children.

Children develop self-esteem and respect for others. They celebrate their friends' birthdays and become aware of wider society by learning about different festivals throughout the year. Books, posters and play equipment portray positive multi-cultural images. Systems are in place to support children with special needs.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. They are made to feel welcome and are kept informed about the setting through newsletters and written information displayed in the entrance hall. However, the prospectus for parents has not been reviewed and updated to reflect current practice. Children and their parents take part in fundraising and social outings. A popular book-share scheme operates. All the parents spoken to at the end of the sessions were happy with their child's care. However, some parents would like more information about their child's progress and achievements.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who have been vetted and have followed sound recruitment procedures. The children benefit from staff attending training to keep up-to-date with current childcare issues and trends. The pre-school operates a lunch club; this has been successful and is popular with both children and parents. However, due to a misunderstanding, registration requirements for the session times are not being met.

All the required documentation to promote the welfare, care and learning of the children is in place. There are clearly written policies and procedures which are shared with staff and parents.

The leadership and management of the pre-school are satisfactory overall, although there are some areas for improvement. There has been significant changes to both committee members and the staff over the past year. This has resulted in an unsettling time and has had an impact on the morale of the staff and the team spirit. Staff are showing a positive commitment to improve their professional development through training. A great deal of thought has been given to the future development of the pre-school and they are now going to admit children after they reach their second birthday into the setting.

The provision meets the needs of the children that attend the pre-school.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the pre-school has taken steps to improve the welfare and safety of the children. The committee members are in the process of completing checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Ofsted is now notified of any changes in staff. An operational plan has been developed to show how the staff, premises and equipment are used to meet the needs of the children. Fire safety procedures have been improved as the children practise emergency evacuation procedures more frequently and staff record and evaluate the efficiency of each fire drill. During each session the staff now plan a range of activities to develop the children's imagination and creativity.

Satisfactory improvement has been made following the last inspection for nursery education. The children have some opportunities to develop shape, space and measure with relation to height, length and weight. Assessment records have been developed to link directly to the stepping stones, although staff are not consistent when identifying the next steps of learning or when using their observations to inform future planning. A procedure has been implemented for staff to evaluate activities. However the quality of teaching and the best way to ensure the smooth running of the sessions are not currently monitored or evaluated.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received 2 complaints. The first complaint logged on 6 January 2005 listed concerns regarding Standard 1: Suitability, Standard 2: Organisation, Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play, Standard 7: Health, and Standard 14: Documentation. An unannounced visit was made to the pre-school on 18 January 2005. As a result 2 actions were set to ensure that Ofsted were notified of any changes in staff and committee members at the earliest opportunity and to ensure that all undertake relevant vetting procedures. The registered provider was also asked to review and update the operational plan, especially the risk assessment for control of hot drinks and the policies and procedures for smoking. A satisfactory response to these actions has been received.

The second complaint logged by Ofsted on 19 January 2005 was made regarding an incident witnessed by a parent in October 2004. The concerns related to Standard 1: Suitability, Standard 2: Organisation, Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play, Standard 11: Behaviour Management, Standard 12: Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers and Standard 13: Child Protection. The registered provider was asked to conduct an internal investigation. Following review of the internal investigation report Ofsted was satisfied that no further action was required on this matter. The registered person remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- review the organisation of the daily routine to ensure that, where two sessions are offered in any one day, there is a break between sessions with no children in the care of the provider
- develop further the range of learning opportunities offered to the younger children, for example by using the Birth to Three Matters framework
- review how lunch boxes are stored, particularly in hot weather.

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 use of time and resources in order to maximise children's learning. Consider how evaluation could be extended to ensure that teaching methods and activities are adapted to challenge and support children to achieve as much as they can
- continue to develop the assessment records so that staff consistently observe the children's progress and date their achievements. Consider how this information can effectively be shared with parents.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk