

Priorslee Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	208249
Inspection date	03 July 2007
Inspector	Olwen Pulker

Setting Address	Priorslee Avenue, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9NR
------------------------	---

Telephone number	01952 299979
-------------------------	--------------

E-mail	
---------------	--

Registered person	Priorslee 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?

Priorslee Pre-School opened in 1991. It operates from one main room in a community building in Telford, Shropshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:15. The group is closed on Wednesday afternoon.

There are currently 44 children from two years six months to five years on roll. Of these 37 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel in to work or live locally. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs five staff. All have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

There are appropriate procedures in place for ensuring that the space that children use is hygienic, for example, areas are cleaned daily, tabletops are wiped down and toys and resources are clean and in good condition. Children are learning good personal hygiene as they independently wash their hands after toileting and are learning to routinely do the same before eating. Staff take opportunities to remind children that it is very important that they clean their teeth daily to help keep them healthy. Children are protected from the risk of infection and cross-contamination through the effective implementation of the setting's policies and procedures, such as excluding children who are ill or infectious. A qualified first aider is always present and there is written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment in place for all children. This consent is available on site so staff have ease of access to it if required.

Children learn about healthy eating through topics, discussions and food tasting sessions. Some children say they like fruit; apples, bananas and strawberries being their favourites. They are provided with fruit occasionally but snacks generally consist of toast or biscuits which all the children enjoy. This does not encourage children to eat healthily. They have the choice of water or milk to drink although most have limited opportunities to develop their independence by pouring their own drinks.

Children have good opportunities for physical play both indoors and outdoors. There is a secure paved area and adjoining area of grass to the side of the building where the children have access to a varied selection of equipment such as a slide, small trampoline, wheeled toys and sand/water play. When weather conditions are unsuitable for outdoor play, staff ensure that a different physical activity is available daily indoors. Children eagerly take part in keep fit exercises and enthusiastically jump, hop, wiggle, shake and jog on the spot. They catch, throw and kick balls to help develop their coordination and are beginning to learn about the effect that physical activity has on their bodies as staff prompt them to feel their increased heart beats.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have good access to a varied range of well-maintained, good quality resources and activities. Children are able to choose from the resources placed in low-level storage units or access play equipment from the range that has been made available to them by staff. There is limited use of displays at child-height due to the building being a shared facility.

Information relating to child protection procedures is readily available and staff access training whenever courses become available. This helps to ensure that staff would know what to do if there was a concern about a child. Security and surveillance of children's arrival and departure is effective and all visitors to the group are required to sign the visitors book. Children develop an understanding of what to do in the event of evacuation through regular fire drills. Appropriate procedures available within the policy file, the covering of low-level electrical sockets and the lagging of hot water pipes in the areas used by children help ensure that children are safe. Sensitive and timely reminders from staff help children learn to keep themselves and others safe as they play and use the equipment in their daily routines.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are happy, content and occupied with a suitable range of activities which are planned by staff. They have time to enjoy their favourite activities, in particular physical play, role play, creative activities such as play dough, printing, cutting and gluing. They are becoming competent in the use of tools such as rolling pins, glue sticks and scissors. Children show a great interest in construction and use bricks to create birthday cakes complete with candles and cars which they manoeuvre around the road mat. They study plans with great concentration and follow the step-by-step instructions successfully to create models. Children proudly show the octopus, fish and spider they construct. Children enjoy listening to stories and enthusiastically join in singing songs of their choice such as 'Down in the jungle'. They enjoy good relationships with supportive staff and those who are new to the setting are gaining sufficient confidence to begin forming friendships with others. Children are developing independence and self-esteem by taking responsibility for tidying away toys and setting the tables for snack.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a generally secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and apply this knowledge to plan and deliver the curriculum. Consequently children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Written plans provide suitable guidance to staff about focused activities and what children are intended to learn. Staff undertake observations and assessments of the children and key workers use these to complete a stepping stones profile and produce an informative book for each child. These books contain an useful insight into children's attitude and aptitude as well as examples of their letter and number formation and craft work. Staff engage in children's play and challenge children by good use of questioning to extend their learning. Behaviour is well managed and this results in a caring environment for children. They are sufficiently confident and content to work and play independently or in groups. Staff interact well with children and provide a comfortable environment in which children are able to learn and develop. However the environment is generally not stimulating at low-level; there are few opportunities for children to see written words and numbers other than during focus activities. Also, focus activities are not formally evaluated to show if they are successful in their intent and therefore inform future planning.

Children are making good progress in early communication skills. They speak clearly and with confidence; sharing their news during group time and talking actively to both their peers and staff within their play. Children enjoy listening to stories; they sit well and listen with focus, eagerly contributing and responding to questions about the story as it is read. They extend their vocabulary as staff introduce words such as Eskimo and igloo as the story is read and children consolidate their learning as they recap what they have seen and heard at the end of the story. Children are able to help themselves to books from the selection available in the bookcase and on the window sill. They show respect for the books turning the pages carefully and putting them away after use. Older children recognise letters and confidently call out "e for elephant and f for fish and fun". Children have ample opportunities to practise their writing skills, write their names and form numbers with varying degrees of competency. Some older children write their names clearly in well-formed letters.

Children are beginning to count and use numbers well. Staff extend children's learning by introducing counting during free play and focus activities. Children confidently count the number of brick 'candles' and legs on the model spider and octopus. They count the number of paper circles they stick down to make their caterpillars. Some draw legs and count those.

Children are learning to recognise shapes such as circles and rectangles. Some older children are grasping the concept of addition and know that adding two cubes to five cubes will result in them having seven in total.

Children are introduced to a range of topics that help to develop their awareness of their environment and the world in which they live. They learn about living things as they observe the growth of flower and vegetable seeds which they have planted. They observe patterns as they use paint and crayons when creating vegetable, spore and leaf prints. Children develop a sense of time and place as they explore their local community and its history. They learn about the way people used to live; their homes, jobs, schooling, clothing and methods of transport and compare them with what they can see as they walk around the area, visiting the lake and the local shop. Children learn about the significance of different festivals and customs and taste foods from various countries. They have some opportunities to use information and communication technology through play equipment such as phones and a computer key board.

Children move confidently and are developing good coordination skills. Some handle a range of tools and small equipment well, such as scissors and pencils. They enjoy making attractive displays using a variety of different materials, such as cotton wool, tissue paper and card to develop their creativity. Their imagination is well developed as they play in the office using the keyboard and having imaginary telephone conversations with mummy and daddy or being doctors using the medical kit when treating their patients.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are content and happy in the setting and those who are new to the group are supported well by key workers to help them settle and feel secure. Behaviour is good, with staff using positive techniques well to support and encourage good behaviour or deal with unwanted behaviour. Children are beginning to learn about their own locality and other cultures and countries through well-planned activities and topics. Staff make good use of a local multi-cultural resource centre to ensure that the resources positively represent individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others. There are appropriate procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with staff maintaining positive relationships with outside agencies and working closely with parents. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Parents receive good information on how the setting operates and have access to the prospectus, policies and procedures. Daily verbal feedback and the sharing of individual profiles for all children ensure that parents are informed about their children's activities and progress. Staff seek parents' views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting. Regular newsletters and notice board displays keep parents informed of activities and forthcoming events. Parents are invited to become involved in their child's learning by sharing their skills within the group or support fund-raising activities. The partnership with parents and carers who receive nursery education funding is satisfactory. They receive clear information on the educational programme provided for their children. Planning sheets on the notice board keep parents abreast of the current activity and learning objectives. However, staff do not actively invite parents to become involved in their children's learning at home by extending the activities undertaken within the group. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress because staff share developmental records with them on request. An 'open-door' policy is maintained to enable parents to talk to staff if they wish to do so.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Policies and procedures clearly outline how the setting operates in practice. Most records are well-maintained and organised to ensure they are easily accessible when required. However, information contained in some policies, for example, the complaints and child protection policies, is not current. Consequently, parents are not being kept informed of changes and children's welfare is not fully safeguarded. Staff are aware that the present method of recording children's accidents does not promote confidentiality and are seeking alternative documentation to address this issue.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff are appropriately qualified and work well together as a team and this supports a happy, relaxed and caring environment for children. They are given opportunities to further develop their skills, for example, attending training in various aspects of early years childcare and education. Good child to staff ratios mean that children have good individual attention where required and this helps them to develop well. Two afternoon sessions a week have been set aside for the children who are due to start school in the coming term. These sessions allow children to experience a more focused learning environment and provide good opportunities for staff to encourage and support the older children in their writing and number skills. Good procedures are in place for ensuring that children are cared for by staff who have had appropriate experience, enjoy working with children and have completed appropriate checks. Staff meet each month to discuss issues and plan for children's learning. Staff appraisals by the managers are continual and informal, however, the managers themselves do not have appraisals to support their development.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure that the operational plan was finalised and made available to parents and to improve the children's hand washing facilities to promote good hygiene. A detailed operational plan is now in place and available on site for parents to view. To ensure that good standards of hygiene are maintained staff clean the toilet areas and provide liquid soap and clean handtowels.

In addition, the setting was asked to improve opportunities for children to engage in self-initiated activities. Time is given during each session for children to be involved in activities of their choice. Staff place a varied and interesting selection of resources on tables or on the floor for children to choose what they want to play with and have free movement between items of their choice. There is some low-level storage containing play resources and children are also able to select items from these units.

Staff also agreed to develop ways to support and increase challenge within a range of play and learning experiences, to older or more able children. They have successfully addressed this by setting similar tasks and varying the learning intentions for the different age groups within a focus activity. Hence, all children are essentially completing the same activity which is extended for older or more able children. Also those children starting school in the coming term attend two afternoon sessions a week when activities are much more structured to prepare them for school.

Finally, the setting was asked to develop systems to be used by the committee to support staff in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching methods employed. This has not taken place and remains a recommendation from this inspection.

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):

- continue to develop children's awareness of healthy eating by introducing more healthy snack options
- review policies and procedures to ensure that the information shared with staff and parents is up to date.

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):

- formalise evaluation of activities to inform future planning to meet the needs of individual children and provide more visible prompts for number and word recognition at child height to help promote children's mathematical and language development
- continue to develop ways of enabling parents to be involved in their children's learning
- develop systems to be used by the committee to support staff in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching methods employed.

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