

New Road Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221885
Inspection date	20 February 2008
Inspector	Susan Sykes
Setting Address	New Road CP School, The Pre-School Mobile, New Road, Whittlesey, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE7 1SZ
Telephone number	07773 405955
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Registered person	New Road 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?

New Road Pre-school opened in 1985. It operates from a mobile classroom on the site of the primary school. It is situated in Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 18 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11.30 term time only. The children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 20 children from three years old to under five on roll. Of these, 17 receive funding for nursery education. Children generally come from the local catchment area, although all children are welcome to attend. The pre-school currently supports three children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and one who speaks English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff, all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification or who are working towards it. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is protected as staff follow good practice to enhance this aspect of their care and development. They teach children the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines, such as washing hands after using the toilet or before eating, and provide all the equipment they need to wash their hands independently. Adults remain alert to reinforce good practice as necessary to ensure children undertake such tasks. A firm ethos of encouraging sick children to stay at home reflects the written policy and ensures their well-being as well as protecting the other children from cross-infection. All staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and a well-stocked first aid box ensures staff can respond to minor injuries.

Children increase their understanding about a healthy lifestyle. They grow vegetables, such as carrots and tomatoes, in the pre-school garden, which they then take home. They enjoy nutritious snacks during the session, such as fresh fruit or vegetables. Adults are vigilant to ensure they take account of the parents' wishes and the children's choices and dietary needs, ensuring children receive appropriate nutritional foods. Children develop their social skills through eating their snacks together although, snacks are eaten directly off the table top which exposes children to the risk of cross-contamination and does not consolidate their understanding of hygienic procedures. Children can access fresh drinking water whenever they need to, which helps them to respond to their body's needs and ensure they remain hydrated.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health, both indoors and out. They enjoy, for example, music and dance activities, as well as physical exercises indoors as they participate in energetic action songs. Children move around the premises safely avoiding hazards. Children have good opportunities to use small scale equipment safely to develop their finer manipulative skills, for example, threading, jigsaw puzzles and using scissors. Large scale equipment outdoors develops their large physical skills as they use, for example, the slide or trampoline with confidence. Children are keen to try and gain new skills as the adults have a good understanding of appropriate activities and the level of support individuals require, such as using the trampoline with adult supervision, if needed, and the children are enthusiastic to share their success as their self-confidence grows. They use scooters, bikes and 'ride-in' toys with confidence, manoeuvring around obstacles with ease, demonstrating an awareness of space.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents receive a very warm welcome from staff who ensure the environment is ready for them when they arrive. The activities and resources provided are generally clean, safe and appropriate for the children's age and ability. Appropriate safety precautions are in place, for example electric socket covers and a safety gate which prevents children from accessing the kitchen. A daily risk assessment identifies hazards which are then addressed before children attend. All visitors to the setting are closely monitored and a signing in system ensures all adults are accounted for and attending for a legitimate reason, safeguarding children. Fire drills are held regularly and these are recorded, evaluated and used to improve future evacuations, thereby promoting children's safety.

Children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe as, for example, they are asked not to run indoors in case they fall and hurt themselves and they show an understanding of the boundaries in place to keep them safe, for example they point out to others not to go on the pavement area of the playground as it is slippery and they could fall over and hurt themselves. These clear boundaries within the setting promote their safety are always followed by clear explanations for the required behaviour by staff so that children can fully understand the importance of such practices. Visits from outside agencies, for example fire safety officers, the police or lollipop lady, raise children's awareness of dangers in everyday life. This is further consolidated by activities within the setting such as promoting road safety making children aware of how to stay safe.

Children are protected from harm. All staff have a thorough understanding of child protection issues and their responsibilities in this area. Children's safety and well-being is promoted as staff remain vigilant with regard to existing injuries that children have from outside of the setting and record and use this information appropriately and confidentially. However, there is no clear written policy in place if an allegation is made against a member of staff which can compromise the effectiveness of procedures in such an event.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children separate well from their parents and carers as they come into the setting excitedly and are happy, secure and settle quickly into their routine. They feel a sense of belonging as they put their coats onto their named pegs and select an activity to participate in. Their daily experience at the pre-school is enhanced by staff who are kind and caring. Children feel welcome and valued as staff join in with their play and conversations, taking time to get to know each individual child. This creates a positive, caring environment where children receive consistent care. Children are confident and their self-esteem is bolstered as they are given praise and encouragement from staff, for example, as they actively tidy up together for snack time and help each other.

However, the organisation of the session can mean that some children are not actively engaged in play or learning experiences of their choice for sustained periods of time. For example, the snack time routine begins with a whole group story time, or children selecting a book to look at individually, and some children do not engage with this. This is followed by all the children going to the toilets to wash their hands, before sitting down for the food and drink. After eating, while still seated, children participate in whole group adult-led activities in which some children become disruptive. This routine can take a considerable amount of the session's time, meaning child-initiated play and learning opportunities are stifled. This may also impact on their self-esteem as they are frequently requested to sit down or told that they should be listening. Staff often prepare snacks and pour children's drinks for them which is a missed opportunity for children who could become more independent and develop self-help skills, given the chance to undertake these tasks themselves.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use it adequately and appropriately to plan a range of activities for children. Planning is undertaken weekly and includes the area of learning, for example 'small world' or role play, with a brief description of resources needed, such as 'fuzzy felts' or 'exercise stencils' for each day. Planning covers the six areas of learning with learning intentions linked

to the stepping stones. However, the learning intentions are not directly linked to the activities which can sometimes make it difficult to ascertain the specific target of the activity. Plans do lack detail to adapt the activity to encompass children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or more able children, and this is sometimes reflected in the practice. Staff regularly observe children and record their achievements in a variety of ways and these are generally used to plan the child's next steps.

Children's personal, social and emotional skills are being developed in the setting as they make independent choices, sit together at snack time and play. Children play well together as they negotiate scenarios in the home corner, re-enacting everyday life, and make sense of the world around them. They learn to take turns and share resources. Their self-esteem is effectively encouraged as staff praise their efforts, for example as children tidy up ready for snack time.

Children are developing secure communication skills as they engage in conversation with their friends and staff who actively listen. They discuss, for example, what they had for breakfast and this is extended further to encourage children to talk about other aspects of their life, developing language skills. The book corner is welcoming and inviting where children generally enjoy looking at books and sharing stories with staff and this develops competence in language and begins to form the early links to literacy. However, whole group story time is not effective in engaging all children who become disinterested and behaviour becomes more challenging. Children confidently use tools and resources to make marks for meaning, for example as they 'write' notes from a telephone conversation.

Children gain an understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy through counting and other activities. For example, at the play dough table, they begin to compare sizes and shapes, developing an understanding of mathematical concepts, or engage in other activities such as sequencing games. Cooking, water and sand activities develop children's sense of size, weight and capacity. Children demonstrate their understanding of numbers as they count the spots on dominoes and match them to the relevant digits. They build elaborate train tracks developing children's thinking and methods of problem solving.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed through resources and activities that explore cultures and celebrate festivals, such as Christmas or Chinese New Year, in a meaningful way. They begin to comprehend a sense of time as they watch the bulbs and seeds they have planted grow. A range of programmable toys and easy access to the computer build their understanding of information technology and children persist at simple programmes on the computer developing their concentration skills. A range of resources, such as beads, scissors, glue and pens, enables children to hone their manipulative skills.

Children's creativity is encouraged through a variety of mediums. For example they have opportunities to engage in role play, draw and paint freely and participate in music and dance activities where they can express themselves and develop their own ideas. This means children will learn to respond, explore and communicate their ideas using all of their senses.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the pre-school. They form positive relationships with their peers and staff who are caring, attentive, and listen well to the children. Staff respond promptly and sensitively to them and in turn, children are confident to approach them for support or reassurance. Children's independence is promoted as they move around freely and make their

choices of play during parts of the session and they are soon absorbed in their chosen activity. Children receive praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements and staff respond positively to children's interests, for example as a child sees an icicle hanging from the shed, staff respond by getting the icicle for him, and they talk together about how they are formed and what makes them melt, building on children's natural curiosity.

Activities are planned to highlight different festivals to increase children's awareness of other cultures, such as Diwali, Chinese New Year and Christmas. This enables the children to begin to develop a positive attitude to others. Children are familiar with the daily routine, for example as they all sit together for snack time or line up to go outside. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate intervention and referrals to suitable professionals outside the provision. One-to-one attention is given to meet generally meet the individual children's needs.

Children behave well and are polite as they respond to the praise and consistent guidelines set by staff. Staff treat the children with respect and listen to them, which encourages them to value others. The setting has a policy which outlines strategies of managing behaviour and the setting encourages good behaviour through age-appropriate strategies. Children are encouraged to share, play together and respect each other. They are given opportunities to appreciate other cultures and express themselves through a variety of mediums. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is being fostered.

Children benefit from the working partnership between their parents, carers and staff to provide effective care, for example, information regarding children's individual needs, such as allergies, is collated and recorded. This contributes towards maintaining their well-being and safety. Parents receive information about the setting in the regular news letters. Parents speak positively of the service the setting provides and of the staff in the setting. Children see positive relationships between staff and parents, supporting their emotional security. However, information for parents to contact the regulator with a concern or complaint is outdated making it difficult for parents to express concerns to Ofsted if needed.

Partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is satisfactory. Parents and carers receive an information pack which highlights specific aspects of the pre-school to help inform them of the day to day running and gives an overview of the areas of learning. There are notice boards in the main lobby which include information regarding the areas of learning, staff training certificates and other general information pertinent to the pre-school and Early Years. Newsletters provide information regarding the focus areas for the forthcoming term and information about other events. In addition, informal discussions provide opportunities to discuss children's progress as well as a written report at the end of each term. However, children's starting points for their education are usually ascertained in the pre-school and a continuous input from parents to inform the pre-school of the child's learning at home is sporadic which means parents do not become fully involved in their children's education. Parents do, however, report that their children enjoy nursery and they feel that they are kept well informed.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Regular staff meetings ensure staff are being suitably developed and their training needs for the effective running of the setting are met. This is fully supported by the manager and registered person of the setting making sure children are provided with appropriate care and

education. They have some understanding of the group's strengths and weaknesses and have generally responded well to past recommendations to improve their practice. However, deployment of staff and the structure of the session can impact on the child's learning and play experiences in a less than positive way. Toys and activities are put away while children participate in whole group story time where some children become disengaged and can disrupt the activity for those who want to listen. Furthermore children are encouraged to participate in activities of the staff's choice rather than taking the lead in their own learning experiences. For example at the snack table after eating all the children are requested to remain in their seats and participate in a whole group activity. However, some children become restless and begin to disrupt this part of the session. This does not fully support their own or their peer's educational experiences.

There are robust procedures in place to ensure that all adults who look after the children are suitable to do so. The pre-school always maintains staff to child ratios, which ensure children receive appropriate levels of individual attention. This enables them to settle and become confident, independent learners. Staff regularly attend training to increase their knowledge and skills and therefore improve the quality of what is provided for the children. However some of the policies and procedures which are required for the efficient management of the pre-school are not up to date or in line with current requirements. For example the complaints procedure contains an out of date address and telephone number for parents to contact Ofsted should they wish and there is no written procedure for administering medication. These policies and procedures do not fully underpin the care provided for the children that the registered person is responsible for.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager and staff are committed and professional in their approach to providing children with early years play and learning experiences. They work closely together to ensure the day to day running of the pre-school goes smoothly and provide an environment for children to be happy, supporting their sense of well-being. Staffing ratios are maintained throughout the session ensuring children are well supervised and supported during play activities. However, the structure of the session and deployment does not always effectively support children within whole group activities, for example story time at the end of the session where children become disengaged as staff tidy up. Furthermore the staff in the pre-school have limited time to undertake tasks such as planning, which can hinder the effectiveness of children's learning experiences. The manager has worked with the local authority in the past to develop the quality of nursery education and has a positive attitude towards implementing strategies to enhance their practice, which benefits the children's care and learning.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to introduce an induction and appraisal system for staff and ensure good hygiene practices are re-enforced regarding hand washing. They were also asked to further extend activities in relation to communication, language and literacy and mathematics to extend the children's skills and ensure that creative activities in relation to exploring media and materials are more child-led.

The provider now has an induction and appraisal system in place for staff. Staff monitor children to ensure good hygiene practices are re-enforced regarding hand washing for example before snacks or after using the toilet. Children have access to activities, resources and opportunities

that develop the four competencies of communication, language and literacy - reading, writing, listening and speaking. Mathematical development is supported in both planned and spontaneous activities for differing abilities which extend children's skills.

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 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 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):

- ensure that the complaints procedure is in line with current requirements so that parents are aware of how to contact Ofsted if they have a concern or complaint
- ensure all relevant records, policies and procedures relating to the day to day running of the pre-school are up-to-date, readily accessible on the premises and available for inspection.

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 planning procedures to ensure that staff are clear about learning objectives and how to adapt activities for children of different stages of ability, and that information is used effectively to plan children's next steps
- ensure that the deployment of staff at whole group times, such as prior to snack time and at the end of the session, is effective in supporting the children's care and learning and consider the organisation of group activities, including story-time, to make learning opportunities for children more effective.

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