

South Cerney Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101528
Inspection date	28 November 2007
Inspector	Shirley Ann Jackson
Setting Address	Ann Edwards Primary School, Berkeley Close, South Cerney, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 5UW
Telephone number	01285 860 340
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Registered person	The Trustees of South Cerney Pre-School Playgroup
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?

South Cerney Pre-School Playgroup was established in 1969. They moved to their new purpose-built building in 2006. This is situated within the grounds of the Church of England School in the village of South Cerney, near Cirencester, Gloucestershire. It is run by a management committee, and led by a pre-school leader, who is accountable for the overall organisation and the daily management of the group. There is an outside play area available for outdoor play.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open during term time only. Sessions run Monday to Friday from 08.55 - 11:55, and on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12:50 - 15:05.

There are currently 41 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Currently, six staff are employed to work directly with the children on various days of the week. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are attending training. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children follow established routines to begin to learn about positive hygiene practises. Older children confidently and independently attend to their own personal hygiene needs. Children are aware that they need to wash their hands before they eat snack. However, children wash their hands in shared washbasins of water and staff do not routinely talk to children about the reasons for washing their hands. Children's health is promoted as all staff hold current fist aid certificates and a first aid box is readily accessible. Clear procedures are in place for recording accidents and administering medication.

Children are offered a variety of healthy and nutritious snacks during their time at the group. This is offered in plentiful supplies for the children. However, snack is offered quite late during the session and is sometimes offered close to lunch time. Staff do not routinely talk to the children about the food they are eating and why it is good for them. Drinking water is freely accessible for the children to independently help themselves.

Children have the opportunity to choose if they want to play outdoors as the playroom has direct access to the outdoor play area. This means that children enjoy fresh air and exercise during every session. When outdoors children play happily on wheeled toys, adjusting the speed and changing direction to avoid obstacles. Children have the opportunity to show increasing control in using climbing equipment, such as the wooden climbing equipment. They use one-handed tools and equipment, such as glue spreaders. Children begin to understand that equipment and tools have to be used safely, for example, using knives to cut up vegetables to make soup.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in new purpose-built premises. The areas used are clean, bright and well maintained with lots of natural light. The premises are secured when all of the children are present. This ensures that children cannot leave un-noticed and prevents unauthorised entry. The room used is made welcoming to children with displays of their work and photographs on the walls. However, many of these are at adult height so children's view of them is restricted. Children are supervised well as staff have identified potential risks and minimised them to allow children to move around safely.

Children play with a suitable range of resources and equipment. These are good quality and are well maintained. Staff ensure that toys are safe and suitable for the age and stage of development for the children attending. A number of resources are stored in low level storage units, but not all of these are labelled to encourage children's independent selection. Staff set out some resources for children before they arrive. Children are also able to independently choose what they would like to play with from the accessible units.

All staff hold current child protection certificates so children's welfare is protected. Staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect. They are aware of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child in their care. A child protection policy is in place and is shared with parents via the welcome pack.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and enjoy coming to the group. Staff help to settle any children who are unsure and parents are encouraged to stay to settle their child. Children build positive relationships with staff and seek them out if they need help or feel unsure. Staff have not attended any training on the Birth to three matters framework, although they have looked through the pack. Planning for the younger children is not currently in place, staff use the same plans as those for the pre-school children. Observations and assessments of the younger children are in their infancy and are not currently used to plan for the next stage in the children's learning.

Younger children learn social skills and enjoy being with and talking to adults as they take part in registration time. They begin to use language as a means of sharing their feelings, for example, when something troubles them. Children learn new words, such as what the season is. They listen well at large group times, for example, when listening to the content of a letter from Father Christmas. Children have opportunities to re-enact familiar scenes with the help of props, such as those in the role play area. They enjoy using other forms of communication, such as painting and craft activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum as they have attended relevant training to support them. The level of challenge offered is sufficient to interest most children in the activities offered and enables them to make suitable progress. The activities and experiences offered cover the six areas of learning and mostly meet the needs of individual children. However, staff do not link focused activities to an area of learning, this makes it difficult to ensure all are covered evenly. Staff observe and assess the children's progress, but these do not fully reflect the children's abilities, nor are they linked to the stepping stones. Consequently more able children are not always sufficiently challenged. Children enjoy coming to the group. They are sufficiently confident and self-assured to work and play independently or in small groups. They respond appropriately to realistic adult expectations for acceptable behaviour so that learning can take place. Children show interest in a range of purposeful, first-hand experiences and activities. They have suitable levels of independence and curiosity. Overall, children make sound progress in their learning and achievement given their capability and starting points.

Children talk confidently to their friends and familiar adults. They respond to simple instructions, such as tidy up and registration times. Children listen to others in small groups when the conversation interests them. Some children are able to distinguish one sound from another, for example, sounding out the initial letter of their name. They begin to show an awareness of rhyme in spoken words. Children listen to stories in large and small groups. They handle books carefully, hold them the correct way up and turn the pages. Children draw and paint, sometimes giving meaning to their marks. Some children begin to draw lines and circles using gross motor movement. However, mark-making resources are limited in the role play and outdoor areas.

Children show an interest in numbers and counting, for example, counting the number of adults present. They willingly attempt to count with some numbers in the correct order. Some children recognise numerals one to nine, when looking at the date. However, staff do not use everyday routines to extend more able children's abilities or to build on what they already know. Children use size language such as 'big' and 'little'. Some children show awareness of shape in the environment, for example, the child who drew 'a perfect circle'.

Children explore objects. They show an interest in why things happen and how things work, for example, taking apart the runner bean pods to see what was inside. Children show an awareness of change as they look at the weather each day during registration. They investigate construction materials, such as bricks. Children have the opportunity to try out a range of tools and techniques safely, such as the woodworking tools. They have the opportunity to show an interest in the world in which they live as they care for plants in the raised flowerbeds. However, there are limited opportunities for children to learn how to operate simple equipment.

Children begin to differentiate colour, such as the colour of snow in the book. They sing a few simple, familiar songs. Children explore and learn how sounds can be changed by playing with musical instruments and with the 'musical tree' in the outdoor play area. They use available resources to create props to support role play, for example, play food and dolls. Children engage in imaginative play based on their own first-hand experiences, such as, taking the 'baby' for a walk. They have opportunities to show an interest in what they see, touch and feel as they play with play dough, gloop and shaving foam.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about different cultures, backgrounds and religions as they celebrate different festivals through activities. The group has a suitable range of resources which positively reflect the wider community, helping children to become aware of diversity. Children find out about the local community as they go for walks to the library, post box and around the school field. The group can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as staff have training and experience in this area. This enables all children to take part in the activities offered at their own level and in their own way.

Younger children separate from their main carer with effective support from staff. Older children separate from their main carer with confidence. Children show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities, such as choosing what they want to do at free play time. They show confidence in linking up with others for support and guidance, such as playing cars together. Children have a sense of belonging as they register themselves when they arrive for the start of the session. They feel safe and secure and demonstrate a sense of trust, for example, cuddling the staff. Children show a sense of pride in their own achievement, such as the child showing staff her 'snake' picture.

Children's behaviour at the group is generally good. Staff are positive role models for the children. They have a calm, re-assuring manner and respect the children and their individuality. Staff use praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour and to build children's self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are given clear information about the group and the curriculum they follow through the welcome pack which they all receive. Ongoing information is shared through newsletters, a notice board and by talking to staff on

a regular basis. Parents opinions are sought through regular questionnaires to ensure that parents are satisfied with the care and education offered. Parents are involved in their child's learning by helping on rota duty and sharing library books with their children. However, parents are only asked to complete the required paperwork for their children and do not have an active role in their child's developmental records.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The person in charge of the setting is appropriately qualified and experienced to provide care for young children. She is supported by an enthusiastic staff team and a supportive committee. The staff team are committed to training to aid their professional development and to benefit the children attending the group.

Staff work well together as a team and are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the group. The setting uses the key worker system, and parents spoken to are aware of who this is. Staff make effective use of the accommodation and resources, such as giving children the choice to play indoors or outdoors. However, snack is sometimes offered quite late in the session, close to lunchtime. Organisation of the indoor space enables children to take the lead in some of their own play as they can independently select resources they would like to play.

All legally required documentation is in place and is well maintained. The daily register provides an accurate record of the times of attendance of children, staff and visitors. The group's registration certificate is clearly displayed so parents have information about the conditions of registration. However, some of the group's policies are brief and do not reflect the group's daily practice.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. Staff regularly review their practice following training and support visits from the local authority. Recommendations and points for improvement following the last inspection have been tackled in a positive manner to help the group improve the service it offers children and parents. The group's development plan to address areas for improvement is in it's infancy due to recent changes in the committee and moving to the new premises. Some links have been built with the school where the group operates, helping to ease children's transition in to school. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the lase card inspection the group agreed to complete the operational plan and make sure that any poisonous plants are made inaccessible to the children.

The group has now moved to new premises and the outdoor play area has plants which are safe for the children. The group has all legally required documentation in place, along with all other necessary paperwork to make up the operational plan.

At the last education inspection the group agreed to continue to review, develop and extend the children's assessment system to further support and provide ongoing evidence of children's progress and achievements.

Staff have continued to review the methods used to observe and assess the children's progress and achievements. However, there is scope to improve this further.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 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):

- ensure that hand washing procedures help to prevent the spread of infection
- consider the timing of snack time to ensure that children do not get too hungry during the session
- develop planning, observations and assessments for the younger children

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 to link it to the areas of learning and include differentiation to help the more able children move on to the next stage in their learning
- continue to effectively develop observations and assessments, linking them to the stepping stones
- involve parents in their child's assessments to find their starting points and continual development

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