

Little Hoots

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	510075
Inspection date	07 March 2008
Inspector	Angela Cole
Setting Address	Grangefield Approach, Voxwell Lane, Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 8GL
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Registered person	Grangefield Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Grangefield Pre-School was registered in 2001. It operates from a purpose-built annexe situated within Grangefield Primary School, Bishops Cleeve. It is currently de-registering as a charity and is run by the leader who is line-managed by the school head. A maximum of 30 children may attend the setting at any one time. The group offer pre-school sessions on weekdays during term time from 09.15 to 15.15 and before and after-school care from 08.00 to 09.00 and 15.30 to 17.30. A holiday club operates in school holidays.

There are currently 81 children aged from three years to under eight years on roll and children up to the age of 11 years are also accepted. Of these, 50 children receive funding for early education. Children come from within the local community. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs seven members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a further qualification. The group has close links with the adjacent school. The pre-school is a member of the Gloucestershire Playgroup and Toddler Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the general cleaning programme for the premises, furniture and equipment. They willingly wash after toileting using individual towels. However, they do not learn good personal hygiene when eating without having washed or having used hand gel, rather than soap and running water. A first aider is on hand to ensure that children are treated appropriately following accidents and suitable records are maintained. Despite the contents of the first aid box being regularly checked, some items are out of date, which compromises the children's health. Children's medication is stored safely out of reach, though consistency of care is not promoted by ad hoc arrangements for recording consent and administering. Children benefit from the clear policy about excluding those who are ill or infectious and staff make sure parents are made aware of this.

Older children benefit from vigorous physical exercise as they play outdoors after school whenever this is possible. They negotiate the challenging, balancing equipment and play energetic ball games. Pre-schoolers enjoy daily fresh air in the playground, when gardening and going for walks to the wooded area. They have weekly exercise in the hall, for example, negotiating an obstacle course, though do not have free access to challenging physical equipment or to outdoor play. Children receive varying encouragement to gain personal independence skills, for example, to dress and pour their own drink. They gain appropriate dexterity with small tools, for example, to cut and draw.

They understand the importance of access to drinking water so they do not become thirsty. In pre-school, they eat the nutritious foods provided, including fruit and healthy lunches, though do not regularly talk about the value of healthy foods. Parents are not given specific guidance on healthy eating for the content of lunch boxes. At the out-of-school clubs, children enjoy ample quantities of food, though they often eat refined foods, including white breads and high fat spread. The foods comply with all special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit as the building is self contained, well maintained, kept at an appropriate temperature and secure for pre-schoolers. The toilet facilities are integral, so children visit these safely. During pre-school sessions when the smaller room is not used, children do not have ample space to play in the main room. The environment includes outdoor spaces where children move more freely, including playgrounds and the wood. The group owns appropriate ranges of quality toys and equipment that are suitable for the ages and stages of the children. Most are in good repair, though some books are worn. Young children can safely access some resources for themselves, including those for drawing, small world play and construction.

Staff have a suitable awareness of safety as access to the provision is monitored to keep children safe. They are vigilant when children arrive, depart and play outdoors, so that none leave unsupervised. Children move safely indoors as possible risks are identified and reduced; formal risk assessment is not completed for some outdoor areas, nor for outings. They begin to learn how to keep themselves safe during regular fire practices and from listening to the road safety

person. They sometimes hear staff explaining, for example, what may happen when a soft toy is thrown.

The staff safeguard and promote children's welfare and have all the required procedures in place. There is a sound programme to ensure that all staff receive up-to-date child protection training and information. Staff are familiar with, and actively refer to, the child protection policy and procedures so they have a comprehensive understanding of child protection. Any issues are dealt with sensitively and effectively, ensuring the welfare of the children and families concerned.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time in the group. Staff observe their play and so are generally aware of their needs. Pre-school children generally feel valued and safe so they concentrate on their initial activities for a long time. However, their involvement and independence are not best supported by breaks in routine and when activities, such as story and show time, are taken by few staff with all of the children. The range and balance of activities helps children to make satisfactory progress in all areas of their development. Children have some choices and access a selection of resources as staff have begun to develop aspects of the room layout.

At the out-of-school clubs, children are happy and relaxed. They confidently access resources in storage so they make satisfactory progress in each area of child development. Children contribute their ideas to the varied, holiday-club programme, though during term times, staff offer few ideas so they tend to do similar activities each day. Children enjoy the after-school outdoor facilities, including ball games and the fixed equipment for climbing and balancing. Indoors, they are keen to draw and ask for table games to play with their friends.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The leader has an effective understanding of the Foundation Stage, though other staff have a varied knowledge of the early learning goals and of how children learn. They follow a clear system of planning based upon topics and suitable stepping stones, but this does not clearly link to assessment of the needs of children currently in the group or to their play interests. Staff use some appropriate teaching methods, including a balance of free play and adult-led activities. They sometimes suggest small group tasks, for example, to extend children's mathematical understanding. However, the routine only offers short periods for children to initiate their own exploration and staff do not always base their questions about what the child is doing. As a result, children are not appropriately challenged, for example, to think further, to do things for themselves, and to learn to manage their own behaviour in large groups. The pre-school owns a wide range of resources. However, children do not regularly access items from storage to use for their own ideas, for example, to create and construct indoors and outdoors. Staff use effective methods to help those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to progress.

Children make satisfactory progress in speaking, for example, at 'show and tell' and they learn a few new words to extend their vocabulary. However, the noise level in the main room is generally too high for them to be engaged in in-depth conversation or to freely express their ideas. They listen to instructions, though younger children are not fully involved in whole group stories. Children show some awareness of rhyme and rhythm, enjoy looking at picture and information books and recognise their first names. They confidently draw and give meaning

to their pictures, for example, of 'a baby bear that dropped things on the floor', though are not encouraged to 'name' work in their own way from a young age. Children's basic understanding of numbers is suitably consolidated in routines that include counting those in their group and recognising the corresponding figure. Some children show curiosity about numbers in comments such as, 'I'm three', though do not regularly count as they play. Children effectively use shape and size words in practical situations, for example, as they look at a heart-shape book and build the 'biggest' model.

Children regularly talk of family events, and learn of different celebrations from parents, including Diwali. They explore sound-related objects and a natural material each day, though other investigations, for example, in cooking or about animals, are occasional. They design with paper shapes and construction materials, using familiar techniques and tools. They use electronic toys confidently and participate in weekly sessions at the school's computer suite. They notice some features of the local environment as they go to the dentist, enjoy visitors including the fire and police services, and gain a sense of time through seasonal walks. Children explore some different materials as they mix paints, chalk on black paper and feel different textures, including sand and coloured icing for sugar mice. They play instruments and sing loudly to explore how sounds change, but their response to favourite songs is varied. They begin to use imagination in role-play at the 'vets' and become engrossed in play with different-sizes figures and toy vehicles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are individually supported to settle as they arrive by caring staff. Older children can relax and 'chill out' and there are plenty of laps available for the younger ones. At pre-school, staff notice children's needs but do not always react to support them, for example, in large group situations when young ones are disturbed by loud sounds. Children begin to think of others as they support various charities. Staff have satisfactory regard to children's individual backgrounds as resources give children experience of individuals from the wider community for them to develop a positive attitude to others.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn to be well behaved during free play, polite and to manage aspects of their own behaviour. Staff are clear in their expectations and use sincere encouragement and praise. As a result, children show a good awareness of rules so they learn to play with each other, to share and to take turns. At the after-school club, the different ages get on well with each other and older children spontaneously help younger ones at their games. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported in close liaison with their parents and other agencies.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Families feel welcome so that parents speak well of the group. They receive a quality, information pack that includes all of the pre-school's policies. Some information about the Foundation Stage is available on typed sheets and in photograph albums, though these are not prominently displayed. Staff ensure that carers are told about significant events, such as how well a child settles. However, key persons do not make regular contact with families and there is no information for parents about what children have done that day. Family members say that staff are friendly and approachable for them to ask about the children. However, there is no system to regularly share children's records of achievement or to include parents' comments whilst the children are at the pre-school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who are qualified and experienced. There are suitable systems for appointing new adults, though staff's ongoing suitability is not checked. Non-vetted persons are not left in sole charge of children. Generous ratios of staff are on the premises though the key group system is not well established for younger children to have consistency of care and learning support from specific adults. Children focus well on their chosen activities and work well around each other in limited, indoor space, though pre-school routines and groupings are not best managed for their involvement and independence.

The pre-school is revising some of its policies and procedures to show more detail, including the fire log. All legally required documents to foster children's health and safety are maintained and stored confidentially in the office area. The group has sheets to set up a log for any complaint to include the necessary information. The before-school and pre-school registers are clear, though are not completed as soon as children arrive and depart.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Children benefit from the chairperson's steady support and clearly defined roles of staff members. The manager assesses the pre-school's strengths and areas for development, including the need for frequent meetings and extending personal development through regular appraisal of staff. The group has a clear system to monitor the Foundation Stage curriculum by highlighting aspects of the early learning goals. The leadership is willing to seek advice and is committed to improvement through working out a programme to act on the information achieved. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the setting improved some written policies and its information for parents and staff. The group has developed the policies for child protection, complaints, students/volunteers and behaviour to reflect more aspects of group care and provide clear information for participating adults. This has had a positive effect on the operational plan for the children's welfare.

The previous education inspection required the pre-school to improve provision for children's physical development, their communication, language and literacy and staff understanding of how to support children's independence and positive behaviour. Children have regular opportunities for physical development in the hall and frequent action songs; they often go outside, for example, to control wheeled toys on the playground, dig the garden and walk in the wooded area. Staff have developed some opportunities for children to develop their early reading and mark-making skills. Children have free access to some books and paper, and a drawing activity is regularly arranged, such as drawing with water-based pens and chalking on large pieces of black paper. The development of children's early language skills remains an area for further improvement. Adults are more aware of how to develop children's independence and of methods that support positive behaviour. For example, children access some storage and staff often use praise to develop individual children's self esteem. The developments made have had a positive impact on children's learning, though these remain areas for further improvement regarding the layout of the resources and management of learning in groups.

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 the 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

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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 good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing and that the first aid box and its contents comply with Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations
- assess the risks to children in relation to all outdoor areas and outings and take action to minimise these
- ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking the ongoing suitability of staff to work with children and that the system for registering children's attendance that shows their hours of attendance is completed without delay.

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 and assessment procedures so that all staff are clear about the learning objectives, including those in communication, language and literacy, and how to adapt activities for children of different stages of ability so information is used effectively to plan for their interests and what they need to learn next
- improve the routine so children have independent access to a wide range of indoor and outdoor resources and to activities, play opportunities and first-hand experiences which allow them to build on their natural curiosity as learners (also applies to care)
- extend the information for parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum and ensure they have regular opportunities to share and contribute to children's records during their time at pre-school.

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