

Charfield Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY221221
Inspection date	19 October 2007
Inspector	Linda Janet Witts
Setting Address	Foundation Room Charfield Primary School, Wotton Road,, Charfield, Glos, GL12 8TG
Telephone number	0786 6049115
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Registered person	The Trustees of Charfield 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?

Charfield Pre-School has been open since 1967. It operates from the Foundation Room situated in Charfield Primary School. The pre-school serves the local area and can care for up to 20 children aged two to five years. The group accepts children from the age of two-years-nine-months and currently has 39 children on roll, of whom 30 are funded three and four-year-olds. The group welcomes children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language.

The group is open term time only. Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 11.45 and Monday to Thursday from 12.00 to 14.30.

The pre-school is run by a voluntary management committee. A team of five staff is employed. Parents assist staff on rota duty. The group receives support from an advisory teacher and Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is mostly promoted well. They are well nourished, enjoying nutritious, healthy and varied snacks. For example, they have home cooked bread and a choice of fruit. Children bring packed lunches when they attend afternoon sessions. Leaflets on healthy lunches are sent home to encourage parents to send lunches that promote healthy eating. The children have individual cartons of milk to drink with their snack and bring bottled drinks from home that they can access as they wish during the session. Children sit together at snack-time and enjoy listening to a story. Lunch time is a sociable occasion when children sit with staff to eat and chat.

Children learn to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. They can access tissues to wipe their noses and routinely wash their hands after messy play and before they eat. Children know that hand-washing serves to remove germs. For example, a child says, 'germs can make us poorly if they get into our tummies'. In the event of a child becoming upset, unwell or sustaining an injury staff act promptly to minimise their distress. A fully trained first aider is present at each session. Parents are routinely asked to give permission for staff to seek emergency advice or treatment for their children and to permit staff to administer medication, if necessary.

Visitors to the group provide further opportunities for children to learn about good health. For example, they are visited by a health visitor and dentist. The dentist shows them how to take care of their teeth and the children have fun, examining the teeth of the dentist's dragon puppet. They receive written information about teeth cleaning and a timer to encourage children to clean their teeth effectively at home.

Children develop their physical skills as they go about their play. They manoeuvre around the room avoiding obstacles. They carry resources between activities and show respect for the personal space of others during group activities. In fine weather children are able to use the newly created garden area. Here children can pedal and propel tricycles, scooters and sit-in vehicles. They can practise their ball control, throwing and catching skills. They can also climb and slide on the equipment sited on a bark safety surfaced area. Weekly physical education sessions are held in the school hall. The use of the outdoor area is not incorporated into activity planning, therefore, although children enjoy their time outside, the area is not used to its full potential.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure environment. Children are brought into the pre-school building and delivered to their waiting parents at the end of each session. Children are supervised closely by the vigilant staff. Indoors the play room is checked daily to ensure that it is safe for use. A risk assessment checklist is used for this purpose. Safety measures are taken to prevent children from leaving unsupervised, accessing the kitchen and store cupboard. The risk assessment does not fully highlight, to staff, the particular risks to children's safety and action to minimise them. It does not cover use of the garden area or school hall.

Children learn to keep themselves safe by following staff instructions and through group discussions. They walk safely, in line, as they move between the pre-school building and garden area, across the school playground. Regular fire drills help to familiarise children with emergency evacuation procedures. They also learn how to keep safe from visitors to the group, such as, police officers.

The pre-school room is organised so that children can move safely between activities. A variety of resources are set out for children to access. These are in a good state of repair and suited to the children's different stages of development. Children are encouraged to play an active role in tidying up, helping to maintain a safe play environment.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through the recruitment and vetting procedures for staff. Visitors' identity is checked and a record of their attendance made. Staff demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. The group's policy contains out-of-date information and does not include informing the regulator in the event of an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy themselves at the pre-school. They come in confidently and are familiar with the group's routine. They relate well to one another and are relaxed in the company of the staff. Children are interested in the activities offered to them. These include group activities and those chosen for themselves from the selection of activities set out for them to choose from. Children under the age of three years, play alongside the older children happily. Planning does not differentiate for the younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Children benefit from the practitioners' enthusiasm and engage in some worthwhile activities and experiences. The leader has a developing understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and the new Early Years Foundation Stage. She is working to encourage other staff to attend training to improve their knowledge of the curriculum frameworks. A key worker system is used and each key worker makes assessments of the progress of children in their group. However, there is no systematic approach to assessment and information gathered is not always used effectively to inform future plans. As a result, plans do not show differentiation for the children's differing stages of development and some children are not sufficiently challenged by the activities offered. Plans incorporate each area of learning but do not give sufficient attention to aspects of these where children's learning is more limited.

Staff manage the children and their behaviour well, creating a happy environment, conducive to learning. Staff interact well with the children and initiate plenty of conversation. They understand the benefits of using visual images and props to aid communication for all children. They introduce some mathematical language but do not make full use of practical opportunities to introduce ideas and concepts, for example, simple calculation and problem-solving. The play space offers areas for table top activities, 'messy play' and floor activities. Storage of equipment and resources belonging to the after-school club, who share the premise, reduces the amount of available play space. There are some displays of children's work, posters and charts that enhance the environment. Resources, such as, dressing-up clothes and a small range of books are readily accessible. Writing implements, creative materials and other resources are not readily

available for children to use as they wish. The garden is not used to its full potential. It is not routinely incorporated into activity plans, as an integral part of the children's learning environment. When children do go outside they are able to develop their physical skills well, using the equipment and resources provided. Children are keen to participate in activities and are making satisfactory progress across most of the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Most children communicate with confidence. They ask questions, recall experiences, make their needs known and offer suggestions to others during the course of their play. Children see some print used as labels and are learning to recognise their own names. Picture cards serve to remind children to look and listen. The children enjoy books shared with adults, as individuals, in small or large groups. They listen intently to stories and show interest in the illustrations. Children have opportunities to mark-make when painting, exploring foam, chalking and during drawing activities. Children are sometimes offered pencils if requested, but writing implements are not readily accessible to them, due to safety concerns of some staff. Children listen to sounds, such as, environmental noises in a sounds lotto game and have other opportunities to develop their listening skills and sound recognition.

Children aged three and four years demonstrate an interest in numbers and counting. They join in group counting and some know the number that comes next after a given number. Some children recognise simple shapes and can say how many sides and corners different shapes have. They use mathematical language, such as, 'big', 'small' and 'long'. Children are introduced to positional language, for example, as they complete a large floor puzzle, as a group with the leader. Children have few practical activities to compare groups of objects, to problem-solve and calculate.

Children are able to investigate a variety of natural and man-made materials. They participate in cooking activities, explore clay, shaving foam and corn flour 'gloop'. There is a goldfish in the pre-school room and children look closely when they are introduced to a hedgehog. A small area of the garden is used for children to plant flowers and vegetables. Children talk about the weather, making observations through the windows and recalling what it is like as they travel to pre-school. Topics, such as, 'people that help us', introduce children to different people and their job roles. Some children talk about the jobs their parents do and they learn about the roles of visitors, such as, a dentist, police officers and health visitor. Religious festivals are celebrated and children see some positive images of different cultures and disability. Counting is also sometimes done in French or Spanish. This introduces children to the wider community. The three and four-year-olds are keen to use the computer. Some children demonstrate very good computer skills. They can manipulate the mouse and complete simple paint programmes. More able children can even print out their finished work unaided. Children construct with manufactured construction resources, on small and large scale, using their own design ideas.

Children develop their fine motor skills as they carry out activities, such as, making peg patterns, threading, decorating biscuits and using 'tap-a-shape' resources. They try to put on their own coats and to open packaging on items in their lunch boxes. Children mould play-dough, effecting change upon it with their hands and plastic tools. Children are not encouraged to learn how to use knives and scissors safely, as staff spread toppings on children's food and are reluctant to allow children to access scissors without very close supervision.

Children use their imagination as they go about their play. They like to engage in role-play based on their own first-hand experiences. They dress up and utilise available resources as props. Sometimes they ask staff for pretend money, so that they can go 'shopping' or use it

their 'travel agency'. Children paint and draw and are introduced to different creative techniques, during adult-led art activities. They enjoy the sensory experience of mixing paint with their hands and hand-printing. Children cannot create spontaneously using their own ideas, as resources to enable this are not readily available. Children join in singing and action rhymes enthusiastically.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and their parents or carers are warmly welcomed into the pre-school by the friendly staff team. Children are happy to attend the group. They are sociable and talk happily with their friends, staff and other adults, including those unfamiliar to them. Children's independence is promoted. They are encouraged to try things for themselves, such as, putting on their coats, washing their hands, helping themselves to drinks and plates at snack-time, and helping to tidy away resources.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is fostered. Children understand the boundaries for behaviour within the setting. They receive plenty of meaningful praise and encouragement which fosters their self-esteem. The children are well-mannered and the adults are good role models. Children of all ages sit patiently during group activities, snack and lunch-time and take turns at activities, such as, when using the computer. Children are helped to consider diversity. They have the use of books and small world resources that show positive images of ethnicity, gender and disability. Planned activities, such as, celebrations of religious festivals, introduce children to different cultures.

There are currently no children attending who have English as an additional language. None of the children have learning difficulties or disability. The group is fully committed to inclusion and welcomes all children. The leader works closely with the local area special educational needs coordinator to improve her own knowledge and to ensure that she is able to recognise developmental problems early, to offer appropriate support and work in partnership with parents and any professionals involved in children's care.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. This partnership contributes significantly to children's well-being and gives children confidence to form secure and happy relationships with the staff. Parents receive information about the pre-school provision and policies. Some of the policies lack information. For example, the complaints procedure does not include any timescales or correct details of the regulator. There is a parent notice-board where parents can see plans for the week. A suggestion box is situated in the entrance hall to encourage feedback from parents. Parents receive verbal feedback about how their children have been at pre-school. Annual parents' evenings are held to talk to parents about children's progress and parents can look at their children's progress records. Parents are encouraged to join in fund-raising events and to help the group. For example, the recent 'ground force day' to re-vamp the garden. Some parents help out regularly and gain an insight of the children's activities and learning experiences. However, staff do not actively seek to involve all parents in their children's learning. Parents are not asked to make initial or ongoing comments about their children to assist staff in the assessment of where children are in their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The pre-school staff work together to ensure that children enjoy their time at the group. They have high regard for the well-being of all children and staff deployment contributes to children's good safety, enjoyment and ability to take an active part in the setting. Each session is structured to enable children to engage in adult-led and group activities, and also free-play activities when children choose from a range of activities set out. In fine weather children are able to enjoy outdoor play. However, the learning potential of the outdoor play space is not fully embraced. Children are familiar with the routine and high adult to child ratios ensure that children receive appropriate support. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the playgroup is satisfactory. The team of staff is led by an enthusiastic leader, who is training to gain a level 3 qualification and keen to use newly acquired knowledge and ideas. She regularly attends training workshops to help her in her role. The leader is trying to encourage other staff to update their knowledge and skills, to enhance the provision. The voluntary management committee is happy to support staff in their personal development. The leader uses self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement in their child care provision and shares her findings with her line manager and also staff, at their regular staff meetings. However, there is no effective system to monitor the provision for nursery education. As a result, the weaknesses of assessment and planning have not been identified and children's learning in some areas is not promoted effectively. Staff do work well to ensure that the activities offered are worthwhile and enjoyable.

As part of the conditions of registration the committee is required to notify Ofsted of any significant changes. On most occasions the group does this promptly, however, the committee has failed to notify the regulator of recent changes to opening hours. Policies and procedures are available for reference. Some of these contain out-of-date information and do not reflect current regulatory requirements. For example, the complaints policy has not been extended to include their duty to investigate written complaints and report back to parents within a timescale. Details of the regulator in this policy are incorrect and omitted from the group's child protection procedure. Legally required records are clear, up-to-date and securely stored.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection several recommendations for improvement were made in respect of the provision for both care and education. These were to develop procedures to maintain confidentiality when parents are signing records. Secondly, to develop procedures to record existing injuries on children and the explanation given by parents. Thirdly, to ensure the complaints procedure includes the contact details of the regulator. In respect of the educational aspect of the provision the recommendations were to allow children access to a variety of resources and tools, including writing/media equipment so that they may independently express their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Also, to develop opportunities for children to begin to understand the concept of subtraction. Other recommendations were to ensure assessment of children informs planning so that individual needs can be met, and to develop strategies to evaluate the setting's strengths and weaknesses, including the observing and evaluating of staff's performance.

Since the last inspection there have been changes in committee and leadership of the provision. Steps have been taken to address some but not all of the recommendations made. Procedures

to maintain confidentiality have been implemented and a form, signed by parents, is now used to detail any existing injuries. Contact details have been added to the complaints procedure but these are incorrect. A poster is displayed that has relevant contact details should parents feel the need to complain to the regulator.

The recommendations made with regards to the educational aspect of the provision have not been fully addressed and many of the weaknesses that gave rise to the recommendations remain. The group has recently introduced an appraisal system and the committee has nominated a line manager to liaise with staff and to regularly observe them in the group.

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 action 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):

- extend the group's risk assessment to include the school hall and outside areas used. Ensure that written documentation includes sufficient information about the risks to children's safety and action to be taken to minimise the risks
- extend group policies to include notifying Ofsted of significant events, and add contact address details for the regulator in the child protection and complaints procedures

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):

- improve staff knowledge and understanding of the developmental frameworks implemented and how to successfully support children's all-round learning
- develop the use of observation and assessment to identify where children are in their learning. Encourage parental involvement in this process. Use information gathered effectively to inform planning to ensure that activities reflect children's interests and build upon what they already know and can do

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