

Elfin Nursery Pre-School group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101540
Inspection date	14 February 2008
Inspector	Hilary Elizabeth Tierney
Setting Address	Cold Pool Lane, Up Hatherley, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 6JA
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Registered person	Falmai Reay
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Elfin Nursery Pre-School Group is a well established, privately owned playgroup in Up Hatherley, a residential area to the south of Cheltenham. The playgroup operates from the village hall and has the use of a playroom, a quiet room, kitchen and an enclosed outside play area. It is close to local schools, a church, library and shops.

The group may provide care for 24 children from two to five years, and accepts children from two years and six months. There are currently a total of 32 children on roll, of whom 26 are funded three and four year olds. The group currently offers support to children who have English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Sessions for pre-school children are provided on Monday to Friday mornings from 09.15 to 12.15 and those for younger children are on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12.45 to 14.45, during school terms.

A total of six members of staff work with the children, including the owner. There are two staff who hold a National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in Childcare and Education. The other

staff hold appropriate Level 2 qualifications and all have completed first aid and child protection training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children have an excellent understanding about personal hygiene procedures. They wash their hands before snacks, after being outside and after activities. Paper hand towels are used which help prevent the spread of infection. Clear, detailed policies for sickness and health are in place. If a child becomes sick at the setting parents are contacted immediately. Staff are confident about how to deal with minor accidents and have a detailed procedure to follow in the event of a serious incident. All parental permissions have been obtained and their contact numbers are easily accessible. Records of any accidents and any medication given to children are detailed and shared with parents. Staff are good role models and children observe them cleaning tables with anti-bacterial sprays and washing their hands before touching food. All written parental permissions have been obtained.

Children have extremely good opportunities for outside play and developing their large physical play skills. The staff ensure that children have access to a climbing frame and balancing boards inside, along with circle games, such as 'the farmers in his den' and moving to music. Outside the group have a small enclosed area. This is used very effectively to give children the chance to explore and access to regular fresh air. Children were seen having great fun playing in the soil that had been collected from the builders during the development of the outside area. They used their hands and spades to explore the soil. They took great delight in moving the soil from the pile to a tray that staff had put out and talking about what they were finding, which included stones, hard pieces of soil and insects. Children have access to water play and a play kitchen outside. There are excellent interactions between staff and children at this time.

Children understand about healthy eating. They thoroughly enjoy snack time and there are lovely interactions between the staff and children at this time. They talk about families and friends. The staff manage to bring in areas of learning into this time effectively. Older children build their confidence through the well managed snack times, staff encourage two children to be helpers to pour drinks each session. They stand behind a table, with one responsible for pouring milk and the other water. The rest of the children go up and ask for what they would like to drink and the child responsible pours the chosen drink into their cup. Children are careful to pour the liquid into the cup only to a certain height. Younger children, who attend at different sessions, are encouraged to pour their drinks at their table. Staff put a small amount of milk or water in a jug to help children to pour their drinks confidently without spilling. Staff have a superb understanding regarding the special dietary needs of children in their care. They are careful with the food they provide when certain children are present. Children have good easy access to drinking water during all sessions, they have their own water bottles which are regularly re-filled by staff as required.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are welcomed into a warm, friendly and brightly decorated room. Displays of children's work around the room give children a sense of belonging. Resources are of extremely high quality, in good condition and are easily accessible for children.

Children are extremely safe as they play. Staff to child ratios are high and staff are vigilant as they supervise the children both inside and outside. Careful explanations to children about why they should not do something and how to keep themselves and others safe are given frequently by staff. For example, children are reminded about how to carry scissors from one area to another by staff and the consequences of what may happen. Clear risk assessments are carried out both daily and weekly. Staff keep hot drinks away from where children play. The front door remains locked at all times when children are present. A visitors book and a message book for parents to record if someone different is collecting their child are used. Authorised people to collect are recorded on registration forms. A detailed outings procedure is in place and helps to keep children safe when away from the building. Detailed fire evacuation procedures are in place, these are regularly practised with children and detailed records kept.

Children are well protected. All staff have completed safeguarding children training and they have a clear awareness regarding the signs and indicators of abuse. Staff are very clear about the procedures to follow in the event of having a concern about a child in their care. There is a detailed child protection policy in place which includes a procedure to follow in the event of having an allegation made against a member of staff. Existing injuries are recorded and shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy, confident and secure as they play. The younger children are greeted individually into the group by staff and settle quickly into the routine. New children leave their parents happily and are greeted by other children in the group. For example, one child was observed arriving and sitting in the circle and another child saying hello, telling the child their name and how old they were. The younger children are beginning to be given the same responsibilities as the older children, to help encourage their independence. They are chosen to be coat and bell monitors. Children were observed ringing the bell around the room for tidy up time. Planning of activities for the younger children are based around the Birth to three matters framework and staff provide an excellent range of activities which are exciting, stimulating and fun for children to learn and develop. Individual children's interests are acknowledged and staff ensure that their needs are met extremely well. Interactions between the staff and children are very good. Staff use clear positive language with all children which helps them in their language development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The older children are provided with stimulating, exciting, fun activities which help them learn and develop. Staff work extremely well together and obviously enjoy being with the children and helping them learn. Staff have a clear knowledge and understanding about the Foundation Stage of learning and use this when planning activities. Planning and assessment helps staff identify individual children's needs and how they can meet them and offer extensions where needed. Children are developing successfully in all areas of learning. They have a good understanding about mathematical language and are beginning to recognise numbers and identify fingers for numbers. Mathematics is used in all aspects of play, but is particularly reinforced during snack time. Staff sit with children and discuss carefully with them the amount of fruit they have, how many children on the table and how many pieces of fruit they need. Children were observed being asked by a member of staff how many pieces of apple were left and how many children there were on the table and how many that meant they could have each. The children told the member of staff

there were five children on the table and ten pieces of fruit left. The member of staff then asked how many pieces does that mean you can all have. A child replied two, they were congratulated by the member of staff for getting this right. Children are well behaved and interact very well with each other and the staff. They are developing good relationships with each other. They co-operate as they play games and organise themselves. For example, a child uses a tape recorder confidently as they play musical statues. This game develops with a few children playing to all the children and staff playing. All children have great fun during this game. Children are learning independence through clear procedures the staff have put in place, which allows them to use the toilet with little help from them, putting on their coats for outside play and selecting games and resources. Children have a sense of community and are very happy to talk about their families and friends.

Children have an excellent understanding regarding linking sounds and letters and staff have worked hard to help children understand this. Staff use clear language to speak to the children at all times. Staff also use sign language as they speak to children during activities and circle time. Children have started to use and understand the sign language. It is particularly used during songs and circle time. Children were observed playing a matching card game, a child started to say the sounds of the letters as the cards were turned over. They thoroughly enjoyed this and it added to the game they were already playing. Staff built on this, so every time a card was turned over the sounds of letters of the pictures were done by all children. Children have good opportunities to make marks and are beginning to develop early writing skills. They have extremely good access to writing materials at all times during the sessions. Children have very good opportunities to develop an understanding that words have meaning and are able to take books home for parents to read to them. Children are able to develop their imagination with a lovely role play area, that can be accessed easily during the sessions. Children are able to investigate and explore with exceptional guidance from the staff. Children have a good sense of time and place. They talk about where their friends are on holiday, looking at a map of the world and finding the place. They understand about when it is time to clear away and help with great enthusiasm. Children take part in French lessons which are taken by a parent. She is bi-lingual and spends a short time weekly with a small group of children. The children enjoy this time and have learnt some French which is then reinforced by staff, as they play games. Children enjoy music and singing, they join in rhyming songs with staff and happily finish the sentences with a rhyme of their own.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are treated with equal care and concern by all staff. Excellent support is given to children who have English as an additional language and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff work very closely with parents to offer support children and their families need. Resources are used very effectively to help children understand the diversity within the community and the world around them.

Children behave very well as they play. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff have a calm, consistent approach with children and are excellent role models. They speak to children with calm, quiet voices at all times and consequently the relaxed atmosphere provides a delightful environment where children learn and develop. Children learn to share, take turns and show care and concern for each other and the staff. Children are offered lots of reassurance and cuddles when required. They are developing into happy, confident, polite children. Children have very good concentration skills whilst playing games. They understand about having to tidy up and do this with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. They receive a warm welcome into the group and given a verbal update after the session as they collect their child. Parents spoken to were full of praise for the staff and their approach with the children. They receive very detailed information in various forms including newsletters, open evenings, individual parents evenings, informal discussions, notice boards and they feel staff are very approachable. Parents are fully aware about the Foundation Stage of learning and the Birth to three matters through very clear information that has been shared with them. They have easy access to the policies and procedures, but are also given a copy of them when their child starts at the group. Parents are able to stay and settle their child into the group, for as long as the child needs them to stay. Parents are aware of the complaints procedure.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

All legally required documentation for registration is in place. Registers are detailed and parents take responsibility for signing their child into the group and staff sign children out as they are collected. Attendance hours for staff are recorded clearly. The registration certificate is clearly displayed which enables parents to see the conditions of registration. Paperwork is very well organised and easily accessible. It is kept secure and locked away. Staff are very aware of maintaining confidentiality. Detailed policies and procedures are in place, these are regularly updated. There is a clear complaints procedure and system for the recording of any complaints should there be any.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The team of staff work extremely well together and are very committed to provide high quality childcare. The key worker system works very well and has helped staff to build excellent relationships with children. Staff complete detailed self evaluation sheets, approximately every six weeks, which helps them identify their strengths and weaknesses. They regularly have staff meetings which they use effectively to help them plan for the future. Regular appraisals are completed by the owner/manager and she uses these to help her plan the staffs' training needs. Both external and internal training are completed as required. There is a clear recruitment and vetting procedure in place, which ensures that only suitable adults work with the children.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care:

The provider had two recommendations from the last inspection. These were to develop the policies for complaints and sickness to ensure they provide effective and useful information, including contact details for the regulatory body and clear guidelines about sickness procedures within the group. Also to ensure the child protection policy provides clear information to staff and parents about the procedures used in the event of an allegation being made against staff or other child protection concern. The policies for complaints and sickness have been developed effectively so they now provide useful information which informs parents clearly. The child protection policy has been updated and provides clear guidelines for staff and parents and clear procedures that can be followed in the event of an allegation being made against staff or other child protection concern.

Nursery Education:

The provider had no key issues from the last inspection. However, they were asked to give consideration to interventions between staff and children during some activities, to ensure that children are enabled to develop skills according to their individual abilities. This has been considered and the staff now intervene only when necessary which allows children to develop their skills according to their abilities. Staff offer encouragement and praise as children achieve their goals.

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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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