

Starlings Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110181
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Inspector	Alison Jane Kaplonek
Setting Address	c/o Manor Field Infant School, Haydn Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG22 4DH
Telephone number	07740715078
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Registered person	Starlings Pre School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Starlings Pre-School opened in 1993. It is situated in classrooms attached to Manor Field Infant School in Basingstoke. The pre-school has access to a safe outside play area and some use of the school playing fields. The pre-school serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered to care for 40 children between the ages of two years and five years. There are currently 91 children on roll. This includes 56 who are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with learning disabilities and/or difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00 Monday to Friday and there is a lunch club.

Seven members of staff work with the children. Of these, six staff are currently trained to NVQ level 3 and one is training at present. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and the National Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play an active part in keeping themselves healthy by independently taking themselves to the toilet and washing their hands. They have easy access to tissues and are able to wipe their own noses, carefully putting the used tissues in the bin. Children's physical needs are well met because staff follow effective procedures and practices, such as wearing gloves when dealing with accidents and keeping surfaces clean. They consult with parents about the children's health needs and keep appropriate records on site. Most staff have valid training in First Aid. Children are well nourished and enjoy a varied range of fruit and vegetables, or hot snacks such as tuna and pasta, at snack time. Those who choose to stay for lunch bring a packed lunch and staff are careful to store perishable items in the fridge. Children are offered drinks at snack time but do not have easy access to drinking water throughout the day.

Children take part in a good range of activities which promote their physical development. They delight in the games they play using the stretchy Lycra, when they kick and wiggle their toes underneath, or stretch and pull as they bounce the ball on the surface of the material. They have daily opportunities for outdoor play time when they practise a variety of skills such as pedalling, scooting and balancing on the tyres, in the safe and varied outdoor areas. All children are gaining in control and coordination when using tools and materials, such as pencils, scissors and collage resources.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a safe, secure, bright and welcoming environment. Good use of the available space enables them to move freely within the rooms, where they are able to choose activities and confidently access the well maintained toys and play materials. Children can access the toilet facilities independently and are encouraged to do this. They are often provided with the opportunity to free flow between the inside and outside environments, so extending the choice of activities available. Staff are vigilant and reduce the risk of accidents by closely supervising children at all times. They often talk to them about keeping safe by not running indoors and being careful around the water tray in case there is water spilt on the floor. Visual and written risk assessments are completed, each day, on the premises and equipment. Children are familiar with the fire evacuation procedure which they practise regularly, sometimes in line with the infant school drills.

Children are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and keep local contact numbers accessible. Parents can access information about the pre-school's child protection policy from the folder provided. Staff have links with both the school and their local authority and issues are dealt with efficiently.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are motivated to learn by the provision of a good range of stimulating resources and activities provided each day. They arrive at the pre-school eager to take part in the activities available. For example, they happily self select from craft activities, painting, construction, role

play or puzzles. They are secure and settled and are able to form positive and caring relationships with each other and the staff .

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide an environment where children have a wide choice of practical activities and are learning through play. Children's work is valued and used for display purposes, providing a colourful and stimulating environment. Children happily participate in the planned activities but equally enjoy initiating their own learning as they dress up together or work out how to use the dance mat. They confidently ask questions and request assistance. The weekly plans include the six areas of learning and identify a stepping stone for each area. However, they do not show how activities will be extended for the older or more able children and some children are not reaching their full potential. All staff make effective evaluations of activities and share details of children's achievements at the end of the day.

Children are confident speakers and converse easily with adults and each other. They use language to explain what they are doing, both to staff and each other. They enjoy listening to stories and are beginning to be able to sound out the letters in their names. Some children are able to recognise their names on labels when they self-register or find their place at snack time. All children use marks to represent their ideas. Some children can write recognisable letters, although others struggle as they are asked to copy their names from their name cards.

Children confidently count to five and some are beginning to recognise numbers. They explore shape, size and quantity during a range of planned and incidental learning opportunities, such as puzzles, water and sand play. Children are being introduced to mathematical language and talk about bigger or smaller as they cut materials for their junk models. They show an interest in solving simple number problems and some older children use language such as "more" or "less" to compare numbers of objects as they sort the play fruit.

Children regularly explore and investigate, for example when painting, junk modelling or playing with dough. They have access to a good selection of electronic toys and know how to switch them on and off. Children design and build confidently using a good range of materials and tools. They are gaining confidence as they use scissors and glue sticks. Children use their imaginations well in numerous play situations, for example during role play and when creating art and craft work. They explore colour and texture when painting or using collage materials as they make sand pictures or talk about the squishy dough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They show respect for each other, and are learning to share and take turns. They form good relationships with adults and their friends and older children often play co-operatively together. Children play an active part in the selection of activities and resources, and respond well to the classical music played to inform them that it is tidy up time. They are all keen to help and some sweep up the sand or wipe tables, while others put away the toys. Staff regularly praise and encourage good behaviour and as a consequence children behave well. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or English as an additional language are welcomed into the pre-school and provided with the appropriate support to enable them to access the wide range of resources. Children have access

to a selection of resources which promote equality of opportunity, such as books or dressing up clothes. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are kept well informed about the policies and procedures and daily routines, through regular newsletters and clear information boards. However, they do not receive information about the planned activities or topics their children are taking part in. They find staff very approachable and appreciate that they are welcome to stay in the sessions until their children are settled. They are invited in to the pre-school to see their children's records of achievement and discuss their progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are settled and happy in the pre-school environment provided. The successful organisation of both their care and education ensures that their health and safety are assured and that they are achieving well in their learning. The environment is well organised and children are able to access equipment and resources at all times, enabling them to become independent in both their care and learning. A good range of policies and procedures are consistently applied. Children benefit from well qualified staff who attend further training to improve their knowledge and understanding. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. There is a clear management structure within the pre-school and effective leadership ensures that staff work well as a team and provide care and education of a good standard for all children. Management and staff, monitor and evaluate activities and the provision of nursery education. Staff receive regular appraisals to identify their training needs.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the pre-school were asked to develop staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. Most staff have now completed the training in child protection.

They were also asked to ensure all necessary detail is recorded within documentation in accordance with the National Standards and guidance and that practice is consistent with written policy. All documents now include the required detail and are reflected in the daily practice.

To improve the Nursery Education, the pre-school were asked to develop a system to provide parents with opportunities to formally contribute to their child's future learning targets. Parents are now consulted about their children's needs and provided with formal and informal opportunities to discuss their children's learning. They are invited to see the Record of Achievement sheets and their children's work.

The pre-school were asked to provide opportunities for children to develop: their independence and social skills at snack time; their vocabulary during everyday activities; their number recognition skills; their awareness of time and weather and their free creative expression by free access to a range of different materials. Children's independence and development of social skills are well supported in the pre-school routine and they make good progress in all areas of learning.

Management were asked to maintain documentation to provide clear evidence of the monitoring and evaluation of practice and improve planning and assessment records to show clear stepping stone links to learning. Weekly plans now include clear stepping stones for each area of learning and regular evaluation is carried out for these activities.

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 children can access drinking water at all times.

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):

- share information with parents about the planned activities to ensure their full involvement in their children's learning.
- to ensure that children are reaching their full potential, make sure that all activities are age and stage appropriate and that plans show differentiation for the older or more able children.

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