

Tree House Pre School (The)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106052
Inspection date	18 September 2007
Inspector	Anne Legge
Setting Address	41 Exeter Road, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 1PU
Telephone number	01395 272935
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Registered person	Tree House Pre School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

The Tree House Pre-school has been registered since 1999 and may care for up to 26 children aged from three to five years. It is managed by a voluntary committee and is affiliated to the Pre-school Learning Alliance. Children attending live in the sea-side town of Exmouth and the surrounding locality.

The pre-school has the sole use, during sessions, of two adjoining classrooms in Exeter Road Primary School and also uses the school's computer suite, hall and library. The enclosed infant playground is used for outdoor play.

The pre-school is open on weekdays in term-times, from 09:00 to 15:15. This includes lunch club sessions which run from 11:45 to 12:45.

The pre-school employs a qualified early years teacher as supervisor and six other staff, all of whom have appropriate child care qualifications.

There are 44 children on the roll at present, 37 of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as

an additional language are welcomed and supported. The setting has received support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children make very good use of the outdoor play areas to access fresh air and enjoy physical exercise. An outdoor play worker is employed to promote children's enjoyment of physical activities, and they are encouraged to move freely between indoor and outdoor play, throughout most of each session. Children take part in a wide range of energetic activities, including climbing and balancing, throwing bean bags into targets or riding a variety of wheeled toys. They benefit from the pre-school's healthy eating policy and pro-active approach to ensuring that all children are offered nutritious meals and snacks, throughout the day. Staff provide very healthy snacks, including a good variety of fresh fruit and savoury items. Simple nutritious lunches are also offered, including pasta and sandwiches. Staff work very effectively with parents, to ensure that packed meals include healthy foods and promote children's good health. Children take plenty of fluids, as fresh drinking water is always available and milk and water are offered at snack. Special dietary needs are recorded and carefully met.

Children are very well protected from infection. They play in clean premises and staff are vigilant in maintaining high standards of hygiene, throughout sessions. Tables are disinfected before children eat and floors and toilets are monitored appropriately. Children learn good routines regarding hand washing. They use paper towels and liquid soap, to reduce the spread of infection. Children's care is mainly consistent, when they are unwell or injured. Four staff have current first aid qualifications. Accidents are recorded and the information is generally shared appropriately with parents, although some records are not signed. Medication records are completed and shared, but they are not signed by parents after administration.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe environment. Their security is given a high priority and access to the setting is carefully monitored. Gates are locked during sessions, allowing access only through the school. Staff are always vigilant at the ends of sessions, when gates are open for children and parents to enter and leave the premises. Outdoor areas are checked carefully by staff before children use them, ensuring that all hazards are addressed. For example, prickly plants in the environmental garden are regularly trimmed, to protect children from harm.

Staff have a good understanding of safety issues and they risk assess indoor areas regularly, carrying out daily checks, to ensure that children can play without risk of harm. Children choose from a wide variety of toys and resources, which are in good condition and checked regularly for safety and hygiene. Toys are stored at low levels, so that children can access them safely and independently. There is ample space in the two play rooms, for children to move around safely. Children are safe in emergencies, as evacuation procedures are practised regularly, taking into account the attendance patterns of the children, so that they all become familiar with the routine. Staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues and are able to protect children effectively from abuse or neglect, although the child protection policy lacks some procedural details.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from carefully planned sessions, when they enjoy a wide range of play experiences, both indoors and outside. They settle easily at the pre-school and they move confidently between activities, displaying high levels of concentration. They enjoy a good balance of free play and structured activities, and benefit from the skilful support which staff provide. Planning for the youngest children takes account of the Birth to three matters framework and plenty of sensory play is available, such as with dough, paint, sand and water.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan interesting themes, based on letters of the alphabet and covering all areas of learning. They observe children's achievements and use this information informally when planning activities. Staff have a good understanding of the curriculum and they use their knowledge of individual children to adapt activities, to meet the needs of each child. They use questions and discussion effectively, to promote children's thinking skills and develop their understanding. Consequently, children make good progress overall and able children are challenged appropriately.

Children develop a love of books, as they share texts in the school library or enjoy story-time, responding enthusiastically to the skilful questions of staff. They extend their understanding of letters, as they discuss the letter of the week, and as able children are encouraged to recognise and write it. Children count in daily routines. They achieve an understanding of number patterns, as they discuss one more or work out how many are left, when one object is removed. They discuss shapes, as they use them to make pictures and patterns.

Children develop a sense of time, as they examine photographs of themselves and others as babies, or sequence pictures of people at different stages in their lives. They design and make models, using recycled materials. For example, they use cardboard boxes and tissue paper to make model barbecues and food. Children extend their knowledge of technology, using computers confidently, both in the pre-school and in the school computer suite. They enjoy being creative, as they paint and draw or dress up for role play. They sing familiar songs, joining in with appropriate actions, and they have regular access to a range of musical instruments. Children develop their physical skills, as they use small equipment, such as pens, scissors and hammers, with increasing control. They become skilful at managing large equipment, such as tricycles, scooters and a climbing frame.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The pre-school welcomes all children and families, offering support to parents and often to whole families. Children are nurtured effectively, including those who speak English as an additional language. Staff help children to learn words in other languages and to value individual differences. They celebrate birthdays and special events, successfully promoting children's self-esteem. Children use multi-cultural resources, such as dolls, books and puzzles, and they celebrate a variety of festivals, helping them to respect the beliefs of others. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn to be aware of the needs of others, as staff help them to share resources and take turns, such as on a balance beam or when sharing toy baskets. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well included and supported, although systems do not ensure rigorous monitoring and review of their progress

within the pre-school. Children behave very well, responding to the clear routines within the setting and the positive and consistent approach of staff, to the management of their behaviour. They enjoy constant praise and encouragement and they willingly comply with requests, such as to tidy up. Music is used very effectively, to mark transitions in the daily routine and to help children understand what is expected of them at these times.

Children benefit from the pre-school's very good relationships with their parents and the appropriate systems used to communicate with them. Initial home visits by staff help children to settle at the pre-school and regular exchanges of information enable carers to be involved in their child's development. Contact books, newsletters and a notice board are used to complement the many discussions held between staff and parents. Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents have received summary reports about their child's progress in all areas of learning, and meetings are planned, when progress information will be shared. Some photographic evidence of children's achievements is available and progress is discussed informally with individual parents. This enables parents to support their child's development, although records currently lack detail and targets are not systematically shared with all carers.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by very well-qualified staff, who are committed to further developing their skills, through attending relevant training courses. They work as a very effective team, providing children with good individual support. Staff ratios are high and adults are thoughtfully deployed. Space is used very creatively, both indoors and outside, so that children can choose from a good variety of activities, at all times. Children thrive in a bright, attractive environment, where safety and hygiene standards are good. Their care is underpinned by all the required documentation. However, the safeguarding policy lacks details of procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a staff member, and complaints procedures are out-of-date regarding Ofsted's contact details. Some records are not signed appropriately by parents.

Leadership and management are good. The quality of the nursery education is carefully monitored by the supervisor, who is a qualified teacher and has achieved Early Years Professional Status. Staff appraise each other and committee members take part in formal staff appraisals, ensuring that training needs are identified. The pre-school's strengths and areas for further development have been recognised by staff, who are committed to constant improvement in the quality of provision for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the pre-school agreed to improve risk assessments, to update some policies and procedures, and to increase the committee's understanding of its responsibilities. Children's safety has been improved, as risk assessments are now appropriate and include daily checking of all areas used by children. Some committee members are involved in staff appraisals and have a reasonable knowledge of their role and responsibilities. Many aspects of the group's organisation are successfully delegated to staff, who have appropriate skills. Policies and procedures are now mainly comprehensive, although some lack minor details or current information.

At the last nursery education inspection, the group agreed to develop their systems for planning, monitoring and for informing parents about their child's progress. They were asked to improve

the display of books and the organisation of some whole-group activities. Children now have good access to books and they enjoy well-organised whole-group activities. Informal systems for sharing progress information and for planning to meet children's individual learning needs are effective, but formal recording systems still lack detail and rigour.

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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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):

- make sure that children's care is always underpinned by current and comprehensive documentation, including up-to-date complaints and safeguarding policies, and records of accidents, medication and incidents, which are shared and signed appropriately by parents.

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):

- continue to develop assessment systems, so that children's progress towards the early learning goals is clearly recorded. Use this information to set targets for future development, which are shared regularly with parents
- further develop systems for monitoring the progress of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ensuring that their individual education plans are regularly reviewed by staff and parents.

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