

Early Days Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 306381

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Inspector Gillian Sutherland

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Registered person Early Days Childcare Centre Committee

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Sessional 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 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?

Early Days Pre-school and Sunshine Kids opened 1995 and operates from two self-contained units on the grounds of Raeburn Primary School. A maximum of 24 children may attend either the pre-school, out of school club, or holiday club at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 and from 12.30 until 15:00 term time only. The out of school club operates from 08.00 to 08.55 and from 15.15 to 17.40 term time only. The Sunshine holiday club operates from 08.00 to 17.40. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for early education. There are currently 63 children attending out of school club. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The nursery employs 10 members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications whilst others are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and caring environment. Staff provide good levels of support to help children gain an understanding of good practices which in turn develop their understanding of being healthy. Children do follow good hygiene procedures and practices, such as hand washing before snack time, after participating in messy play activities and after toileting. All children attend to their own needs competently.

Staff are fully aware of the children's individual needs and quickly identify when they are unwell and respond by taking the appropriate action, such as making the children comfortable and contacting their parents. All medical conditions are recorded on each child's enrolment form and parents give prior written consent for medication to be given, thus ensuring that children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. Children receive appropriate care if there has been an accident because a number of pre-school staff hold current first aid certificates, thus ensuring that there is always at least one member of who is fully trained in paediatric first aid on duty. Accurate records relating to accidents are held at pre-school and those records are countersigned by parents.

Staff create many opportunities for children to develop their understanding about healthy eating and drinking during discussions at snack time and planned topics included in the activity programme. Children are offered a varied range of snacks including many different fruits and vegetables. Children enjoy social snack times where they can sit together and chat, thus developing their confidence and self-esteem. For the out of school children, breakfast was very relaxing where they came into the setting and enjoyed a choice of cereals, toast and drinks. Similarly at the end of the day the snacks provided include children making their own fruit kebabs. Staff prepare the fruit prior to arrival, with the exception of the fresh pineapple, which a member of staff demonstrates how, using a fruit scorer, the inside of this fruit is safely removed and then cut up into smaller pieces for the children to access and enjoy. Drinks, including water, are freely available to the children, as there are jugs of cold water and cups available at all times throughout the day and all children can go and freely access a drink at any time. Attentive staff are always on hand to assist children if required.

Children enjoy a good range of planned and spontaneous activities which develop their physical skills. For example, weather permitting, children attending pre-school or out of school may participate in a range of outdoor activities, such as riding their bikes and wheeled toys around in the garden area. Alternatively children's balancing skills are well promoted as they access skipping ropes and hoops which they learn to jump in and out of. A game of football may often be chosen by the children and then staff assist them to erect the goal posts and supervise or participate with them in this game. Music and movement sessions, which include action rhymes and songs, are enjoyed by the younger children when the weather may not be conducive for outdoor play. Children practise their fine motor skills as they skilfully use a range of tools including scissors, cutting tools, the computer mouse and drawing materials. Children are becoming aware that participating in a varied range of physical activities contributes to keeping themselves healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed and happy as they enter pre-school. The security of the premises is effective in keeping children safe. Access is via their own pathway and they then through the pre-school's own gate, where visitors ring a bell and wait for a member of staff to come and let them in. All visitors are required to sign the visitors book. Children are supervised when entering and leaving each session and the nominated adult collecting the child is known to the staff.

The play room for pre-school and out of school children is well laid out and organised. Children are greeted warmly by staff and then they go off quickly to seek out their friends. Colourful displays of children's work help develop their sense of belonging and create an attractive environment for them to play. Children independently make choices from a good range of easily accessible resources which are stored in labelled trays and containers in low-level units. Pre-school and out of school children know which set of cupboards contain the toys available to them. Clearly defined play areas allow them space to be quiet, use their creativity, extend their imagination and develop their play.

Children move around and self-select the toys and resources they want to play with and the activities they want to participate in. Their safety is well promoted through daily risk assessments, where staff check all areas, both indoors and outdoors, prior to each session operating. Good procedures are in place regarding the collection of children and appropriate arrangements are made with the staff if anyone other than their parent comes to collect them.

Effective fire safety procedures are in place and staff ensure that all children learn how to evacuate the building quickly and safely. Fire drill practices take place at regular intervals and a record is maintained of when these are carried out.

Staff have attended training and have a good knowledge and understanding of the procedures to follow if they had concerns about a child in their care. However, the current child protection policy does not fully comply with current guidance in respect of terminology and it does not contain appropriate contact details for police and social services.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and separate from their parents as they are eager to participate in the many activities available to them at pre-school. Children achieve well because staff are skilled and use their understanding of early years guidance, such as the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and more recently the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide good quality care and education. Children show independence as they self-select and make choices about the toys and resources they want to play with or participate in.

Staff encourage children to play together and share. An example of this was observed as children participated in an activity where they were making a jelly for the snack the following day. After first washing their hands and under supervision from a member of staff they had to break the jelly up into small pieces and put it into a bowl. When the warm water was added they all took turns to stir this and watch until it had dissolved. This activity prompted so much discussion regarding texture, colour, smell and the excitement as they watched it disappear.

Children enjoy close contact with familiar adults and staff are aware of the individual needs of each child and as a team they work together to ensure the individual needs of each child are met whilst they are in pre-school. This results in the children being happy and secure in their relationships with staff. Children's self-esteem is developed as staff give children lots of praise and encouragement and display their artwork around the pre-school. Staff working in each of the different age groups talk to the children throughout the session, helping them to become skilful communicators.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff share the responsibility for the implementation of the educational programme and have developed some understanding of the Foundation Stage, which they then use during their planning to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered. Children are therefore making steady progress towards the early learning goals in all areas. Effective planning and record keeping assists the staff to provide new and stimulating play activities.

The planning of the activity programme is primarily undertaken by the pre-school supervisor and she explained that activities are planned on a long and short term basis and cover a two year cycle. Staff observe children at play and use notes to record the achievements children reach during their play. Each child has their own development file, into which these development notes are transferred to. Parents have access to these files at any time on request. The pre-school supervisor has since the last inspection introduced the concept of continuous play into the pre-school practices and she feels she would like to develop this further, once the planned alterations to the building have been completed.

Children participate in a wide range of purposeful activities and access a varied range of resources which support their progress across all areas of learning. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories, participating themselves when appropriate during the story session. Children are confident speakers and talk to each other, and to the staff during their play activities. They are beginning to recognise the sounds and shapes of letters and can identify these. During one story session the member of staff brought in a large tape recorder machine and fitted to this a number of head sets. Children then had the option of listening to the story through the headphones. Some of the children enjoy listening to stories in this way, whilst others prefer to listen as a group and look at the pictures in a book together.

Children enjoy accessing role play and two children were observed playing in the home corner with the two baby dolls, a high chair and a tea set. Language development was well promoted here as one child tried to put the doll in a high chair and tried to feed her whilst the other child decided she would make a cup of tea for them both.

All children are provided with many opportunities to promote their creativity, and their personal self-esteem is raised, as they proudly display and talk about their art and craft work. Children have daily opportunities to participate in a creative activity, which includes painting, sticking and gluing pictures. Another important activity is the use of sand, water and dough. In this activity children were able to create many different patterns in the dough using shape cutters and paper cake case to put their 'cakes' in that they had made. Children also enjoyed playing in the water trough which they could freely access during the session and were aware of the need to put their protective aprons on before they began. Here children were able to discover the joy of filling up containers and jugs and measuring and pouring them through different

containers. For example, children loved to feel the water trickle through their fingers as they poured it through a sieve or strainer.

Children count confidently and are able to recognise numbers displayed on posters around the pre-school. They have many opportunities to identify different mathematical shapes and also participate in simple calculation activities. For example, when the musical instruments were being given out, the staff member gave one child an instrument and she asked him if he knew what shape it was, to which he promptly replied 'Yes, it's a triangle'.

Children also use simple mathematical concepts as part of their singing rhymes. An example seen was when children and staff began to sing a song about a train and as they sang the song they had to make the circular motion of the wheels with their arms. The train went faster and the children had to make the circles faster, and then the train went slower and slower until it stopped. Children really enjoyed singing this and trying to keep the actions going as they sang. At registration time, morning and afternoon, one child is chosen to come out and after the register has been taken it is then their task to count the children and see how many are present. Children really enjoy doing this and can count quite easily, and there is always someone available to assist if a child gets a little stuck.

Children are learning about the environment as they have a poster up describing different fruits and vegetables, and also identifies the different parts of the world where they come from. Staff talk to the children about those foods that are good for you and those that are not. Children have done gardening here in the pre-school and they have a full range of small children's-sized gardening tools, including the watering can.

In the pre-school room there is a large tank which contains some African land snails, and there are posters and books displayed which provide the children with some information of how to look after them and what they like to eat. By caring for these creatures, and with the help of the staff, children become aware of the needs of other small creatures and animals out in the wider world.

Children are also making preparations to go on their autumnal walk around the edge of the school playing field and by the woods. The staff member had a bag with some autumn leaves and a conker in. This prompted a discussion from the member of staff leading the circle time, to ask them about the different colours of the leaves and how the case around the conker is prickly and also to talk about the squirrels that are now looking for food to store away for the winter.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Friendly, caring staff provide a warm, welcoming environment for children and their parents. Children are greeted by staff who ask how they are and what they have been doing at home. This helps them feel secure and develop a sense of belonging. Children are encouraged to select their own activities, learning to make their own decisions.

Children attending the pre-school are developing a good understanding of their local community and the wider world through planned activities. They celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year and positive images are displayed around the environment. Children access a wide and varied range of resources and equipment providing they are appropriate for their age and ability. Staff are knowledgeable about children's individual needs as these are fully discussed

with parents prior to care commencing. Each child's individual needs are then met in practice by the pre-school staff.

Children in both age groups behave well and benefit from the praise and encouragement they receive from staff. They are polite, share resources and take turns when participating in the activities available. Staff act as extremely good role models and children learn from the example they set. Parents are made aware of the pre-school's behaviour management policy and are fully aware of the strategies that are used to manage any incidents of unwanted behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are warmly welcomed into the play group and are provided relevant information regarding its' policies and practices. Notice-board displays and information given to parents ensure they are well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and also the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children's development and progress are observed, monitored and recorded, and parents are fully aware they have access to these records at any time. This ensures parents are able to contribute to their child's care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel at home and are at ease in the well organised environment. Children benefit from being cared for by staff who are qualified or experienced in childcare. All staff members have a good knowledge and understanding of children's developmental needs. They work well as a team and are clear about their individual responsibilities. All children receive good support from a staff group that enjoy their company and know them well, thus helping them feel secure and confident.

Children are kept safe because all staff working with children have had satisfactory clearances. Good staff-child ratios ensure children receive lots of care and attention. All staff have the opportunity to access additional training to support children's learning and development, and some have indeed accessed such training.

Policies, procedures, consents and records, which detail children's needs and inform staff of procedures to follow in situations, such as a child not being collected, are maintained. However, whilst the pre-school policies are going to be reviewed and revised by the staff team, there are some policies which need immediate attention because they do not fully comply with current guidance and legislation. Those policies are: safeguarding children; complaints procedure; and emergency staffing policy.

The provision is effectively organised to enable all children to move freely around and choose from the interesting and good range of activities available. They settle well into a familiar routine, made possible by staff who work well as a team and ensure the smooth running of the session.

Leadership and management is good. All staff work very well together as a team to support children's learning and development. Space, resources, time and grouping are well organised to promote children's enjoyment and achievement. The play group owner and staff evaluate how well the planned activities have met the learning outcomes and ensure that all areas of learning are fully covered. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, when four recommendations were raised, the staff at the pre-school have now devised and implemented a system which indicates the time of arrival and departure, and they now have drinking water freely available to all the children present. The other two relate to the policies and procedures, and the management team have devised a written policy which would be followed if an allegation of abuse was made against a member of staff. The last one was to review and update the policies and procedures, and this is still ongoing as there has been a change of centre manager within the last six months and the management are now going to review the policies and procedures with the staff at the team meetings.

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.

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 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):

- continue to review and revise all the nursery policies and practices, and ensure the safeguarding children, complaints procedure and emergency staffing policies are given priority

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 evolve the continuous play concept within the pre-school sessions.

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