

Preston Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	146756
Inspection date	19 November 2007
Inspector	Jo Rowley
Setting Address	Preston Village Hall, School Lane, PRESTON, Hertfordshire, SG4 7UE
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Registered person	Jenny Woolner
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?

Preston Nursery School is a private nursery school which opened in 1988. It operates from Preston village hall which is situated in Preston village, a rural part of North Hertfordshire. The nursery serves the local area and the surrounding village community.

There are currently 32 children aged between two years six months to five years on roll, of which 13 children receive funding for education. The children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently has no children attending the nursery school who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or English as an additional language.

The nursery school opens four days a week during school term-time only. Sessions are from 9:00 to 12:00 and 12:00 to 15:00, some children attend from 9:00 to 15:00.

Four staff members work full-time with the children. All of which are qualified to NVQ Level 3 or above. The setting receives support from the local Community Development Team and the Pre-School Learning Alliance, as well as teacher support from the local school in the village.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to be healthy through their daily routines and they know about good practice, such as washing their hands before having their snack. However, personal hygiene is not effectively promoted as children often use the same water for hand washing, therefore, they are not fully protected from cross-infection. Staff follow well established health and safety policies to ensure that the well-being of the children is generally protected. However, accident records are not always completed in full and the first aid box contains out of date items. This does not fully promote children's health.

Children have their nutritional needs met as they enjoy a wide range of generally healthy mid morning snacks which their parents provide for them. They individually serve themselves fresh juice or water and are able to access drinking water throughout the session. Staff adhere to the setting's procedures in order to protect children's health and are vigilant in protecting those with specific allergies. Children enjoy the social aspect of meal times because staff promote their language and interests through informal discussion as they sit and eat with them.

Children enjoy a exciting range of physical activities both inside and outside. During inside play the children creatively use different material scarves. For example, they are encouraged to move around the room with their scarves, they talk about how high and low they can make their scarf go and as the music is played children pretend to be elephants, pretending that the scarves are their trunks. In the outside area they have opportunities to develop their physical skills with a wide range of outdoor equipment that is available to them, such as wheeled toys, water play, sand play, balls, basketball hoops and impromptu games of hide and seek. Children move freely in both areas negotiating and taking turns with the resources, they are competent in these skills and show an awareness of taking care and not bumping into each other.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment where there are creative displays of their own work. They receive a warm welcome from the staff who are skilled in encouraging children to separate from their carer with ease. Children's safety is well protected because staff are aware of potential hazards and monitor these to reduce the risks to children through regular checks. For example, when children arrive and leave staff ensure that they monitor the front entrance and there are many occasions throughout the day when staff count the children, therefore, their safety is protected. The daily implementation of practical policies and procedures ensure that staff are able to promote children's safety. The emergency evacuation procedure is clearly displayed and regularly practised with the children. Staff, parent helpers and children are sufficiently familiar with the procedure and therefore, their safety is protected.

Children are developing an understanding of taking responsibility and keeping themselves safe. They are consistently given gentle clear explanations by staff to help them understand the relevance of safety rules. For example, they understand why it is important not to run inside the nursery, so that they don't bump in to anyone and get hurt. Children use bright and stimulating resources that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development which staff regularly check to ensure that they are clean and safe. Their welfare is well promoted because staff have attended additional child protection training and have a good knowledge of the

child protection procedures to be followed, enabling them to identify, report and follow up any concerns in line with current guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children spend their time purposefully. They are keen to participate in the activities and play opportunities provided and they are confident in their relationships with each other and staff. Their personal development and self-esteem are promoted through encouragement and good levels of support from the well-established staff team. Children's actual work is displayed, helping them to feel valued, secure and confident within the setting. They show their developing independence as they carry out self-care skills, such as visiting the toilet, putting on their own coats and serving their own drinks. They interact well with staff who are skilled at letting the children develop activities. For example, children devise their own game of 'being teachers'. They take it in turns to be the story teller and dance teacher and staff encourage this. This promotes children's imagination.

Children's learning is further promoted because staff make effective use of open questions and suggestions to encourage children to think further. An example of this is when children and staff spontaneously collect snails from the garden. The staff member asks children questions such as "where do you think the snails live" and "can you see how they move". The children enthusiastically watch the snails moving and talk about the food that they eat and how they like to hide under the leaves. Careful planning of activities for all age groups ensures that children's learning is well balanced and activities are linked to their individual needs and capabilities.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this is linked in to the planning of activities, therefore, staff are developing younger children's learning. All children are encouraged to use their imagination and staff take an active role in their play. Children's behaviour is very good and they are aware of each other's needs. They share and take turns as staff gently remind children that it is kind to share and that way everyone has a turn at what they are doing. An example of this is where children play together on the carpet. They take turns with the trains and ask each other questions, such as "would you like to use my train now".

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress in all areas and their overall development is promoted because staff have a thorough knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, planning and adapting activities appropriately. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use comprehensive methods for assessing their starting points. Information gained from this is then used to highlight areas to be covered, determining future activities. Using this information enables staff to highlight and monitor individual children's progress. However, the information highlighted is not consistently dated and therefore, it is not always clear to see how the children have developed since their progress was last observed. Staff plan with reference to the Foundation Stage to ensure that children are offered a range of relevant topics and experiences. The planning of activities is completed by all staff, it is practical and comprehensive and staff monitor and evaluate this to ensure that all areas of learning are covered.

Children's language and literacy skills are well promoted, including the development of their listening skills. They attentively listen to stories which are told by staff members and have independent access to a range of books, promoting their ability to understand the meaning of print. Children are confident to initiate conversation, they listen well to instruction and are developing their skills in talking as they are involved in the carpet time activities. For example, a French teacher comes in to the nursery on a regular basis. The children are skilled in counting, they say hello, goodbye and are able to tell the teacher their name, all in French. Children have independent opportunities to develop their mark making skills and are encouraged to write their own name where appropriate.

Children use mathematical language confidently and there is sufficient equipment available, including pattern making and problem solving resources to enable this. They learn about growth in different situations, such as when they grow their own flowers from seeds, promoting their mathematical understanding. There are regular opportunities for children to develop their calculation and matching skills. For example, the children devise a bar chart recording the different eye colours that the children attending the nursery have, counting how many of each colour and matching children to the colour of their eyes. Children enjoy and join in with number rhymes and songs and are able to count confidently.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is well promoted. For example, staff encourage children to learn about Divali, the festival of light celebration, through various resources, such as informative resource books, dressing up clothes, music as well as inviting parents in to share their knowledge. They make a welcome mat and turn the home corner in to a home with 'pretend' cleaning products as they teach children about the preparation for the festival, following the traditions of Divali. Children benefit from a range of different teaching methods to keep them motivated and on task, ranging from group activities to one to one sessions. Children use the computer independently or in a small group with a member of staff. The more able children are often observed to be showing their skills confidently to others. For example, one child says "if you use this button it will take you to the next page".

Children have good opportunities for developing their physical skills through their participation in daily activities, they have regular access to an outside area further promoting their physical exercise. They learn about spatial awareness and the different ways in which they can move, such as climbing, running and pedalling. On a rainy day the children participate in physical play inside. They have opportunities to use a range of small and large equipment in imaginative ways. For example, the children use rolling pins and imaginative frying circles whilst making Chapati's, in line with the Divali theme, they knead the dough and use their hands to manipulate the dough in to their required shapes.

Children are involved in creative activities, such as drawing, cutting, painting and role play. They learn about colour mixing and what happens when you mix two colours together. Their creative development is further developed as they have opportunities to explore different materials, such as cotton wool, stones, feathers and tin foil whilst learning about how and where these are found. Some activities are linked to a current theme, while others are self-initiated. Children have opportunities to use their imaginations through a wide range of media including musical instruments. They successfully use the instruments to make up their own songs, promoting their confidence and creative development.

Children are very secure and demonstrate a sense of trust as they confidently initiate conversations with staff and turn to them for help in sorting out any problems. They are clearly aware of the expected codes of behaviour, using manners appropriately. For example, a child

asks "can you help me with my buttons please" as she gets ready for outside play and as staff help them with their drinks at meal times children say 'thank you'. The children are beginning to make firm friends and are learning to care for each other, for example, when one child is slightly unsettled another child goes and gives the child a hug. Staff praise the child's caring actions and consistently, all children are praised by the staff who promote positive behaviour with verbal rewards, such as "well done, you are very kind".

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and parents receive a warm welcome from staff as they arrive, children separate from their carers easily and settle quickly at an activity. Children's experiences are shared with parents verbally on a daily basis to ensure that they are kept informed of how their children are progressing. Children are enthusiastic as they take part in the planned activities or make independent choices for free play. Their confidence and sense of belonging is established as they record their own attendance at snack time with name cards.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered. They are learning to respect others, they are kind to each other and are willing to help each other when required. For example, when working on the computer one child shows another what to do when they are not sure. Staff demonstrate a good awareness for meeting the needs of individual children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a designated person who ensures that all staff have a knowledge and understanding of the setting's special needs policy, in order to promote children's welfare. Children with English as an additional language are supported because staff are aware of their individual backgrounds and adapt activities to ensure that all children are able to take part and enjoy all that is offered within the nursery.

Children take turns and show a good understanding of each other's needs. They are able to access a range of resources and planned activities that promotes equality of opportunity and develops their understanding of the wider world. For example, children have been introduced to different festivals, such as Divali. This promotes children's awareness of different events in the lives of others. Children's behaviour is good, they are encouraged to share and be kind to each other and staff promote this through the use of consistent and regularly praise, with children responding well to this. There are suitable strategies in place for dealing with inappropriate behaviour if required, such as 'time out'.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. All parents are warmly welcomed in to the setting and are aware of the daily activities offered. They are kept well informed of themes and topics through regular newsletters and information displayed on the parent's notice board. Regular opportunities ensure that they have the opportunity to see how their children's skills are developing through discussion with the staff and as children leave the nursery parents are given written assessments and examples of their children's work. Parents receive good quality information about the Foundation Stage and the education opportunities that are provided by the nursery. They are actively encouraged to become involved in their children's learning and regularly participate in outings and activities. During discussion parents speak highly of the staff and say that they are very happy with the care they provide for their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the needs of all children are met. Their well-being is monitored and maintained as effective systems are in place to ensure that the staff working with the children are suitable to do so. For example, there are recruitment and induction processes as well as regular appraisal systems in place. Children's individual needs are recognised and met with appropriate documentation and policies that comply with regulation. However, although children's attendance is recorded on a daily basis the actual times of their attendance if they arrive late or are collected late are not recorded and therefore, the register does not always show the correct number of children attending, this does not fully support their safety.

Staff have a strong commitment to training and they have regular access to information which enables them to continue to develop their understanding of children's care and learning. Children benefit from well motivated staff who are good role models. They take responsibility as a team for planning and ensure that resources are appropriate. Staff are actively involved in all aspects of the children's learning, consistently encouraging them and extending their language, they prompt discussion and ask the children appropriate questions to ensure that they are progressing in their learning. Documentation is generally in order with policies and procedures being reviewed and updated as necessary, therefore, children's well-being is protected.

The leadership and management is good. The well established staff team work very well together, there are monitoring strategies in place to evaluate the plans which identifies strengths and areas for improvement. There is a strong commitment to developing all areas of the setting and to promote staff development, a clear staff induction process and regular appraisals ensure that the nursery policies and procedures are understood by all staff and that these are consistently applied. The leader and all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in extending the children's learning and are committed to ensuring that all children make progress towards the early learning goals. Planning and observations are reviewed to ensure that activities and themes extend and develop the children's learning in all areas. The leader promotes an inclusive environment in which every child is important. The leader and staff are sensitive to children's needs and take time to make sure that children are encouraged to join in and enjoy new experiences.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the staff agreed to ensure that Ofsted are informed of any changes to the nursery. All significant changes and/or incidents are reported to Ofsted in line with regulations. They agreed to obtain permission, from parents, for seeking any necessary emergency medical treatment or advice. This is in place for every child and therefore, their health is protected.

The staff also agreed to ensure that children's hours of attendance are clearly recorded within the registration system. Whilst the registration system shows children's attendance on a daily basis, it does not show actual times of arrivals and departures and therefore, children's safety is not effectively protected and a further recommendation is given.

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 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):

- develop personal hygiene practice in order to prevent cross-infection
- ensure that accident records are completed in full and the first aid box is replenished as necessary
- ensure that actual times of children's attendance is recorded.

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):

- ensure that developmental records are dated to provide an effective account of children's progress.

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