

Standens Barn Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220107
Inspection date	04 October 2007
Inspector	Andrea Ewer
Setting Address	Community Centre, Topwell Court,Standens Barn, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN3 9TW
Telephone number	07733 140070Sandra
E-mail	
Registered person	Northampton Pre School Group
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Standens Barn Pre-School opened in 1993. It operates from Standens Barn Community Centre. The pre-school is registered to care for 27 children and serves the local community. There are currently 23 children from two to under five years on the register. This includes 17 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions. Staff are able to support children who have special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days each week during school terms only. Sessions run from 09:30 until 12:00 and a lunch club is available from 12:00 until 13:00 on Monday to Wednesday.

There are six staff employed to work with the children, four of whom hold an early years qualification.

The pre-school receives support from a local authority advisory teacher and 'Birth to three matters' advisor.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted well. They benefit from regular fresh air and exercise during outdoor play and staff provide physical activities indoors daily. Children develop increased control of their bodies and negotiate space well as they speed up and slow down to avoid others, whilst pushing and riding wheeled toys such as bikes and scooters outdoors. They develop co-ordination as they throw and catch balls outside and become confident climbing up the steps and going down the slide.

Children are cared for in clean, tidy premises. They are gaining a good awareness of the importance of cleanliness as they competently practise self-care as part of daily routines. Children readily wash their hands at appropriate times such as before eating and after visiting the toilet. Staff carry out effective hygiene procedures that maintain hygiene standards throughout the day. Tables are cleaned before food is served and the floor is cleaned after snacks. Children receive appropriate care in the event of minor accidents or illness because most staff hold an up-to-date first aid qualification, and a well stocked first aid kit is readily accessible.

Children enjoy nutritious snacks that promotes their healthy growth and development including fresh and dried fruit with a drink of milk. Snacks are planned according to children's individual needs and take account of children who have special dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play safely in the well-organised, and secure premises. Posters and useful information for parents is displayed and helps to create a welcoming environment. Children move around freely and participate comfortably in the activities provided. They choose what to play with from the wide range of resources and activities set out, that meets their play and development needs well.

Overall, effective systems are in place to ensure children's safety is promoted. A clear health and safety policy ensures both the premises and equipment are safe and potential hazards are minimised. Damaged resources are identified and either replaced or repaired during daily risk assessments and the written policy for parent helpers clearly informs them that they must not escort children to the toilet or use corporal punishment, which ensures children's safety is not compromised. Children are cared for by sufficient staff who are deployed effectively, the arrival and departure of children is monitored closely by staff, regular fire drills are carried out and effective safety measures are in place such as safety gates that prevent children entering the kitchen unsupervised. The long cords on the blinds throughout the premises however, pose a potential hazard to children's safety. Children start to take responsibility for their own safety as staff remind them to try not to spill the water on the floor because they might slip over. They learn to use scissors safely with guidance from staff and learn how to keep safe during outings. Children enjoy visits from the local lollipop lady and go on to dress up as the lollipop person, make a zebra crossing and talk about crossing the roads safely.

Children are well protected from harm or neglect because staff have satisfactory knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. There is a clearly identified member of staff who

has attended relevant training and supports all other staff to implement procedures in line with local guidelines.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school and benefit from a warm, caring environment where they share good relationships with staff and their peers. Children under three years play happily with suitable toys and activities. They benefit from a wide range of activities planned using the 'Birth to three matters' framework, that meets their physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs well. Children become competent learners as they paint brightly coloured pictures at the easel and have fun feeling and moulding the play-dough. This helps to develop their imagination, assign meaning to marks and express themselves creatively. Records of children's achievements are based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and show clearly what stage they are at in their development. This supports staff to plan for the next steps in children's development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a stimulating range of activities that promotes children's learning. Some staff, however, are less confident in their understanding which results in inconsistent teaching methods, many missed opportunities to extend children's learning and subsequently activities often lack challenge. Overall rooms are set out well, allowing children to choose which activities to join and generally staff make good use of their time to support children's learning. At times, however, some areas of the nursery are uninspiring, occasionally activities are not planned well enough to ensure children understand the purpose of them and use of the outdoor play area is restricted which limits children's play and learning experiences.

Children's progress records show clearly what children can do, however, they do not always link to the stepping stones and the next steps for children's learning is not clearly identified or used to inform planning for individual children. As a result there is not always sufficient challenge for children. Children's records are however, shared regularly with parents and valuable information about what children can do when they enter the Foundation Stage is obtained from parents. This supports staff to provide appropriate learning opportunities for children and helps children build on skills they already have. Planned activities are evaluated regularly and generally show where they have been successful in promoting children's learning or how the activity could be improved or extended.

Overall children are making good progress in personal, social and emotional development. They are keen to participate in most of the activities provided. Children are forming friendships with each other and some children actively seek out their best friends to share experiences. For example, they decide together which activity to join and sit together, chatting away happily during their snack. Children speak confidently to express themselves both in small and large groups. They confidently share their news during group time and talk about significant experiences, such as their visit to see a helicopter and how much they enjoyed exploring the inside. Generally children listen carefully and respond well to open ended questions. They enjoy listening to stories on the tape recorder and develop their language for speaking and thinking as they predict what might happen next in stories. Children have many opportunities for mark making. They enjoy drawing pictures of themselves and make marks in the dry flour which helps to develop their hand-eye co-ordination and subsequently their early writing skills. Although children have access to a wide range of books and listen to stories intently, the book corner is

not inviting and therefore they do not often choose to look at books for enjoyment. Children start to understand that text carries meaning and link letters to sounds. Staff ask what their name starts with and sound out the starting letter as they find the mat with their name on at group time. Children are making good progress in mathematics. They regularly count as part of everyday activities, such as, how many raisins are left in their bowl, they count along with staff during the 'Ten little ladybirds' story, how many flowers they need for each bunch and how many potatoes they have dug up. Children start to recognise numbers as labels as they observe the number posters on display and talk about numbers during group time. Children recognise shapes such as squares and circles, and sort and match during games of lotto and snap.

Children enjoy local walks where they talk about the things they see and collect items for harvest festival which they take to the nearby elderly peoples home. This helps children learn about their own and the wider community. Children have regular access to the computer and are making good progress in their use of information communication technology in their play. They investigate and explore how things work as they confidently use programmable toys such as remote control cars and electronic games. Children learn about caring for living things, growth and change. They observe the tortoise bought in by staff, care for bulbs and potatoes as they grow and observe what happens to the ice when it is put into the water tray. Children have fun imitating real life as they dress up as fire fighters and doctors which helps them start to make sense of the world. They express themselves creatively as they tap out simple rhythms using musical instruments and move their bodies in various ways to music. For example, they pretend to be leaves fluttering to the ground.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are fostered. Children enter the pre-school happily and are welcomed warmly by staff. They share caring relationships with consistent staff who know them well which helps them to feel valued. Individual children's needs are met because staff develop an effective partnership with parents. Useful information is obtained from parents about their children when they start the pre-school and is shared and updated regularly thereafter. Children who have or may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate care because staff confidently implement the special educational needs code of practice. They carefully monitor any concerns they have about children and work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure care is provided to support children to reach their full potential.

Children develop a positive self-image as they play with toys and use resources that positively represents themselves and people of other races, religions, cultures and abilities to themselves. These include dolls of various colours, puzzles that show people from around the world, small world people including some who have a disability and books. Children have many opportunities to learn about the cultures and beliefs of others as they actively participate in activities that celebrate festivals from around the world such as Chinese New Year, Diwali, Christmas and Halloween.

Overall children respond well to the regular praise and encouragement given by staff. They are reminded of the pre-school 'rules' daily during the group welcome session, which supports children to negotiate, share, take turns and play co-operatively. At times, however, not enough is done quickly enough to calm more boisterous children.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Parents receive useful information about the Foundation Stage in the form of the pre-school handbook. Information about the current theme is displayed, with activities to be provided and parents and children are encouraged to bring items from home linked to the theme to talk about during group welcome sessions. This enables parents to contribute positively to their children's learning at home. Parents have regular access to their children's progress records through parents meetings and regularly contribute their own observations of their children. This strengthens the partnership with parents and has a positive impact on children's learning and development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted satisfactorily because overall space, staff and resources are organised effectively and allows children to play and develop their ideas in a safe and generally stimulating environment. Children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced adults who have undergone effective recruitment and vetting procedures that ensure they are suitable to have unsupervised contact with young children and ensures their safety, care and welfare. Sufficient staff are deployed effectively to ensure children are well supervised and overall appropriate care is given.

Clearly written policies and procedures that staff understand and overall, implement consistently are in place and contribute to the welfare, care and safety of all children.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. New staff receive an induction programme which gives them a clear understanding of their role in promoting children's care and learning. All staff attend regular team meetings and appraisals, and there is a commitment to the professional development of staff in the form of training plans to develop their knowledge and skills. Staff have recently attended training in Planning for the setting, Mathematical Development - Shape, Space and Measure, Helping Children Learn how to Behave and The Role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. This contributes to maintaining and enhancing the standard of care and nursery education provided. Although there are some very good systems in place, the use of evaluation is not sufficiently effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection recommended that the pre-school develop a procedure for lost or uncollected children, develop and implement an action plan that shows how qualification requirements will be met and develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues.

Children's welfare, care and safety are now promoted more effectively because most staff, including the supervisor, hold a relevant qualification and a written policy for lost or uncollected children is included in the pre-school handbook. There is a clearly identified member of staff who has responsibility for child protection who provides support and guidance to all other staff including local authority safeguarding children's board guidance and a written policy is in place. This ensures children's well-being is safeguarded effectively.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that the pre-school develop children's understanding of simple calculation and problem solving in everyday practical activities, develop

teaching strategies to ensure sufficient challenge for older more able children and improve involvement levels during activities, develop the short term planning to include sufficient detail to enable practitioners to adapt activities to promote the learning of all children and take account of children's individual needs.

Children are now developing a good understanding of problem solving and simple calculation. Some staff have attended training in mathematical development and have a better understanding of how to incorporate simple calculation into everyday practical activities. For example, children regularly count during many activities and are gaining an understanding of how many are left if you take one away. They regularly count how many pieces of fruit they have left if they eat one piece and sing simple number songs and rhymes where they add one more or take one away. Some progress has been made in developing teaching strategies to provide challenge for more able children and to improve involvement levels during activities. Individual education plans are developed for some children and staff discuss individual children who they wish to focus on in a particular area of their development. Although this does not always transfer into practice, staff have worked hard to develop the planning and continue to work towards using information from children's progress records to inform planning to ensure children are challenged to reach their full potential. The staff rota clearly shows each member of staff's responsibility during each session and promotes better involvement levels for most children as staff are deployed well throughout the pre-school.

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

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- improve children's safety by making sure the cords on all blinds are inaccessible
- improve the presentation of activities to make them more inviting to children in particular the book area

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):

- develop the quality of teaching to promote learning outcomes more effectively, extend children's learning and ensure children are challenged to reach their full potential
- develop the use of children's progress records to inform planning and to plan for individual children
- develop the use of the outdoor play area to enhance children's play and learning experiences
- develop the use of evaluation to monitor and improve the quality of care and nursery education provided.

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