

Oundle Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220304
Inspection date	17 March 2008
Inspector	Jean Suff
Setting Address	Fletton House, Glapthorn Road, Oundle, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE8 4JQ
Telephone number	01832 273 647
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Registered person	Oundle Community Pre-School
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 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?

Oundle Community Pre-School is a committee run provision. It was formed in 1963 and operates from rented single storey premises adjacent to the local library and includes an enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school for sessional care at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during school term-times from 09:10 until 12:00.

There are currently 29 children aged from two and a half to under five years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All children speak English as their first language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff to work with the children. Six members of the staff hold early years qualifications and the seventh is working towards an appropriate qualification. An additional staff member is employed on a part-time basis to prepare snacks. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the Northamptonshire Early Years advisory team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff have a sound knowledge of health and hygiene guidelines and procedures. For example, they use plastic table cloths and wipe tables with antibacterial spray before and after snack. Children are aware of their own needs and are developing independence in their personal care. For example, they independently use the toilet facilities and are aware of the importance of hand washing after using the toilet 'to get rid of germs or you will get poorly.' However, due to the nature of the rolling snack bar and the location of the hand wash basins, not all children wash their hands before snack. This increases the risk of infection for children. Accidents and illnesses are dealt with effectively. For example, a high proportion of staff hold a first aid qualification and first aid supplies are readily accessible. Accidents are properly recorded, however, parental signatures of acknowledgement are not always obtained. This potentially compromises continuity of care.

Children's dietary needs are met well as staff have a good knowledge of nutrition and work closely with parents. For example, they display the snack menu daily and take careful account of individual needs such as allergies. Children are encouraged to learn about healthy eating through planned activities such as growing vegetables and cooking fruit buns for snack time. Snack time is a relaxed occasion where children sit with their friends and develop social skills. They enjoy ample quantities of healthy foods such as cheese, crackers, salad, vegetables and fruit. Children are involved in the preparation of their snack and in serving drinks which promotes independence and the enhancement of self-care skills. Fresh drinking water is readily available from a dispenser for children to independently access. Staff encourage children to take additional water after exercise to ensure they remain hydrated throughout the session.

Children benefit from choice and regular fresh air as the pre-school door is open whatever the weather allowing free-flow between inside and outdoor activities. Children develop very good physical control through daily indoor and outdoor activities. They have opportunities to strengthen their large muscles as they move tyres, pipes and large toy vehicles. They gain good spatial awareness as they climb, jump, balance and manoeuvre wheeled vehicles. Children have good opportunities to develop hand to eye co-ordination through a range of activities such as painting, pouring sand and compost, beating together sugar and eggs and manipulating the computer mouse.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in well-maintained and secure premises so helping to promote their well-being. Bright displays, posters and information for parents provide a welcoming environment. The play area is spacious and well-organised into curriculum areas so enabling children to move around freely and safely. Children and parents are greeted warmly and made to feel welcome. This encourages children to enter the setting confidently and quickly join their friends in play. Children who are not yet settled are given individual attention from staff which greatly increases their self-confidence. Children's development in all areas is promoted by a range of good quality play equipment that is well-labelled and accessible to children. They move around the room and outside play space confidently selecting toys and resources for play.

Children benefit from good security measures to ensure there is no unauthorised entry to the building. Staff are vigilant throughout the session and have good systems in place on departure to ensure children do not leave the premises unaccompanied. This ensures that children can play safely. Children play with resources and equipment that are safe for them to use because staff carry out thorough risk assessments and ensure any hazards are minimised. Staff ensure that activities remain safe, tidy and attractive for children to use by ongoing tidying up throughout the session. Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff talk to them about safety issues. For example, they remind children to walk within the setting, show them how to use knives carefully and practise the emergency evacuation procedure on a regular basis. The fully enclosed outdoor area is checked every day to ensure it remains safe for children.

Staff have a good practical awareness of what child abuse and neglect means and of what to do in the event of any concerns about a child in order to safeguard their welfare effectively. However, the current child protection policy does not fully reflect national guidelines on the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff. This limits the pre-school's ability to manage any such incident in children's best interests.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are busy and happy at the pre-school. They settle quickly when they arrive and go about routines confidently. They play imaginatively in the home corner and outside cafe, preparing and serving meals and ice creams. They ride wheeled vehicles, fill the back with sand and compost 'petrol' and enjoy painting and printing activities. Children make their own choices when selecting activities throughout the session and negotiate and take turns sensibly when sharing toys and equipment.

Children develop good relationships with staff and one another. Staff take time to help them settle when they first start, listen to what children say and value their news from home. Children develop high levels of self-esteem and confidence because staff are caring and encouraging, constantly praising their achievements. Staff talk with children, join in and support their play so allowing for progress. Although all children engage with the same activities, learning plans for younger children are clearly linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make sound progress in their learning because they are supported by staff with a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff are committed to a child-centred curriculum and provide varied and broad experiences that follow children's interests and promote their development. Children's key workers regularly use both formal and informal observations to identify what children know and to build on this in order for them to achieve. Children's progress is tracked and records are detailed and well-organised. This helps staff to identify the next steps for children's learning. Children's learning is enhanced because staff daily discuss children's individual achievements, plan activities to meet needs and extend their learning appropriately. For example, staff noticed that one child was carrying a shopping basket and playing at shops for a good proportion of the morning so they provided resources such as a till, a shopping list and empty food boxes, to turn the home corner into a shop the next day. Staff use a good variety of teaching methods that suit children's preferred learning style. They allow themselves time to firstly observe and then intervene, to demonstrate, give an explanation or offer a challenging question. Staff give children good opportunities to initiate or choose an activity for themselves. Staff use positive

language when managing children's behaviour, however, opportunities are missed to develop children's listening skills, for example, during tidy-up times and singing sessions.

Children develop good personal, social and emotional skills. They move around the setting confidently and are developing a strong sense of self-care as they put on their coats, help themselves to snack and select activities which interest them. Children are sufficiently self-assured to play independently or in groups. They are beginning to negotiate and play co-operatively with each other, filling each others cars with petrol, reading a map together and calling out directions.

Children are able speakers but few opportunities are provided for children to practise their listening skills either in a small or large group. Although a comfortable and well-stocked reading area is provided staff do not sufficiently encourage children to look at books or share a story. This limits learning. Children follow simple instructions while cooking or preparing snacks. They have opportunities to mark-make with an interesting variety of materials in a range of play situations such as the home corner, painting table, shop or café. Children begin to realise that print carries meaning as they find their names on their coat pegs or name cards at snack time and make words with magnetic letters.

Children often recognise and use numerals up to 10 reliably, for example, when independently using a simple number sequencing game on the computer. They learn about mathematical concepts as they construct small and large models, match cake mixture to paper cases, print patterns and price tickets. Staff are adept at using mathematical language such as how many, more and altogether so children begin to learn about simple calculation and they sometimes introduce problem solving into routine activities. Most children are able to identify shapes and colours.

A good range of investigative resources motivates children to explore how things work. Children play with timers, look through magnifying glasses and position pipes to see where the water flows. Children build large constructions from cardboard boxes, climb into them and incorporate them into their play. They handle compost and look for living creatures in the outdoor area. Children explore different media and materials through craft activities such as painting, printing and collage. They are able to competently use small equipment in their creative work such as scissors, glue sticks and pencils. There are sufficient resources to encourage the use of information technology and children know how to use them. Children use their imaginations well during role play, reflecting on their own experiences and remaining in role for long periods of time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well known and very much treated as individuals and with equal concern. Details such as the use of children's named photographs on low pegs for coats and belongings make children feel at home and part of the setting. Information is gathered from parents when children begin at pre-school and regularly updated in order to promote their well-being. As a result, children feel valued and special. Staff use the knowledge they have about each child to support their individual needs very effectively. For example, they provide resources they know specific children will enjoy and benefit from the next time those children attend the pre-school. Good systems are in place to identify and monitor children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff understand the need to work closely with parents and other professionals to meet the needs of children in such an instance. Children begin to learn about similarities and

difference as they take part in planned activities linked to festivals and celebrations. For example, they taste food for Japanese Children's Day, make individual cards for Mothering Sunday and print green shamrocks for St Patrick's Day.

Children's behaviour is generally good. Staff are calm in their dealings with children and give regular reminders and praise so children begin to learn what is acceptable behaviour at the pre-school. Close links with parents ensure consistency and that children begin to understand what is expected of them. Children work harmoniously with each other and take turns with equipment particularly well in the outside area. They make choices and take decisions, such as, which activities to engage with, when to go outside and when to have their snack. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff meet with parents when children first register and quickly develop friendly, professional relationships which encourage an on-going two-way flow of information. In addition to general information about the settings policies and procedures, readily accessible files give detailed information on the six areas of learning and how the pre-school aims to deliver these so helping parents to gain an overview of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff take time to talk with parents on a daily basis and offer suggestions for parents to continue with play and learning tasks at home. Regular parents' evenings enable staff and parents to share observations and assessments of children's progress on a more systematic basis.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's health, safety, well-being, enjoyment and achievement is promoted by good organisation. Children are happy and have fun in the setting. Space is used well, allowing children to play safely and move around freely. The pre-school operates a key worker system and children are cared for by committed staff who show a clear understanding of their role in supporting children's development and learning. Staff have a range of qualifications and experience in childcare and continue to develop their knowledge and skills through ongoing training.

Staff are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that they conform to legal requirements and required documentation is in place to support the care and welfare of children. However, systems are not yet fully established to ensure that policies and procedures are monitored and updated regularly to ensure they always meet current guidelines. Consequently, some policies, for example, the safeguarding children policy, do not contain all the required elements.

The leadership and management of early education is good. The pre-school leader has a clear vision and aim to provide a safe place for children to develop their personal, social, emotional and intellectual capabilities in a child-orientated setting. Staff work well as a team to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the programme of activities and experiences delivered to children so ensuring each child makes good progress towards the early learning goals. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was given one recommendation. It was asked to ensure that the child protection procedure for the pre-school complies with the locally required procedures. Although the child protection policy has been reviewed and now contains most

required elements it does not fully reflect the nationally agreed procedures to be followed in the event of any child protection allegation against staff. A further recommendation in respect of safeguarding children has therefore been raised.

At the last Nursery Education inspection the setting was given one point for consideration. It was asked to continue to develop opportunities for children to practise and improve their information technology skills. This requirement has been met therefore children's learning is enhanced.

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 by 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):

- ensure steps to prevent the spread of infection are consistently applied, with regard to hand washing
- ensure the accident record is signed by parents on each occasion
- ensure the child protection policy fully reflects the nationally agreed procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against staff
- ensure systems are in place to update policies and procedures in line with current guidelines and requirements.

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):

- improve opportunities for children to develop listening skills by ensuring story and singing times engage children's interest and enable all children to participate effectively.

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