

Fen Drayton Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221777
Inspection date	19 March 2008
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe
Setting Address	The Village Hall, Cootes Lane, Fen Drayton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB24 4SL
Telephone number	01954 230311
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Registered person	Fen Drayton 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 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?

Fen Drayton Pre-school opened in 1982 and operates from the main hall of Fen Drayton village hall in Fen Drayton, Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 25 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open during school term times from 09:15 to 12:00 on Monday, Thursday and Friday and from 12:45 to 15:15 on Wednesday. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 23 children from two years four months to four years on roll. Of these, 14 receive funding for early education. A small number of children who attend have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs three staff. Two members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a varied selection of fresh fruit, such as bananas, apples and kiwi fruit. They sit at tables together so they enjoy some social contact. However the organisation of snack time means children sometimes sit for periods of time that are inappropriate for their age and stage of development. This means they become distracted and bored and as a result sometimes display challenging behaviour. Children do not learn suitable eating habits as their food is served without individual plates; they handle each other's fruit and put their food onto the tables. This also increases the risk of cross-infection. However, staff make sure tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial cleaner before serving. Children have milk or water to drink at snack time, but their access to water at other times is limited, which affects their well-being and their ability to make healthy choices. Children have some opportunities to develop their independence as they act as helpers and take turns to serve their friends.

Accidents to children are recorded in a confidential manner and shared with parents and carers. Sufficient staff hold first aid qualifications to make sure children receive appropriate treatment in the event of an accident. Suitable procedures ensure any medication is administered and stored according to parents' wishes, which helps to ensure children's medical needs are met. Information is collected from parents and carers so staff are aware of any medical needs or special dietary requirements, which helps to keep children safe.

Children enjoy active outdoor exercise each day, they use a safe enclosed play area and benefit from a range of suitable equipment, such as trikes, scooters and balls. They often go for walks around the recreation ground and explore the natural world. Children visit the enclosed public play space close to their setting and use the large fixed play equipment; here they learn to climb, scramble and slide, which builds their confidence. Indoors children use balance beams, a slide or a small trampet to encourage them to extend their physical competences. Children's small muscle development is developed adequately as they use scissors, play dough cutters, brushes or glue spreaders. Malleable materials such as play dough help them gain the necessary strength and control so they can begin to develop their writing and mark making skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is promoted well by staff who supervise them conscientiously as they play and monitor their arrival and departure. The outer door is secured and visitors to the setting wait to be admitted by staff. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as they practise the emergency evacuation procedures and staff keep records of fire drills so potential hazards can be identified and rectified.

The rooms used by the children are warm and welcoming. Although wall space is limited due to the group sharing the village hall, they are creative in the way they display children's work on mobile screens and boards. This promotes children's self-esteem as they show off their art work and pre-writing skills. Resources are of good quality and children have some opportunities to make independent choices. Risk assessments include the checking of toys and equipment to make sure children play safely. Children's safety is assured as staff take appropriate precautions on outings, for example, they carry a first aid kit when they go for local walks.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as practitioners attend appropriate child protection training so they know about the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Suitable policies and procedures mean staff know how to refer any concerns, whilst parents are informed about the setting's role and responsibilities in the parent handbook.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have some opportunities for free-flow play when they enjoy a range of prepared activities and can make some independent choices. They have time to play outside each day and enjoy active exercise. In addition there is a small garden area, where they plant flowers and vegetables and watch them grow and develop. Children show good relationships with each other and mainly play together cooperatively, for example, they enjoy imaginative role play or games such as dominoes. Younger children benefit from the settling in process, which enables parents and carers to attend until their children are secure and content. Children enjoy the company of adults, for example, they sit with them to enjoy a story one-to-one, or join in conversation with them at the activity tables. However, much of the session is taken up with unnecessary routines, such as calling the register and sitting down for snack. This means children are taken away from their self-chosen activities in order to participate. This limits their ability to concentrate and therefore benefit from periods of sustained thinking.

Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children enjoy a reasonable range of activities that are suitable for their age and stage of development. However, although staff are experienced and show children warmth and affection, they do not always recognise the learning opportunities presented by the activities and sometimes fail to enthuse children with appropriate questioning and direction. This leads to some of the activities lacking in interest as children cannot sustain their concentration. Planning includes a satisfactory variety of learning opportunities, but children's learning is limited because the plans do not take account of what individual children can do. Instead adults follow planned activities that do not truly reflect children's own ideas and interests. As a result activities fail to stimulate and challenge children and they become bored and distracted. Some evidence of children's learning is collected and used to assess progress using the stepping stones, however this information is not used effectively to inform the planning, other than on an occasional and informal basis.

However, children benefit from a good variety of books; they settle down in the book area and choose stories independently. They enjoy times when adults read to them spontaneously, which stimulates their interest in reading and story telling. A well equipped graphics area means children choose materials for mark making independently, although some of the strategies used to encourage them are inappropriate for their age and stage of development, for example, using tracings and templates.

Children have a developing understanding of numbers and calculating. They know how old they are and can count out loud using their fingers to check if they are three or four. Some children recognise shapes, such as squares or oblongs and can match them in puzzles or on the computer. Water and sand play gives them opportunities to find out about volume and quantity as they fill and pour using different sized containers.

Children learn about the natural world and how things grow and change. They recognise that seeds need water and sunlight to grow and show pleasure in handling and planting the seeds.

Children who express a need to know what the inside of a hyacinth bulb looks like receive encouragement and positive support from staff as they carefully peel back the layers. They play with a range of media and materials, such as sand, water and dough, which helps to develop their physical skills as well as encouraging their understanding of texture and consistency.

Children have adequate opportunities to paint, colour and draw although some art and crafts are adult led and directed with an overemphasis on the end product, rather than extending children's experiences. Children enjoy role play during their free-play sessions; they dress up, make tea in the house, or sit inside the tepee pretending to be 'in the woods'. This helps them develop their imaginations.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the positive relationships between their parents and staff. They exchange verbal feedback each day and show friendly respect for each other. Written information, such as regular newsletters, the committee minutes and a notice board ensure parents are kept informed about day-to-day changes and events. However, the lack of a key worker system means there is no identified person to work with particular families and therefore some opportunities to develop ongoing purposeful partnerships is lost.

The partnership with the parents of children who receive early education funding is satisfactory. Parents are informed about some of the activities and can contribute to these, such as bringing in items for an interest table. They receive written information in the form of written reports so they have a reasonable understanding of their children's progress. However there is no secure system for staff to collect information about what children can do at home, which would enable them to better plan for children's next steps. Parents and carers say they have few opportunities to find out how their children learn through play and rarely access the development records. However, they are aware they can access them if needed.

Children develop an understanding of the wider world as they learn about festivals from other countries and cultures. A reasonable range of resources, such as a variety of books, puzzles and small world toys helps them recognise the differences and similarities in our society. Generally policies and procedures show the setting aims to make all members of society welcome, however there is a nappy changing policy in place that does not take into account children's individual development patterns, or allow for any additional needs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Generally staff organise activities that children enjoy and show them warmth and affection. Children have opportunities to play independently and they approach some of the activities, such as role play or active outdoor play with enthusiasm. Children are welcomed into the setting by staff and are supported in their separation from their parents and carers, which enables them to develop their confidence and look forward to the activities. Activities do not always provide children with sufficient challenge and this sometimes means they walk away from activities prematurely or become bored and restless, such as during snack time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

At present there is no key worker system and consequently there is no formal means of establishing and maintaining consistency and continuity of care. Absence of effective key

working limits parents and carers opportunities to develop a true partnership with the staff who care for their children and inhibits children's ability to settle easily and develop secure relationships with a key adult, who is responsible for their continuing welfare. However, children feel welcome as they enter a setting where activities and resources have been suitably organised and staff take care to greet them as they enter. Children respond well to the adults around them and relationships are warm and friendly.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Most staff have the necessary qualifications to ensure they have the skills to support children in their activities, although they do not always use what they know to effectively support children in their play and learning. The planning of the activities does not always take into account children's likes and dislikes and staff sometimes fail to respond to children's needs, for example, by questioning them about their play or enabling them to access additional resources that provide extension and challenge. In addition the daily routines impact adversely on children's ability to make good decisions about their activities. This affects learning.

All necessary documentation is in place so staff have information that keeps children safe and well. Personal details are updated regularly and emergency contact details are easily accessible. The registration certificate and the public liability insurance are displayed to reassure parents and the daily register is completed with care and attention to detail. Appropriate procedures are in place to make sure any adults working with the children are safe and suitable to do so. Parents receive copies of the policies and procedures to ensure they are suitably informed about the provision. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered person was asked to develop resources to ensure children have an appropriate range of experiences that promote their understanding of diversity, to ensure records relating to accidents are confidential, to develop planning to ensure a balance across all areas and ensure activities offer appropriate progressive challenge for children and to continue to develop the system for monitoring the effectiveness of the nursery education.

Since the last inspection the setting has acquired a suitable range of resources that help children learn about diversity, such as books, puzzles and dressing up. Accident records are shared appropriately with parents and kept confidential.

The system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the nursery education is still under development. The staff prepare a self-evaluation document, which identifies those areas the setting does well, this includes input from parents and carers. However, the planning has not been developed enough to ensure that activities offer sufficient challenge for all the children, this therefore continues as a recommendation at this inspection.

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):

- ensure food is properly prepared and served, using appropriate utensils such as plates, to avoid cross-infection
- make sure water is easily accessible so children can help themselves
- ensure policies and procedures reflect anti-discriminatory good practice, this refers to the nappy changing policy
- establish an effective key worker system.

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 the activities and routines to promote children's independent learning
- continue to develop the planning to ensure activities maintain children's interest and offer appropriate challenge so they progress according to their individual needs
- improve parents' opportunities to contribute what they know about what their children can do.

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