

Witnesham Area Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251726
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspector	Gill Thornton
Setting Address	Witnesham CP School, High Road, Witnesham, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK, IP6 9EX
Telephone number	01473 784934
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Registered person	The Trustees of Witnesham Area Pre-School
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 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?

Witnesham Pre-school is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It opened in 1974 and operates from a classroom in the grounds of Witnesham Primary School. A maximum of 16 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during term times from 09.00 to 11.45, with a lunch club from 11.45 to 13.00 everyday, except Mondays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 14 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school employs two staff, both of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are gaining an understanding of the importance of good hygiene practices through planned activities and explanations from staff about the importance of washing their hands thoroughly. Staff obtain appropriate information from parents about children's individual health care needs and a well stocked first aid kit is easily accessible in a medical emergency. However, parents' prior written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is not requested, so children may not receive appropriate attention in a medical emergency. Both members of staff have current first aid and food hygiene certificates to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow to maintain children's health and prevent the spread of infection.

Children's dietary needs are met through the provision of a healthy mid-morning snack, when they sit down together to enjoy a selection of items such as cheese, apple, sliced banana or raw carrots. Children who stay for the lunch club enjoy the social occasion as they sit with staff to eat their packed lunch. Drinking water is available for children to access independently throughout the session to ensure they do not become dehydrated.

Children participate in a range of activities which contribute to their physical health and fitness. They enjoy a daily period of outside play when they develop control of their bodies while pedalling, climbing, sliding and balancing. In wet weather they enjoy the excitement of dressing up in the group's all-weather suits and wellington boots so they can enjoy splashing in puddles. Children develop their small physical skills while using a range of equipment such as scissors, mark-making tools and various construction kits.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where staff take appropriate steps to keep children safe. They carry out daily visual safety checks before the children arrive and they supervise children closely to ensure toys are safe and used appropriately. However, full risk assessments are not regularly undertaken on the indoor and outdoor environment to identify the action to be taken to minimise potential risks to children. The premises are secure and staff monitor children's arrival and departure times to ensure they only leave with an authorised adult. Staff are vigilant when escorting children to toilets and the outside play area, they ensure children are aware of safety rules and remind them to look out for any vehicles in the car park.

Children have access to a broad range of good quality toys and equipment that meet safety standards. These are displayed in well-labelled child-accessible storage facilities. Children move around the room safely and independently accessing toys and resources that interest and motivate them. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff regularly update their child protection training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern. However, the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff are not clearly defined in their child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Most children enjoy coming to the setting and generally settle enthusiastically into activities of their own choosing. Staff know the children and their families well and make good use of opportunities to sit and chat with the children to develop their language skills and extend their vocabulary. Most children show confidence as they move independently around the well-resourced learning environment initiating their own play and following their own interests. Staff show interest and enjoyment in children's play, for example, laughing with them as they explore the hand puppets, or enjoying sharing play food with them in the well-resourced home corner.

Staff have attended 'Birth to three matters' training and are aware of the differing needs of the younger children in the group. A flexible settling-in procedure allows parents to stay with their children until they feel they are confident to remain on their own. Staff informally adapt their language and questioning skills to take account of children's differing stages of development. They do not yet reflect the framework formally in their planning as there are only a very few children of this age group on roll. All children have regular opportunities to investigate and explore materials such as sand and water and they eagerly take part in 'show and tell' at the end of the session.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff use their knowledge of the Foundation Stage to provide children with a sufficient range of interesting play and learning opportunities. Planning is based on the six areas of learning, although it is not always balanced across each of the aspects, to ensure children receive a sufficiently balanced curriculum. Weekly plans identify resources available each day, but these are not linked to learning intentions to ensure that staff and parents make effective use of learning opportunities within the everyday curriculum. Adult-focused activities are well planned to identify learning intentions based upon appropriate stepping stones and show adaptation to take account of children's different stages of development.

Teaching is appropriate for the children attending. Staff understand children's needs and have a sound knowledge of how children learn and make progress. The level of challenge is sufficient to interest most children in the activities and enable them to make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Children's progress through the stepping stones is recorded in their records of progress, although these do not currently include written observations of children's play. Staff informally use their knowledge of individual children to identify their next step in learning, although this is not formerly reflected in planning. Staff join in with children's play to extend their learning and encourage them to make their own suggestions, for example, how to reach the top a when building a structure taller than themselves with a construction set.

Children are sufficiently confident and self-assured to play independently or in pairs, interacting and negotiating well. For example, sharing ideas while mixing the sand and water together. They are learning to persevere at their chosen activities and they respond well to staff's use of praise and encouragement. For example, proudly exclaiming "Look I've done it" when completing a jigsaw puzzle. Most children are becoming confident communicators and they make good relationships with staff and each other while discussing things that are important to them.

Children are beginning to recognise their own names and they explore a range of mark-making resources during their play. They enjoy listening and responding to their favourite stories and they are beginning to understand how books work. Children are presented with number, shape, letters and words presented in visual form through posters, displays and labelling around the room. They use positional language and identify shapes during their play and they engage with staff in activities involving sorting and comparing using an attractive range of mathematical resources. Most children can count by rote to 10 but they have little opportunity to explore their simple calculation and problem solving skills during everyday activities.

Children show good levels of curiosity and use all their senses to investigate and explore various materials such as soap or cornflour and water and they describe the changes they observe as more water is added. Children confidently use the computer and they are able to explain to each other what they have to do before progressing onto the next level. Children happily engage in imaginative role play activities based on their own first hand experiences. For example, while operating the realistic range of appliances in the home corner. They enjoy exploring their creativity while selecting various craft resources to experiment with their own ideas. They are able to independently access easels for chalking and painting and become engrossed in exploring what happens when they mix different colours and use them to make hand prints.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the group and displays of their artwork around the room help them develop a sense of belonging. Staff respect children's individuality and ensure they have access to toys and equipment to meet their individual needs. Staff are aware that some children may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and understand the importance of working in partnership with parents and other professionals. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator has attended specific training to ensure procedures are in place to provide children with appropriate support, however, the policy is not line with current requirements.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are learning to take account of the needs of others and celebrate important events in each others lives such as each other's birthdays and Christmas. They have access to resources such as books and puzzles reflecting diversity to help them develop an understanding of the wider world. Children are learning right from wrong. They are polite and staff praise them for being helpful, which promotes their good behaviour. Staff use appropriate strategies to help children learn to share and take turns with popular resources such as the bikes.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Parents receive comprehensive information via the prospectus, which includes copies of all policies and procedures and details about the Foundation Stage. This keeps them up to date with the running of the provision, however, the complaints procedure does not inform them about the requirement to keep a log of complaints. Daily diaries record the activities children have participated in and these are freely accessible to parents. However, there is no effective system in place to encourage parents to share and contribute to their children's records of progress to enable staff and parents to work together to plan for their children's next step in learning. Parents provide information about their children's starting point by completing an 'All about me booklet' when their children join the group. Notice boards and termly newsletters provide parents with further information about the provision of nursery education. A joint meeting has previously been arranged for parents with the school, to ease children's transfer

into school and to discuss ways of supporting children's language development. Parents regularly help on the rota, they value staff and appreciate being able to stay and settle their children until there are ready to separate from them.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by suitable and qualified staff who have a sound knowledge of how children learn and make progress. They understand and generally follow the setting's policies and procedures to take appropriate steps to protect children, promote their well-being and support their development. However, operational policies and procedures have not been updated in line with current requirements and do not always reflect actual practice.

The small team of staff work well together, they are aware of each others roles and responsibilities and are suitably deployed throughout the session. Staff ensure documentation is accurately maintained and kept confidential to support the welfare of the children attending. The group is aware of the importance of maintaining staff ratios and ensuring conditions of registration are met, however, they failed to notify Ofsted of changes in opening times. Children understand routine of session which helps them settle and become independent. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff have been receiving and acting upon advice from their support teacher to develop the learning environment and improve their practice. However, staff appraisals have not been undertaken to provide them with opportunities to discuss and identify areas for professional development and there is no effective system in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of nursery education. Staff foster good working relationships with the school and take children on visits to the reception class to ease their transition into school.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection the provider was asked to develop planning to show links to the stepping stones; improve adult-focused activities to include adaptation and evaluation and provide children with more opportunities for mark-making and free craft play. Appropriate stepping stones are now identified within planning and adult-focused activity sheets include differentiation and evaluation of intended learning, including assessment opportunities, although these are not used to inform future planning. Children have access to an appropriately resourced creative and mark-making area at each session and within other areas of the learning environment. These improvements have had a positive impact upon the provision of nursery education, although planning continues to be an area for development 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):

- request prior written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment
- implement a procedure for carrying out and acting upon risk assessments on the indoor and outdoor environment
- update policies and procedures to ensure they reflect practice and meet current requirements
- ensure Ofsted is notified of any changes in opening times.

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):

- review planning to identify learning in the everyday curriculum and ensure balance across the aspects within each area of learning
- develop opportunities for parents to share and contribute to their children's records of progress
- devise and implement a system of monitoring and evaluating the provision of nursery education.

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