

Hermitage Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253414
Inspection date	09 November 2007
Inspector	Ann Keen
Setting Address	The Hermitage, Wilford Road, Ruddington, Nottinghamshire, NG11 6EL
Telephone number	07923487030 am only
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Hermitage 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?

Hermitage Pre-School opened in December 1967. It operates from a large hall in a building called the Hermitage, which is a church owned facility. The pre-school also has access to a smaller hall and a kitchen area, with toilets adjacent to the main hall. There is a large enclosed garden for outdoor play. The pre-school is committee run and serves the local community.

There are currently 38 children from two to five years on the roll. This includes 10 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting currently have no children who have special educational needs or speak English as a second language.

The group opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00. Seven staff, six of whom have early years childcare qualifications, work with the children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have good opportunities to have fresh air and exercise as the children go outside on a daily basis. They ride on wheeled toys, use bats and balls and play with hoops, helping to develop their co-ordination well. Children have a suitable range of resources to enhance their physical development and staff support them well. Staff are aware of necessary procedures such as sweeping up berries before children go outside to ensure children's health is well promoted.

Children are protected against infection well because staff follow suitable hygiene routines. Good nappy changing procedures are in place. Children have their own nappies from home to avoid allergies and the spread of infection. When changing nappies staff use gloves and antibacterial wipes to minimise the risk of cross-infection. Children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment, therefore promoting good health care. Children are competent at washing their hands so they are learning appropriate hygiene practices and use individual paper towels to avoid the spread of germs. Children are supplied with healthy snacks such as plums and toast with a choice of white and brown bread and staff are making them aware of healthy choices. The pre-school provides water which is available to children at any time and milk is provided at snack time, successfully ensuring children do not go thirsty. Staff hold current first aid certificates; they record accidents and keep a suitably equipped first aid box enabling them to react to emergencies appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a newly refurbished environment so staff are yet unable to display children's work extensively. Despite this, they fully understand the necessity to ensure the physical environment is welcoming for children and some evidence of the activities are displayed. The entrance is clearly advertised as being the pre-school and provides suitable information for parents. The entrance is locked and can only be accessed by staff so children are well protected from intruders. However, some safety measures are yet to be put in place. The outside area is securely fenced and locks are ordered for the gates. In the meantime staff operate temporary measures to ensure children are suitably protected and secure. Other measures which are in the process of being installed are safety film for the higher panes of glass doors and locks on the doors to the back passageway.

Children play in a very light, spacious and airy hall offering them a good amount of space in which to move and play. The equipment and resources are child height and accessible, developing their independence well and enabling them easy access to resources, reducing the risk of accidents. A high level of supervision also promotes children's safety as staff monitor the activities closely. Appropriate regulations are adhered to with regard to fire safety including an evacuation plan. There is a clear and comprehensive child protection policy and staff are knowledgeable about their roles.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident when coming into the pre-school and they are making sound progress in their leisure and personal development. Children are developing positive relationships with the staff, supported by their calm and kind treatment of children. Children are learning what is acceptable behaviour through the use of appropriate strategies. Children's care, learning and play is well supported through a variety of play situations like singing songs, using construction toys and 'small world' scenarios. They record children's development using the 'Birth to three matters framework' so they are aware of the progress children are making. However, they sometimes include the younger children in groups of older children which does not always fully support their development. The toys and equipment are suitable for different ages providing interest and age-appropriate activities. Children are excited and play happily with playdough, giving them sound opportunities to develop their creative skills. The under threes are learning to be skilful communicators through staff's helpful guidance and general conversation.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are beginning to use the six areas of learning to provide a varied programme of activities for the children. Staff are aware of the Foundation Stage and use the guidance satisfactorily to plan activities. They observe the children and are starting to use the local authority assessments adequately to record children's progress. However, they do not yet use the assessments sufficiently well so they plan their work to target specific children's needs and maximise achievement. Staff work well as a team and cope with challenges and changes to the circumstances, ensuring the children's emotional development is nurtured effectively. Staff question the children, successfully encouraging them to think and provide answers. Children benefit from the wide range of resources provided helping them with suitable opportunities to explore, experiment and play. Children are well behaved and staff encourage them through good strategies such as positive reinforcement and giving them reward stickers. Staff generally use suitable methods to help children learn; they provide free choice activities and practical sessions, enabling children to have first hand experiences. Children are beginning to understand that print has meaning and that books are enjoyable when sitting with individual staff in small groups. However, the way children are grouped is not always effective in ensuring children's individual learning needs are met. The wide age group at story time, for example, does not necessarily ensure children are getting the best from the activity.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and they are confident to try new activities, developing their self-esteem well. They are successfully learning to be independent, for example, they select their chosen activity from those on offer. Children are developing suitable attitudes to learning; they are interested and involved in the activities. Relationships between staff and children are good so children learn to develop social skills. Children are learning to express their ideas appropriately which helps them develop their communication skills. They are able to cater for their own needs and are starting to help others, for example, by retrieving a lost ball. Children are effectively learning to recognise their names by collecting their name card at the beginning of the day and looking for their name on the table at snack time. They understand that writing has a purpose and enjoy mark-making through using chalks, paints and pens. Children are fascinated by playing with torches and experimenting with the light they make. As a result, children are learning to understand that torches do not work without batteries, contributing well to children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Children's creative skills are being encouraged satisfactorily and they enjoy practising songs for Christmas such

as, 'When Santa got stuck up the chimney'. Through activities like lacing, children learn to manipulate small objects and the control required to thread the lace through holes. Children have suitable apparatus to develop their physical skills in the outside play area and staff show sound knowledge of helping children to practise those skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. There is good two-way communication between parents and staff. Parents feel well informed about the setting and its provision through open days and daily discussion. At these sessions parents can discuss their children's progress reports and staff have developed systems for parents to contribute knowledge of their children at home. In addition staff encourage the parents to continue children's learning activities at home, for example, by taking a toy bear home to discuss what they have done.

Parents fill in entry forms noting children's dietary requirements and information that staff need to know to make the children's stay safe and enjoyable. Parents are well informed about their children's activities and staff are open to discussions and parents consider them approachable. Parents are welcome to stay at the sessions and to be involved in their children's learning. Parents and carers help on a regular basis, supporting children's learning well.

The development of appropriate behaviour is given high priority through positive encouragement and praise so children successfully learn the difference between right and wrong. Consequently children are well behaved. Children learn to celebrate different cultures and beliefs by participating in a variety of cultural festivals. This gives children an appropriate understanding that people have different lifestyles other than their own. The staff are aware that some children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and take appropriate action. Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care is enhanced by sound procedures. The setting has a range of policies and suitable documentation in place which generally reflects the care of children well. Overall children's needs are met. Contact details are kept accurately so children are safeguarded and carers can be quickly contacted in emergencies. Registers are generally well maintained, which helps to safeguard children. The day-to-day running of the setting is generally good and staff understand their roles and responsibilities, providing children with interesting activities and experiences. The main hall is well organised to allow children to experience variety and to move safely with a suitable amount of space. Staff are fully involved with the children at all times so they receive adequate attention and support. Sound systems are in place to maintain good ratios of staff to children ensuring children's safety is promoted.

A knowledgeable new supervisor has been appointed who is keen to establish effective systems for the management of the pre-school. Sound organisation is provided and staff have regular meetings to help plan future developments ensuring children have a suitable range of activities.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. There is a clear operational plan and the staff work together as a team, committed to help the children progress. A system to appraise staff is in place, however, the means to monitor the effectiveness of nursery

education is yet to be fully developed. Consequently the Foundation Stage is not delivered as effectively as possible to the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last combined inspection, which took place at Ruddington Village Hall, the setting was required to ensure children wash their hands appropriately. As the setting has now moved back to the original building the children are able to wash their hands in freely running water, developing good hygiene practices. In addition the setting was asked to develop children's awareness of healthy eating, which they do by providing healthy snacks and discussing foods with the children. The setting was also required to improve staff knowledge of child protection procedures. New staff have been appointed with adequate knowledge ensuring children are safeguarded and staff explain that they intend to update their certificates through attending courses.

To improve the quality of nursery education the pre-school was required to develop all areas of learning to ensure children receive a balanced programme of activities, develop an assessment system and a system for monitoring and evaluating nursery education. As the setting has recently moved accommodation and chose to continue its previous registration, the last inspection was fairly recent. The setting is in the process of developing these systems and procedures and they have yet to be fully developed to provide children with a programme which caters for their individual learning. The pre-school was required to improve its partnership with parents and carers of funded children by developing ways that parents can contribute to their children's assessments and continue children's learning at home. Staff explain how they have taken steps to improve this situation by asking parents to fill in forms, about their children's achievements for example. This is contributing to staff and parents working more closely to support children's education.

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

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 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):

- take positive steps to promote safety with regard to the glass in the windows, the locks on the doors to the kitchen and hall and the locks on the gates outside.

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 planning and assessment to cover the stepping stones and plan the next step in children's learning
- ensure children are organised and grouped to match children's individual needs (this also applies to care)
- develop a system for monitoring the effectiveness 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