

Springboard Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402055
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Inspector	Janette Elaina Lockwood
Setting Address	Springfield Park Baptist Church, Springfield Park Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 6EB
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Registered person	Springboard Pre-School Management 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 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?

Springboard Pre-School is run by Springboard Pre-School Management Group. It opened in 1975 and operates from Springfield Park Baptist Church hall, which is on the outskirts of Chelmsford. A maximum of 34 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.15 to 12.00 school term time only. The group opens on a Monday afternoon from 13.00 to 15.00 in the Easter term only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local catchment area.

The pre-school employs seven staff of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards the Early Years Professional Status and another towards the

Foundation Degree in Early Years Childcare and Education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy in the setting because staff take positive steps to keep the premises hygienic, for example, following clear rotas for cleaning the equipment regularly. Staff are helping children to understand why they need to wash their hands and children remind each other to put their hands over their mouths when they cough. As a result, children are effectively learning some healthy practices for themselves.

Staff manage any accidents or illnesses to children efficiently because a high number of staff have current first aid training and there are clearly written procedures for dealing with children's health. Accident and medication records are completed properly and staff take good account of children's individual health needs, consequently, children are cared for very well if they are ill or have an accident.

Staff provide children with very healthy snacks and drinks at every session, for example, foods include a very wide range of fresh fruit or vegetables and wholemeal toast is always offered to help satisfy children's hunger. Children are given a choice of milk or water to drink and staff take account of any dietary needs so children are being very well nourished with wholesome and appetising foods. Staff take their key children to help prepare the snack everyday so it becomes a worthwhile activity for them as they talk about the textures and flavours of the food. In addition, children talk about where their food goes to in their bodies, beginning to learn the benefits of a healthy diet.

Staff provide children with regular opportunities for physical development which are interesting to them. For example, there are resources such as tyres for children to roll along or they can balance on a road they have made themselves from wood. Each day children stretch and breathe after sitting down for circle time and before embarking on their activities so they learn a little about how their bodies work. Staff encourage children to learn to co-ordinate their movements in a purposeful manner developing skills such as laying out a blanket on the floor.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are made welcoming by staff who take steps to use areas effectively to encourage children to play. A good range of suitable equipment is used by children both inside and out to interest them and encourage them to develop good all round physical skills. This includes the use of waste materials such as crates, wood and pipes, helping children to use their imagination.

Staff take some steps to keep children to be safe in the setting by carrying out daily written risk assessments both inside and outside, however, these do not identify all the safety issues. For example, although socket covers are used, a bowl of water is situated directly next to a double socket at the same level. In addition, there are plastic bin liners used in the small waste bins in each toilet cubicle. These hazards may compromise the safety of children.

Staff help children to learn some ways in which they can contribute to their own safety, for example, during fire drills. When asked about fire safety children can explain what they need to do when the fire alarm sounds and the reasons for doing so. In this way, children are becoming more aware of keeping themselves safe.

Children are cared for by adults who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills and steps are taken to protect children from people who have not been checked. However, although four staff have attended recent safeguarding training the child protection procedures have not been updated to include reference to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Furthermore, the procedures do not yet include what to do if there are any allegations made against staff and existing injuries are not recorded in enough detail. As a result, children may not be fully safeguarded in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff help younger children to become competent learners by planning an exciting range of activities using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They inform their planning by completing initial child profiles clearly and gathering regular observations of what the children can do and need to do next in their development. In this way, younger children are developing their confidence in being together. For example, children are able to sit in a tent, sometimes alone and sometimes with others with time to play independently using their imagination. Whilst engaged in this solitary play, they move towards interacting with others, beginning to find their voice.

Staff are able to help younger children develop well according to their own stage of development by managing a wide range of individual needs in a whole group time which is short but helps children think and contribute what they know. For example, they talk animatedly about the weather and the date and staff skilfully talk to them about what activities are on offer so children begin to feel part of the group. There are small group story times during the session which enable staff to purposefully meet the younger children's individual needs and staff manage to pitch whole group activities at the right level, reinforcing what children already know and challenging them. For example, when using the parachute, all children can take part and gain different things from the activity such as learning to co-operate, follow instructions and take turns.

Early Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff show a thorough understanding of how children learn and use the Foundation Stage to effectively plan a wide range of exciting activities. The planning helps staff focus on particular objectives and reminds them of the best way they can teach children, including asking open-ended questions to help children to think. Staff plan activities that really interest children so they spend time on the activity and resist distractions, for example, the topic about homes is extended throughout the planning both inside and in the outdoor play area. Children use a wide range of materials and resources, including large photographs of different types of homes which inspire them to use bubble wrap to waterproof a roof, make tents from blankets and tile a roof with wood. Children spend whole parts of the session deeply engrossed in what they are doing using skills across the whole curriculum.

General daily routines such as snack time are also used by staff as an effective means of teaching children worthwhile skills so children can learn in small groups. Staff can monitor closely how children are progressing and have written systems to ensure all children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff provide appropriate challenges to all children through paying careful attention to what children can do and what they need to do next in their learning. The clear observations and

staff's good knowledge of individual children help inform the planning so that it meets the needs of all the children.

Children are interested and motivated in what they do, eagerly choosing their activities. There are many opportunities throughout the day for them to work towards becoming independent, for example, helping to prepare tables for snack and attempting to put on their own coats.

Children are developing good listening skills, hold short interesting conversations with others and staff make opportunities for children to speak, for example, recalling what they have been doing. As a result children have regular chances to use their language to communicate. During circle time, staff talk about sounds and children are able to distinguish how many different sounds there are in a given word. The provision of a cosy book corner invites children to look at books with each other, handling them carefully and beginning to know that text has meaning. More able children are encouraged to write their names on their work and children have writing tools in role play areas, for example, with the play houses in the garden. This helps them to realise the importance of being able to write.

Children are very confident in their mathematical understanding to select the right amount of items needed and most can count accurately with more able children counting up to twenty and beyond. This demonstrates some of their understanding of numbers as labels and for counting in a purposeful manner. Staff help children to compare numbers and work out how many items are needed, for example, two pieces of toast for each child. They learn simple addition and subtraction so are beginning to grasp the basics for calculation. Staff encourage children to use size and positional language, look at the shapes of things together and provide children with tape measures so children can begin to measure things in their play. These activities help children to learn about space, shape and measure.

Staff encourage children to solve their own problems by experimenting and playing with different things to see what happens. For example, children use conkers to roll down a ramp to see how far they will go, or work out how to stop things blowing around in the garden. They use their developing skills of exploration and investigation to find out new concepts. Children are becoming more confident in using the computer and operating simple equipment such as tape recorders to increase their understanding of information and communication technology. In addition to learning about man made things children learn about nature and staff plan exciting topics and themes about the world around them which help them show interest in the world in which they live.

In addition to developing balance and large muscle skills, children are beginning to use small equipment with increasing skill, for example, threading beads or making patterns with small pegs on a board. They explore malleable materials and use tools to make changes in play dough and confidently help to put equipment away safely.

Children choose from a wide variety of creative activities, such as free painting on an easel, or making collages. They work on their own items which are sometimes put together to make a larger display. Through these activities they learn to explore different media and materials. Children enjoy singing familiar songs, moving to the various pieces of music and following instructions on a music and movement tape, using their bodies to express themselves. Through using role play areas and small world equipment children develop their imagination well and become more confident to express and communicate their own ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The Minister of the church visits the children regularly to lead a spiritual story and children take part in charity events such as 'Harvest for the Hungry' whereby they learn about people who are less fortunate than themselves. Children help to pack up food and are shown a film of where the food goes to help them understand more about the lives of others.

Staff plan worthwhile activities to help children learn about other people's festivals and cultures and the play environment is well resourced with multicultural puzzles, posters and books. Activities often include references to our similarities and differences so children can compare what they do in their own homes and the ways in which people live. As a result, children learn to value others.

There are systems in place to help integrate children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into the setting. This includes following a clearly written policy and using a series of observations and record keeping to monitor children's development. Children have individual learning plans with regular written reviews and parents are included in every step. Staff work closely with any specialists to help in consistency and to ensure children are being cared for properly.

Staff manage children's behaviour in a very positive manner by establishing clear boundaries according to children's understanding. They often get down to a child's level to talk quietly to them about their behaviour and negotiate with them. Children share and take turns, sometimes using a timer to see when the time will be up so they know it is fair. The atmosphere in the setting is very calm and organised and staff supervise the children closely, reiterating simple rules for behaviour. In this way, children learn to be confident, behave well and are able to work in harmony with others.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The parents of children receiving funding have regular opportunities to meet with their child's key worker every term for a formal consultation where they see their child's well written records and discuss with them how their child is progressing towards the early learning goals. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children through adding their comments to the records. Any issues can be identified in this way and addressed through the planning so that parents have a direct influence on how their children learn. They are also invited to write down their child's home interests which can then be reflected in the activities so that children can make links between their home and the setting.

Parents of children receiving funding are actively encouraged to be involved with their child's learning, for example, through borrowing the setting's library card to take their child to the library to select books for use in the group so children have an influence on what stories and books are available. Children sometimes take home interesting activities to share with their parents such as looking at their home, discussing the colour of the front door and the number of their house which helps them share their learning with their parents.

Although the information about activities is displayed, it does not relate to the early learning goals, therefore, parents are not entirely aware of what their children are intended to learn and may not have sufficient information about the Foundation Stage.

Parents are given clear information about the setting and its policies and procedures when they first visit. They are invited to read these so that they are clear about how the setting operates

and can make the right choices for their child. Parents are invited to be involved in the group to benefit both children and their parents. There is information for parents about settling their child into the group helping them know what to expect and most children settle well with their parents able to stay with them as long as necessary.

The setting has a complaints procedure which is consistent with the Addendum to the National Standards. This enables staff to manage any complaints in an efficient and timely manner.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. The supervisor shows a high commitment to improving care and education for all children by implementing new ideas regularly to enhance the children's learning experiences. The setting now has a development plan which highlights new initiatives and ensures the setting is keeping abreast of these. For example, the supervisor has recently made changes to the routines to enable children to go outside everyday and take part in a range of activities linked to the general theme. As a result, children are able to choose where they wish to play. These changes inspire staff to be forward thinking, try new initiatives and children are offered new and exciting experiences. Staff are being introduced to the new Early Years Foundation Stage and are beginning to use a new style of planning to incorporate the needs of all children.

The supervisor oversees the work of staff to ensure they continue to gather good quality information about children's progress which can be used to inform the planning and further meet children's needs. Staff often refer to their plans during the session to keep on track. Any areas for improvement are identified and addressed in appraisals or team meetings and training is sought and offered.

The setting has robust recruitment and checking procedures such as proper application, selection and checking procedures. Vacancies are advertised widely, interviews carried out and references taken up and staff are subject to a check by the Criminal Record Bureau. New staff have a three month trial and induction period. Consequently, children are cared for by suitable staff.

Staff are given their own roles and responsibilities which ensures the setting is well organised so that time, space and resources are used effectively to offer children worthwhile experiences. Overall, children's needs are met.

With the exception of the safeguarding children policy, all documentation meets the expectations of the National Standards to ensure children are cared for properly.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the setting was required to; ensure all staff are consistent in the recording of accidents to children and to review the organisation of snack time so that children's play is less disrupted and children are able to be more independent.

The management team have reviewed the way in which accidents are recorded so that staff include all the relevant information and parents' signatures. Snack time is now treated as an activity with all children having the chance to help out, for example, giving out plates and cups.

Early Education

At the last inspection the setting was required to improve the assessment system so staff can purposefully identify gaps in children's learning and plan to cover those gaps to more rigorously progress children towards the early learning goals.

The assessment system now shows clearly any gaps in children's learning which are then addressed by taking forward into the planning so children can make good progress towards the early learning goals.

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 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):

- assess the risks to children in relation to the location of the water bowl in relation to electrical sockets and the plastic bin liners located in the toilet area bins and take action to minimise these
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and that existing injuries to children are recorded clearly and consistently.

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 the information for parents so they have a greater understanding of the Foundation Stage and what their children are intended to learn.

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