

Vicarage Farm Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY287638
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Inspector	Kristin Hatherly
Setting Address	Vicarage Farm Community Centre, Grafton Close, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 5WA
Telephone number	01933 678452
E-mail	
Registered person	Vicarage Farm Preschool
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?

Vicarage Farm Pre-school first opened approximately 30 years ago. It was registered under new owners in 2004 and operates from a large hall in the community centre on the Gleneagles Estate, in Wellingborough. The group has access to the kitchen, toilets and enclosed play areas at the front and back of the hall. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. Five sessions are offered each week. They run from 09:15 to 12:45, Monday to Friday during school terms.

Currently there are 30 children on roll and of these 19 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and one of whom is working towards an appropriate qualification. The pre-school receives support from an advisory teacher and a birth to three advisor. The setting is working towards a Pre-School Learning Alliance accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is effectively promoted by staff who follow clear health and hygiene procedures and ensure they have appropriate medical information such as details of any allergies. Children learn about their own personal hygiene as they are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times such as before snacks and after messy play. This sustains the level of hygiene and helps to prevent the spread of infection. The needs of younger children are effectively met as staff take care to provide appropriate support with toileting. Children's welfare is safeguarded because five members of staff have up-to-date first aid knowledge in the event of any accidents and appropriate procedures are in place if children are unwell. However, although there is written consent from parents with regard to first aid treatment and emergencies, the consent is not clear that staff may seek emergency advice or treatment.

Children bring snacks to the pre-school and parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks and receive suggestions from the staff with regard to suitable items to include such as fruit, carrot sticks and wholemeal bagels or sandwiches. Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet because staff talk to them about eating healthily. Children have access to fresh drinking water at all times. As a result children are thoroughly hydrated and comfortable.

Children enjoy good opportunities to develop their physical skills which contribute to their good health. They benefit from fresh air as they take advantage of the free-flow activities that are set up outside each day. They confidently manoeuvre wheeled toys, climb on climbing frames and hop, skip and jump. Children also enjoy access to large equipment inside which further contributes to their good health. Children move spontaneously with increasing control and co-ordination, developing an awareness of space around them and the close proximity of others. They deftly handle tools, construction resources and malleable materials. This develops children's hand to eye coordination and strengthens small muscles effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment that is secure and suitable for its purpose. They are safe as a result of the staffs' clear awareness of health and safety and their use of risk assessments which cover all areas of the building, the outdoor play area and when taking children on outings. Children have access to a good range of equipment and resources that promote their development. They are able to play safely and move freely between activities in a play environment where space is organised and used effectively. They have access to toys, resources and equipment appropriate to their age and development which are regularly checked.

Children's safety is promoted as effective procedures are in place within the setting and proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents. For example, there is a good ratio of staff to children and risk assessments are carried out daily and termly. Their security is well supported because there are clear routines for arriving and departing parents and visitors. Children understand and practise fire drills regularly which are carefully recorded which helps them to learn how to protect themselves from possible danger in case of a fire. Children are further kept safe as there are clear procedures for outings.

Children are further safeguarded and their welfare well promoted because staff have a clear understanding of their role in safeguarding children and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice. The required procedures and documents are in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy coming to the pre-school. Children's self-confidence is promoted by staff who build warm positive relationships with the children and have consistent expectations and clear routines. Children's needs are met through effective organisation and planning by staff who have a good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They follow the same curriculum as older children who are funded for nursery education but staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to assess the younger children. Staff support younger children appropriately to enable them to take part in all the activities.

Staff demonstrate a caring attitude towards the social side of the child and encourage children to share and play together. Children develop their independence as they express their ideas during play using a wide range of resources which capture their interests, for example during imaginary play in home corner, grocery shop and when experimenting with corn flour and other media. Children enjoy playing in the outside play area which develops and supports their physical skills. They begin to understand their own needs, and with adult support, become aware of the needs of others. Children behave very well, for example, they take turns and share resources. All of these promote their emotional, physical, social and intellectual development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Plans are used flexibly to build on children's interests and to take account of events that occur to extend their learning. For example, children experimented with corn flour and wanted to walk in it so the following week, an activity was planned so the children can make boot prints with paint. There is a system for evaluation of activities and observation of children and detailed child profiles are kept. However, evaluations are not used effectively to show whether learning intentions have been met and how activities can be adapted to ensure learning intentions are met. Staff are friendly and caring and form good relationships with the children which helps them to feel secure. They give regular encouragement and praise which develops children's confidence and self-esteem. As a result, they behave very well. Throughout the setting, children's personal social and emotional development is promoted by the staff's caring attitude towards the social side of the child. They encourage children to respect each other and to play co-operatively. Children work well together, sharing and helping each other.

Children are very confident to speak to and question staff and visitors to the pre-school. They are provided with a variety of role play opportunities to develop an understanding of marks have meaning such as grocery shop and post office. There is a writing table with paper and pencils to encourage children to experiment with writing. They are encouraged to copy their names although not all the children's names are provided. Children listen with concentration and interest to stories and eagerly answer questions and engage in responses to the stories. Children are developing their number skills through a variety of activities such as counting up to the date at registration time and are encouraged to count spontaneously during activities. They

are beginning to understand shape and measure through construction activities, games and puzzles.

Children discuss the weather and seasons at registration time and use their senses to discover a variety of media. They experiment with corn flour, soap flakes, shaving foam and investigate minibeasts. Children have regular access to a computer and computer programs that reinforce their learning in other areas. They enjoy visitors to the pre-school such as the fire brigade and police and go to the local shops and for walks locally, all of which encourages them to develop a sense of community. Children celebrate a variety of festivals and have access to a good variety of resources to promote equal opportunity such as puzzles, small world dolls and books.

Children have frequent opportunities to develop their physical skills. For example they enjoy playing on climbing apparatus which was three climbing frames joined together so that the children had to try different ways of getting across from one to the other. They enjoy moving to music and are encouraged to experiment with a variety of musical instruments. Children engage in dressing up in costumes and play independently in role play corners to develop their imaginative play. They respond and express ideas and share feelings during free play and when talking to each other and staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy activities and resources which promote a positive view of the wider world. They celebrate festivals, for example Chinese New Year and Christmas and have access to resources such as jigsaws, dolls and a variety of books which show people from other cultures. This increases their awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. Children learn about their local community through visitors to the pre-school. They are valued and respected as individuals and are fully included in the life of the setting. The pre-school understands their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act and is pro-active in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken to support children with identified needs. As a result children receive appropriate support.

Children are very well behaved as they are well occupied and because staff provide them with positive role models. Staff deal with behaviour consistently that is appropriate to the child's level of understanding and maturity. Children learn to share, take turns and consider others. They receive regular reassurance, praise and encouragement and enjoy having photographs taken of their achievements which promotes their confidence and self-esteem. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funded nursery education is good. Parents are provided with good quality information regarding the Foundation Stage and how their child will be learning, in order to effectively promote continuity of children's education. Parents are able to speak to their child's key worker at any time and have more formal opportunities to discuss their children's achievements and progress towards the early learning goals. For example, they are invited to come into the pre-school each term to talk about their child and go through their folder. Parents receive regular information about topics through newsletters or, if they wish, by e-mail. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's needs before starting at pre-school and are kept well informed throughout their child's attendance. They report positively about the pre-school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the effective organisation of the space and resources both indoors and in the outdoor area so that they can make choices and develop their ideas as they play. Staff support children well during activities and allow them time and space to initiate their play. The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. Generally, resources and equipment are organised to promote children's safety, welfare and development. Staff continue to update their training to improve and develop their work with the children.

Children's care and welfare are safeguarded by clear and well-maintained documentation and a comprehensive operational plan which shows clearly how the pre-school operates. Policies and procedures ensure staff are clear about their responsibilities and parents are aware of the pre-school's ethos.

Staff are managed well and are encouraged to develop their knowledge and individual skills by attending further training courses in order to continuously improve and develop the setting. This is being developed further as the pre-school is seeking accreditation through the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The owners and staff work well together as a strong, effective and committed team. There are regular staff meetings to discuss and reflect on their practice and evaluate the provision of nursery education, in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and ensure children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff take advice positively from other professionals such as an advisory teacher and Birth to three advisor. Children's individual needs are continuously assessed and discussed by the child's key worker and parents and parents report positively about the setting. Staff support and encourage children very well during activities while still allowing them time and space to initiate their own learning. Overall the needs of the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to ensure staff are aware of the importance of good hygiene practices particularly with regard to snack times. The pre-school has now developed new routines to ensure tables are cleaned regularly and all staff are fully aware of the procedures, thus further ensuring the good health of the children.

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):

- ensure the written permission for emergency medical advice or treatment is clear to parents.

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):

- ensure that all activities are fully supported by the appropriate resources
- develop evaluations to show whether learning intentions have been met and how activities can be adapted to ensure learning intentions are met.

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