

Treetops Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127729
Inspection date	12 October 2007
Inspector	Virginia Cooper

Setting Address	16 Swaisland Road, Dartford, Kent, DA1 3DA
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Registered person	Kim Ann Jackson
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Type of inspection	Childcare
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Type of care	Sessional care
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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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Treetops Pre-School Group is situated to the west side of Dartford and opened in 2000. It operates from purpose built premises set within the owners garden. Children have access to two rooms with an outside play area. The group incorporates many Montessori methods of teaching in their practice.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday, term time only. They operate a staggered opening system in accordance with planning regulations.

There are currently 70 children aged from two to under five years on roll. They are not registered to accept children funded for early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs four members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a higher qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff understand the importance of children feeling secure and safe. There is a settling in procedure enabling the children and their parents to adjust to new care arrangements.

Children enjoy a clean and well-ordered environment allowing them to move around easily and safely. The cleaning routines are rigorous, tables and chairs are washed thoroughly at the end of each day and the flooring is easy to clean.

Staff prevent cross infection by adopting sensible hygiene procedures. Children wash their hands before eating, and after using the toilet. The routine helps them learn the importance of good hand washing procedures.

Staff do not care for children who are contagious ensuring others are not at risk of cross-infection. Children who become poorly whilst at the group are comforted, and made comfortable, until their parents are able to collect them. Staff rarely need to administer any medication, they understand however, the correct procedures and have the necessary record books available should the situation arise. All accidents are recorded and parents sign the entry ensuring they know what has happened to their children. There is always one member of staff present who has a current first aid qualification; they are able to administer first aid to children in the event of an accident or emergency.

Children enjoy plenty of fresh air in a large and interesting garden, ensuring they get plenty of exercise.

The staff record any dietary needs children have to ensure they do not eat any food that is unsuitable. Children usually eat fresh fruit at snack time. They understand that fruit is a healthy food.

Children are offered drinks regularly to prevent them being thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy premises that are bright, welcoming and maintained to a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness. The carefully prepared, well organised and nurturing environment helps children to settle quickly, ready to participate in a broad and varied range of interesting and stimulating activities, designed to promote all areas of development. Child sized furniture is provided to enable children to manage tasks more easily.

Children choose what they want to play with from a good range of well-maintained toys, staff check these regularly to ensure there are no broken parts that could harm a child.

The owner regularly carries out a risk assessment of the premises. The potential hazards and risks are identified and safety equipment is in place to prevent accidents. She carries out a visual check of the premises each day to maintain the safety standards.

Staff understand their responsibility to safeguard children from harm. They hold information about the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff feel confident that they would recognise if a

child were being abused and know who to contact and where to find the telephone numbers for these agencies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff are aware of the framework Birth to three matters and whilst the activities provided for the youngest children are entirely appropriate, staff are not relating the planning or the children's assessment records to the framework. Children have lots of opportunities to explore nature in the large and interesting garden. They love to care for plants and watch them grow. They enjoy playing with dough and use a variety of hand held tools to mould and shape it.

The owner and staff run different types of sessions and when there are vacancies parents can choose which they think are the most appropriate for their child. They have Montessori sessions where staff teach using Montessori equipment. The Montessori resources help children develop in all areas of learning. The Pigeon Steps sessions are very small classes and the owner has devised her own learning programme. There is a very strong emphasis on working in partnership with parents for the children attending these sessions. The owner provides written help for parents to implement at home to help their children progress. The Bear Music and Fox Tales sessions are particularly suitable for creative children. The main focus is drama and music. Children learn how to feel rhythm as they sing and play instruments. Children develop their artistic talents as they make puppets, costumes and work towards putting on a production for their parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff greet children and parents enthusiastically. There is a routine to the day that children are familiar with helping them feel safe and secure. The pre-school have a pet rabbit and tortoise and the children help care for them teaching them to respect living things. They separate from their parents easily and wave them goodbye through the window. The environment is planned to enable children to start playing as soon as they arrive. Children receive lots of attention, praise and encouragement and consequently they feel confident. Staff speak to all children positively. They adopt appropriate behaviour management strategies, according to the age and stage of development, to help children understand right from wrong, for example, distraction with young children, calm intervention, good explanations, and being a good role model. Their behaviour is good, they learn how to share and cooperate with one another. The owner is happy to share her years of experience and help parents implement good strategies to manage their children's behaviour, truly working in co-operation. She will make reward charts for them to use at home that feature a character or topic something the child is especially shows interest in.

The owner and staff have a good understanding of equality of opportunity and a positive attitude towards diversity. Children are treated with respect and made to feel good about themselves. All children have access to a good range of resources that promote equality and reflect positive images of diversity including gender, culture and disability. The different sessions the group operate enables staff to take account of children's individuality.

The owner and staff have lots of experience of caring for children with special needs, they have a positive 'can do' attitude. They discuss each child's individual needs with parents and takes

account of any difficulties they have to ensure the child receives an appropriate service. Staff work hard to ensure all children feel comfortable and are offered a range of opportunities.

The owner believes that a good partnership with parents is key to children's success and progress. She keeps parents very well informed about their children's development. Parents speak very highly of the group, they say their children are making very good progress and really enjoy attending. There is lots of information available for parents about the operation of the group and a website to keep them informed.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The owner ensures that all staff working with children have undergone checks to establish their suitability; she understands she has a duty to inform the registering body of any changes to her circumstances that might affect the welfare of the children. More than half the staff hold a suitable childcare qualification and there is always a member of staff present with a first aid qualification. The owner understands she has a duty to inform the registering body of any changes to her circumstances that might affect the welfare of the children.

The owner and staff are well organised; they have a positive and clear vision about the service they provide. The pre-school is unusual because they offer four different types of session providing parents with choice about how their children learn and develop. All the sessions aim to boost children's confidence and self-esteem whilst they learn through play. The setting meets the needs of the range children for whom it provides.

The registration certificate is displayed ensuring parents are clear about the conditions of registration. The policies and procedures are comprehensive and well written. There is another booklet especially for parents explaining in detail how the different sessions are organised. Staff understand the importance of confidentiality and a good working relationship with parents. Parents provide detailed information about their child to ensure they can provide an appropriate service. They provide telephone numbers for emergency contact.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made that relate to Standard 6. It was recommended that the owner ensures all staff have access to the fire procedures and that she ensures risk assessments on the premises identify action(s) to be taken to minimize identified risks.

All staff are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures. The written procedure is usually displayed on fire doors, however, at the time of the inspection they are not in place because the doors have just been re-painted.

A written risk assessment is prepared for the group's insurers annually and action(s) they need to take to minimize identified risks are recorded.

As a result of these changes children's safety is improved.

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

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.

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):

- consider how the assessment records for the children under three take account of the aspects in the framework Birth to three matters

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