

Somerset Road Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131558
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Inspector	Judith Reed
Setting Address	Portswood Primary School, Somerset Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO17 3AA
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Registered person	Somerset Road 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Somerset Road Pre-school opened in 1979. The pre-school operates from a room within Portswood Primary school, which is located in Portswood, Southampton. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The pre-school is run by a voluntary management committee. A maximum of 24 children may attend each session. The pre-school is open each weekday morning during term time from 09:15 to 11:45 and three afternoons from 12:55 to 15:25. A lunch club operates between morning and afternoon sessions.

There are currently 42 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for early education. The setting supports a number of children who have English as an additional language, and is able to support children with disabilities or learning difficulties.

The pre-school employs ten members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are continuing their training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very healthy as they enjoy frequent opportunities to experience physical play. A climbing frame is available within the playroom and children take turns to climb the steps and slide down the slide. Children also hide underneath the climbing frame. Children have daily opportunities to play in the outside area. Physical play is included in the planning and the range of activities are varied accordingly. Children carefully balance on stepping stones or follow arrows drawn on the ground when riding tricycles and scooters. Children operate traffic lights to make their friends stop and go. They are praised and encouraged when throwing balls into the basketball net. Children take the opportunity to go into the 'scream corner' to shout and scream. This is a popular activity and effectively helps children get rid of aggression and anger by making it fun. Children often play outside in wet weather and enjoy splashing in the puddles. Children learn that they need coats to keep warm or dry and that running around in warm weather makes them hot. Children also have regular opportunities to go into the school environmental area for large games and nature observation.

Children are fully protected by very good hygiene routines. They access a low level sink within the play room for hand washing after messy activities. Children use the toilet independently and wash their hands afterwards. They are aware of needing to wash their hands before having a snack. Individual paper towels are used and disposed of appropriately. A sick child policy is in place and parents are asked to keep children at home if they are unwell. Sleep mats are available for children attending the lunch club. Staff are trained in first aid and a suitable first aid kit is available. Accidents are recorded on individual record forms which ensure confidentiality. Parents sign as necessary. Accident records are fully audited to identify areas of concentration.

Children are offered a choice of healthy and nutritious snack during each session. Staff prepare rice cakes, small containers of dried fruit, or cut up fruit and vegetables for the children. Special helpers are chosen to offer the snack around the group. Children cope well with sitting on mats for their snack. Staff are aware of children's allergies and food requirements. Good manners are encouraged and children use Makaton signs when asking for drinks of water or milk. Staff discuss healthy food options with children and they take part in healthy food activities. Staff request that children bring healthy food to eat at the lunch club.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and safe environment. Staff ensure the gate into the pre-school is bolted throughout the session. A member of staff stands by the gate at the beginning and end of the session to ensure children do not leave without their parents. Children have use of a playroom within the school building. Low level toilets are adjacent to the room. A hard surface, outside play area is available for free flow activities during most of the session. Children also have regular use of the environmental area of the school. This area is well fenced and staff ensure children are effectively supervised when using the area. Children's work is displayed around the play room which helps to value their work and improve self esteem. Staff have a good understanding of safety issues and take all necessary steps to protect children, including providing shade for outside play during hot weather and placing cleaning equipment at high

level. Children take part in regular fire evacuation drills, however, staff do not evaluate the evacuation procedure to improve practice.

Children use a wide selection of toys and equipment. Staff set out toys according to the planning and children have a free choice for most of the session. Staff ensure toys and equipment are safe, clean and suitable for the children present. Children help themselves to some equipment from storage, for example they help themselves to a box of dinosaur models from a low level rack.

Children are safeguarded by a knowledgeable and well trained staff team. Staff are well aware of child protection procedures and report concerns to the leader or deputy. An incident record is used to record concerns and action taken. This is shared with parents when possible. Staff are fully aware of their professional duty regarding safeguarding children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enter confidently and eagerly with their parents. They remove their coats and register themselves with names from the board. A member of staff observes and supports children when necessary, helping to develop their independence and self esteem. Children who are new are welcomed into the setting. If they become upset and distressed their parents are called back and children are comforted by staff. At the beginning of the session children gather on the mat for a brief registration and staff talk about the theme of the week. They say or sing the rhyme and children begin to join in. Staff introduce the children to some of the different activities available. Children are extremely well occupied and busy throughout the session. Most children are settled, happy and eager to take part in activities offered.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making excellent progress and their development is encouraged at all times. Staff are fully aware of the abilities of the individual children attending the pre-school and ensure their progress across all areas of the curriculum. Staff make incidental observations of activities throughout the session. At the end of the session these observational notes are discussed and shared with all staff. Key workers note individual children's progress and development. The next stages of learning are used to prepare future plans. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. All staff are involved in discussions about planning. Target activities are used to ensure the individual needs and interests of every child are developed and met. Throughout the session staff support, encourage and enable children to learn and develop through their play, using a child centred approach. Children develop positive attitudes by being praised and encouraged for their efforts and achievements.

Children relish the opportunity to explore the containers of soil to find the 'worms' hidden in it. They find the worms and say they are dead, as they are not moving. Other children realise that the 'worms' are not real, although they do not know they are made of spaghetti. Later in the week there are real worms in the soil. Some children are shocked by this and do not wish to handle them. Other children are keen to watch and handle them. They sit for some time talking with staff about the worms. Children sieve the soil through their fingers to search for the worms and another insect is found in the soil. Children count the worms they find and talk about what they might eat. They talk about how they move and wriggle.

Children are enthusiastic to use the computer. Children learn to take turns. A member of staff sets up the computer for drawing and children choose the colour to use and confidently operate the mouse to create a picture. They press the button to make the picture print and proudly show their parents at home time.

Children have frequent opportunities to practise counting. They count the legs on a number of creatures such as ducks, dogs and centipedes. This leads to a gluing activity to stick the appropriate numbers of legs on each body. Children are helped to count the number of children present at snack time. They are also asked to think about whether there are more boys or girls. This introduces maths language and estimation. Staff use a well planned target activity to help more able children begin to add small groups of items together.

Children communicate very well. They listen carefully to instructions at the beginning of the session. They listen and respond with enjoyment to stories, songs and rhymes. Staff skilfully use their voice to bring interest to group story time and involve the children by asking questions about the pictures. New words are introduced and children have learned that 'nippy' means cold. Children are encouraged to look at books for a few minutes after snack time. Some look at books independently and know how they work. Others share books with a member of staff who reads quietly to them. Children enthusiastically view the book of photographs in the book corner saying 'Look that's me!' They have incidental opportunities to practise writing for a purpose in the home corner and also take part in writing activities on a table. Children write letters and make them fit into envelopes.

Children enjoy a free painting activity at the easel. They creatively mix the colours together and paint their hands and arm. Children print from their limbs onto the paper making interesting pictures. Children use their imagination and create scenarios, including a story about going to the Isle of Wight on the ferry, when outside on a bench. They use instruments to make music and dance with streamers. Children join in singing at the end of the session and choose a number of songs including 'Twinkle, Twinkle' and 'Sleeping Bunnies'.

Children's personal and social development is effectively encouraged as they begin to be independent. Staff support children putting on dressing up clothes, but do not do it for them. They encourage children to find their own coats before going outside to play, and to replace them on hooks after being outside. Children are asked to sweep up the sand after spillages and to be responsible for their own behaviour. Children learn to take turns on the climbing frame and at the computer.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals and key workers get to know their families. Children use a wide range of toys and equipment which reflects diversity. This includes dressing up clothes, small world dolls in the doll's house, books and home corner equipment. Children take part in celebrating festivals from around the world and a display of posters and pictures reflects Divali. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. A welcome poster with many different languages is also displayed. One member of staff speaks several languages and is able to support families with paperwork and documentation when required.

All children are valued and staff know and understand their individual needs. The named special educational needs co-ordinator attends support meetings to develop and enhance her knowledge. Staff support a number of children with English as an additional language. They

use body language, some signing and talk to the children, who usually learn English very quickly. The lead practitioner states that they aim to include all children whatever their needs and they look at individual cases. Staff at the pre-school recently supported a young child with severe health problems. They ensured they were fully trained each term to support the child's individual needs.

Children behave very well and know the routine of the pre-school. They are praised and encouraged throughout their activities. Staff are good role models for children. They remain calm with the children and ensure that they talk to them about good behaviour and manners. Children are encouraged to share and begin to learn about taking turns with equipment. Children are asked to help tidy away activities before snack and at the end of the session.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents and carers are fully informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum through the 'Parent's Information Book'. This also gives useful information about the key worker system, settling in information, the routine and parental involvement. A notice board near the door shows the theme of the week, and ongoing term, as well as a rhyme linked to the theme. Children are invited to bring items from home linked to the themes or colour of the week. This also enables parents to become more involved in their child's learning. Parents are given a written summary of their children's progress each term. This includes information about each area of learning and a little about their favourite activities. Parents very much appreciate this regular feedback and make positive comments for staff. Parents are aware of their child's key worker and often have a brief chat at the end of the session. They know they may talk to the key workers whenever they wish. Parents state they are happy with the care and education provided by the pre-school staff. The management committee is made up from parents, who also take part in many fundraising activities. A complaints procedure for parents is available and includes the necessary information. The leader states that she has a record of complaints, although this could not be found during inspection.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The whole staff team are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They work together very well and support one another. Most of the staff team are trained to the required level, however, many members of staff are currently on further training courses to continue to develop their knowledge and skills. Ongoing training is very much valued and encouraged. Appropriate recruitment procedures are followed when new staff are appointed and all necessary checks are completed. The lead practitioner is an excellent role model for the staff team. She praises and encourages her committed staff team who have built a good rapport with the parents. All staff are appraised by the lead practitioner. Regular staff meetings are held and the staff contribute to planning. All staff are key workers and keep records about the individual children in their group. They make incidental observations of children's activities and development throughout the session. After the session these observations are discussed and transferred to individual children's record sheets. Key workers ensure the records of achievement are kept up to date and all areas of learning are covered appropriately according to the Foundation Stage curriculum. The lead practitioner ensures the records of achievement are kept up to date by the staff team. Staff are involved in a review of their practice linked to the forthcoming changes in the curriculum.

The pre-school is well organised and the register is kept up to date and accurate at all times. The sessions are a good mixture of free play and group times. Most children are very settled and eagerly join in the various activities around the pre-school. They are interested in trying

new things, such as searching for worms in the soil. Sessions are evaluated to ensure learning outcomes are met. Adults have clear responsibilities during the session, according to the plan. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Documentation is stored confidentially, however, items cannot always be easily found when required. Children's records are stored in a locked box in the store room. A full range of policies and procedures are available to staff and parents.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure all snacks are of good nutritional value, that recording of accidents is kept confidential, risk assessments are reviewed regularly and to hold written permission for emergency medical treatment for each child.

An improved selection of healthy and nutritious snacks are offered to children. Accidents are recorded on individual sheets and remain confidential. Children's initial registration forms include written permission for emergency advice or treatment. Risk assessments are completed annually and reviewed following identification of areas of accident concentration.

At the last education inspection the setting was asked to introduce children to number problems, and to encourage the more able child to solve them in target activities. They were asked to improve the opportunity for children to learn about healthy issues and bodily awareness and to ensure that staff are secure in their knowledge of all aspects and are able to support children in all areas of the curriculum.

Staff have undertaken several training courses and are fully aware of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They support children's learning in all areas including health and bodily awareness. More able children are helped to progress through target activities which include number problems.

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):

- ensure the complaints record is available for parents when requested
- evaluate fire evacuation drill to further improve practice

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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