

Great Holm Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141778
Inspection date	18 October 2007
Inspector	Dorcas Forgan
Setting Address	87 Kensington Drive, Great Holm, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK8 9AY
Telephone number	01908 566459
E-mail	
Registered person	Great Holm 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?

Great Holm Pre-school has been registered since 1989. It is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and carers. The sessions take place in the local community hall in Great Holm, Milton Keynes. The group serves the surrounding area. A maximum of 26 children aged between two years and five years may attend at any time. It is open Monday to Wednesday and Friday from 09:15 until 11:45 and from 12.15 to 14.45, and on Thursday from 9.15 to 11.45.

There are currently 31 children on roll. This includes 24 funded. There are presently no children attending who have special educational needs but the group is able to support such children. There are children attending who speak English as an additional language.

The committee employ six staff and an administrator. The manager and three other members of staff hold appropriate qualifications. Currently one other is undertaking Early Years training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because practitioners have a clear understanding of good hygiene policies and procedures. A member of staff has recently been made responsible for health and safety in the group. The premises are clean and the staff follow good hygiene practices such as wiping services with anti-bacterial spray. Children are becoming independent in their own personal care. Staff encourage them to follow good personal hygiene routines like washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snacks. All of the necessary documentation is in place apart from a means of recording when medication is given.

Children are well nourished. Parents provide the healthy snacks for the children, which include fruit, vegetables, crackers and bread sticks. Children can choose between drinking milk or water at snack time. They can request drinks of water, as they need them throughout the session. Staff work closely with the parents to ensure their child's dietary needs are met. Snack time takes place in small key worker groups. This is so that children can relax and become familiar with a smaller group of children and one member of staff, they chat and take part in some activities.

Children enjoy physical activities in the fresh air whenever possible which promotes a healthy life style. They ride bikes and scooters and play with smaller items like balls, stilts and ribbons to develop their physical skills. Staff provide further activities outside such as playing with sand and play dough and the opportunity for children to make and play in their own den. Younger children go for walks in the local area. Children enthusiastically take part in weekly P.E. sessions where they also practise changing their clothes. They become proficient at putting on socks and shoes and manipulating fastenings.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a pleasant and safe indoor and outdoor environment. Staff present the activities in a well-organised way, children have free access to them. Staff carry out daily checks around the property so that the risk of accidents is minimised. The manager carries out a more comprehensive risk assessment annually. There are very effective security measures in place for the collection of children. Staff are deployed well to supervise the children in all areas.

Children use suitable, safe and clean equipment although some of it is looking rather worn. Children choose which activity they wish to take part in from a good variety set out in the room. They play enthusiastically in the hairdresser's role-play area where they use the hairbrushes and rollers or play the part of the receptionist. They help themselves to drawing equipment, tools and resources from a set of drawers so that they mark make. Children learn to keep themselves safe and avoid accidents through careful guidance and reminders. They repeat that they should not run inside or push others. Staff follow careful procedures when taking children out for walks locally and on larger group outings.

Staff are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children. They understand the procedures and the need for confidentiality. Staff members have the relevant guidance and contact numbers. Some staff have attended additional training. Children are protected from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their sessions in the group, and they look forward to attending. Most children settle quickly at activities, some need a little extra support. Staff greet all the children individually and make them feel welcome. Many children have made friendships. They are keen to play with one another or chat over activities. They are forming close relationships with the staff and approach them with growing confidence. In the first term that children attend the group staff concentrate on the children's personal, social and emotional developmental. They support children in their separation from their parent or carer and help them make new friends. They provide them with choices to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a basic understanding of the Foundation Stage. There are long-term plans that show the themes that the staff will be incorporating. The weekly plans show the activities that are available to the children on a daily basis. One of which is a focused activity concentrating on one area of learning. This incorporates the stepping-stone that staff will be addressing. The manager evaluates these daily to ensure that the learning intention has been achieved successfully, which is not always the case. There are no initial assessments of children when they join the group. Assessments from the first year are not always available. It is therefore difficult to know what level the child has reached. Staff make observations of the children and record these in the children's achievement files, but because the present system is complicated and long winded these are not always kept up to date and future areas of learning only refer to those areas written up. Staff know their children well and are able to describe what they enjoy taking part in.

Children use their initiative and develop their own games, they show great pride in their achievements such as when completing a picture. They are gaining confidence at speaking in large group situations and describing what they are doing. Through finding their own name cards and discussing letters on posters and in books, they are beginning to recognise letters and the sounds that they make. Some of the older children are beginning to write their own names, they enjoy making marks with a meaning such as when using the diary to record hairdressing appointments. They listen to stories attentively and enthusiastically choose books to look at both independently and with their parents. Children are beginning to count and recognise numerals. The staff do not incorporate number activities frequently so that they become a natural part of play or extend activities to challenge children.

Children explore a range of media such as ice, gloop and cooked spaghetti. They attempt to pick spaghetti up with spoons and to whisk it, consequently they discover it is easier to use their hands. There are few opportunities for the children to discover how to use everyday technology or programmable toys. They choose to take part in activities when they can talk about their families and show an interest in the world around them. Children take part very enthusiastically in the PE session, they move to music and follow simple directions, and they find their own spaces and enjoy acting out ideas such as marching as soldiers. They walk on tiptoe, bend, jump and stretch. Children are provided with various ways to promote hand-eye co-ordination from using pencils, chinks and large decorating paintbrushes to manipulating small pieces of puzzle and construction items. Most of the art and craft activities have a planned outcome so that children are not able to express themselves freely or use their imaginations. They take a very active part in a good range of imaginary play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are gaining a sense of belonging to the group and an understanding of the wider world around them. Staff work with parents to meet individual children's needs and to ensure that they are fully involved in the group. Staff use additional strategies to help children with English as an additional language to settle. Children are learning that other people have different views and expectations and they enjoy finding out about these as they celebrate festivals and traditions. There is a good range of resources to promote diversity, which include dressing up clothes and cookery utensils. All children have equal access to all equipment. The setting has satisfactory arrangements to care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities although none currently attend. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are beginning to understand responsible behaviour and for the majority of time behave very well. They know the group rules such as sitting quietly at registration time. Children work harmoniously with others at activities like playing with the farm and chatting while they draw chalk pictures. They make choices and decisions and they are learning to be polite to each other. Staff provide clear guidance and support in individual situations but they are not all so assured during group activities.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive several forms of written information about the group including newsletters. They have access to the group policies and procedures and information displayed on the notice board. Parents are able to take part in the sessions. Children choose library books that they can take home and share with their parents or carers. Staff and parents record comments about how the children have enjoyed these books. Parents are invited into the group each term to discuss the progress their child is making. They receive written reports in the child's last term.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children benefit from their care being well organised. Staff lay the room out effectively so that all areas are used and children can move around freely and choose the activities they want to take part in. The daily routine is clear children know what to expect. The committee employ the staff and ensure that all are vetted appropriately. However, new staff do not have a full induction procedure and the committee do not have a means of monitoring the provision effectively.

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The new manager has been in post for a short while, following a succession of managers. The committee will shortly be resigning at the AGM. The manager has plans for changing some of the systems to improve the care and education that children receive. These changes are being introduced slowly and are being reviewed and monitored as they go along. Training opportunities for all the staff have been improved and advice has been sought from the local authority. Staff work co-operatively, they are all committed to further improvement. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the Children Act inspection recommendations were made that procedures should be established for uncollected children and recording incidents involving children. These two recommendations have been achieved to enhance the safety of children. At the nursery education inspection it was recommended that children have opportunities to practise the correct formation of letters and to express their imagination through art and craft design. Children are beginning to recognise letters and receive support to write them correctly. They do not have frequent opportunities to express themselves imaginatively through art and creative design. A further recommendation was made that the recording of observations should be developed so children's progress and individual needs are highlighted. The new manager has changed the systems but these are not working effectively yet.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- ensure there is a procedure for recording all medication given and that all staff are made aware of it
- develop procedures for the committee to monitor the provision
- ensure that all staff receive a full induction procedure so that they understand their responsibilities, duties and the way systems in the group work in practice

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 further efficient methods of recording children's achievements and ensure children's next steps of learning are included in the planning
- initiate base assessments for each child on entry to group

- improve the staff's interaction with the children so that they are actively engaged with the children especially in large group activities.

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