

Hillside Pre-School and Early Learning Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	144286
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspector	Marilyn Joy
Setting Address	Hillside Road, Verwood, Dorset, BH31 7HE
Telephone number	01202 820679
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Registered person	Hillside Pre-School and Early Learning 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?

Hillside Pre-School and Early Learning Group opened in 1992 and operates from two mobile classrooms situated in the grounds of Hillside First School in Verwood. The pre-school is committee-run and has close links with the school. The children have access to fully enclosed outside play areas. It serves families from Verwood and the surrounding villages.

The pre-school is registered for a maximum of 40 children aged from two years to under five years and usually accepts children from the age of two years nine months. There are currently 50 children on roll and, of these, 36 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. There are currently a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 to 12.00 and from 13.00 to 15.00.

The pre-school employs 16 staff to work with the children, of whom 12 have qualifications in early years. The pre-school also accepts students who are working towards early years qualifications and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

A high priority is given to promoting children's understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle. A comprehensive approach embraces all aspects of being healthy. Healthy cooking activities are often included in the curriculum. Children enjoy decorating biscuits with cream cheese and grapes, and preparing baked apples to cook at home with parents. PE sessions begin with warm-up exercises and staff talk about how the body works. Children learn to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and staff explain why they need to clean the tables before snack. Active play in the fresh air is an integral part of children's day.

Thorough hygiene routines are consistently followed by staff to ensure the environment is clean and efficient measures are in place to minimise the spread of infection. Effective systems ensure staff have a clear understanding of children's health and dietary needs so they are able to respond to individual requirements. All documentation relating to children's health is exceptionally well-organised and accurately maintained. Staff have attended first aid training so they are aware of what to do if a child has an accident or requires specific treatment.

Children's physical development is promoted extremely well through well-planned PE sessions, outdoor activities and access to an extensive range of small and large equipment. Children gain increasing confidence in using scooters and bikes, they start and stop at the traffic lights and competently manoeuvre around each other. Excellent opportunities are offered for children to increase their independence in self-care skills when changing shoes and putting coats on to go outside or opening their lunch boxes at snack time. Healthy snacks are encouraged and staff offer positive comments when children have fruit in order to reinforce healthy eating.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent arrangements are in place to ensure children are safe, secure and well-cared for. Vibrant displays of children's work and posters enhance the attractive and stimulating environment offered. Sessions are thoroughly prepared to ensure staff are ready to greet children and parents as they arrive and activities are organised. An extensive range of stimulating resources is available to support children's development. They are clean and in good condition.

Children's safety is given paramount consideration. Potential hazards are identified and effective steps taken to reduce or eliminate any possible risks. Daily checks are conducted on the premises and resources. Effective security means children are unable to leave the premises unaccompanied and staff are clear about who can collect individual children. Fire drills are practised so that children can be evacuated quickly in the event of a fire. Children's welfare is thoroughly safeguarded because staff are knowledgeable about child protection issues and know what to do if they have any concerns.

Children routinely learn about keeping themselves safe during daily activities. Particular care is taken to help them learn about road safety when going on regular outings around the locality. Safe walking routes are identified and children practise using the pelican crossing when they need to cross the road. Stopping when the lights are red is reinforced when they are riding wheeled toys around the playground. They tell each other red is stop and green is go.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have an exciting, stimulating and enjoyable time at the pre-school. New children quickly settle because there are very good measures for introducing them to the environment and new routines. Information gathered from parents helps staff to get to know children well and provide an individual welcome for them. Children arrive with confidence and benefit from the high staff ratio available. Liaison with the school and familiarity with the premises supports a smooth transition when children transfer from the pre-school to school.

Children explore a broad range of exciting activities which support their all-round development. They form positive relationships with staff and most are eager to share their experiences with them. Circle time is effective for all children. They listen and sit quietly as they are introduced to the activities for the day and are reminded of the daily routine. They are encouraged to recall activities they participated in the previous week and reminded of the new song they are learning. Activities are often linked which helps to reinforce children's learning.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from the qualified and knowledgeable team of staff who work extremely well together. They provide an stimulating learning environment that engages children's interest, consequently children are enthusiastic, motivated and eager to learn. Activities are well-planned to ensure development is promoted in all aspects of learning and children have a broad range of experiences. Detailed observations are used to assess what children can do and plan their next steps for learning, although, they are not always formally recorded in each area. Staff have a secure knowledge of individual children and differentiate activities accordingly. The daily timetable ensures children have time to play indoors and outdoors, as well as having access to a wide range of resources, although some opportunities are missed to maximise children's learning. The covered play area and garden offer play in the fresh air whatever the weather, although, the area is not as stimulating or well-resourced as indoors. Sometimes the indoor layout results in parts of the playroom becoming very busy when children cluster at one end. Children receive enthusiastic support from staff which enables them to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Excellent strategies are used to promote children's personal, social and emotional development. Children gain confidence and self-esteem because they are frequently praised and encouraged by staff who know them well and value their achievements. They learn right from wrong because of the clear boundaries set and develop good relationships with adults and each other. Independence is fostered as they make choices about what they want to do and express their own views. Many become engrossed in tasks and concentrate well, for example, they finish difficult puzzles and spend a long time creating their own collages.

Children engage in relaxed conversations with staff as they play. These opportunities are used effectively to encourage children's language and understanding by recalling previous experiences, talking about what they are doing and what they are familiar with. Circle time games are thoughtfully put together and presented well. Children listen attentively to different sounds and try to describe them, offering words, such as 'crunchy' and 'jingly'. Many engage in mark-making and some attempt to write their name. Children become aware print carries meaning through the use of different types of text displayed around the room, when finding their name when they arrive and sharing books at story time.

Mathematical concepts are introduced effortlessly into activities. Children are familiar with many of the games and confidently complete them on their own. They count how many adults are present at circle time and add on the member of staff outside, they name the shapes as they match them in a book and, with help from staff, order numbers on the washing line. They find numbers on the playground and jump from one to another. Children excitedly investigate the discovery box which contains a vast array of objects. They find out how they work as they press different buttons, wind them up, turn them around and shake them. They learn how to use technology in the environment as they activate the pelican crossing and programmable toys in the pre-school.

Exciting projects and themes introduce children to the world around them, for example, they visit the library, fire station and the woods. They observe and learn about living things as they watch with wonder caterpillars become butterflies and are released into the garden. They talk about and examine vegetables brought in for harvest and experiment with floating and sinking. Children experience a very good range of media and materials. They make clay models, experiment with different paint effects and join in with a varied repertoire of songs and rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and families are welcomed at the pre-school. Staff get to know them well so they are able to meet individual needs. They introduce effective strategies so they can work together with parents to enhance children's learning, for example, a two-way communication book is used so that parents and staff can encourage language development. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support from well-trained and supportive staff. Children become aware of the diversity of society through a range of activities and resources. Positive steps are taken for children to share their own experiences and family events.

Children behave extremely well and quickly learn what is expected of them. They sit quietly and listen to each other at circle time, learn to share and take turns. Staff introduce effective methods to promote positive behaviour, such as consistent guidance, praise and encouragement. Children benefit from observant staff who notice what they do and praise them for doing well and being kind to each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. They receive a good range of information about the pre-school through regular newsletters, information displayed on the notice board and regular discussions with staff. Booklets completed when children first join the pre-school provide staff with a starting point for planning children's progression. Information then continues to be exchanged regularly to ensure parents are well-informed and have the opportunity to be involved in children's learning. They are invited to participate in pre-school outings and contribute to the themes. As a result, children proudly talk about and share the vegetables they have brought in for harvest. Parents value the friendly and approachable staff and the welcome their children receive.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by efficient and effective organisation. Knowledgeable staff fully understand and follow the pre-school's comprehensive policies and procedures to protect children and promote their well-being. Documentation is thorough and very well-organised.

Robust recruitment and employment procedures ensure staff are suitably qualified and supported in their role. Children benefit from the high ratio and dedication of staff, as well as their enthusiasm. Parents are well-informed and encouraged to be involved which has a positive impact on children feeling confident and secure.

Leadership and management is good. Effective and dedicated management of the pre-school enables high quality provision to be offered and positive outcomes to be promoted in all areas. Children benefit from the strong commitment towards the professional development of staff and thorough monitoring of most aspects of the provision. Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school was asked to improve safety in respect of the heating and improve some documentation. The recommendations have been addressed and as a result children's safety and welfare is improved. The heater guards have been raised so they do not pose a risk by becoming too hot when on. Record keeping has been reviewed and effective measures implemented so that all required information is in place and shared with parents.

At the last inspection of nursery education the pre-school was asked to provide further opportunities for children to develop their independence in selecting and using resources, and ensure children's developmental records are regularly updated so that children's progression can be planned and learning difficulties identified. As a result of changes made children are able to choose what activities are set out during the session and help to get them out of the cupboard. They are able to complete craft activities in any way they choose and are able to select creative materials from self selection trolleys, although these are not always positioned for easy access. Children's progress records are detailed and clearly show what children can do. They are regularly updated and contain examples of children's work and astute observations. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good understanding of her role and individual children so is able to meet their needs well.

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the nursery education section below.

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):

- continue to review the layout and use of the indoor and outdoor areas so that opportunities to extend children's learning are maximised.

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