

East Farleigh Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127160
Inspection date	01 February 2008
Inspector	Jenny Kane
Setting Address	Church Hall, Lower Road, East Farleigh, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 0JL
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Registered person	The Trustees of East Farleigh 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 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?

East Farleigh Pre-school has been registered since 1972. It is a registered charity managed by a board of trustees made up of parents. The pre-school operates from the church hall in the village of East Farleigh near Maidstone. There is access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open Monday to Thursday from 09:30 to 12:15 and Friday from 12:15 to 14:45 during term time. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the group serves the local area and surrounding area. There are currently 31 children on roll aged from two to four years. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs six staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The group receives support from the Local Authority Early Years advisory teacher. They are members of The Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in comfortable premises, which staff maintain to a good standard of hygiene. They have effective procedures in place to ensure children's health and share the cleaning tasks. They reinforce and encourage children's hand washing routines. However, the toilet and nappy changing facilities are poor and the committee is looking at improvements. The group promotes the health of the children by gathering a good amount of information about allergies and medical requirements. There is a clear sickness policy, which parents adhere to, and first aid resources are readily available. The majority of staff hold current first aid certificates.

Children bring with them a snack box. This generally includes fruit and nutritious contents. On occasions, children try new food as part of a topic or festival for example when they recently celebrated Diwali. Children sit together at snack time at tables and although this is a social occasion, stopping to clear away the equipment to eat, breaks the routine. Drinks are freely available because the children have individual drinking bottles which they help themselves to during the session. Staff talk to children about healthy eating during snack and explain that food gives them energy to play outside.

Children engage in regular activities, which contribute to promoting their physical development. They have good opportunities to use the outside play area in most weathers. Children show some independence when dressing in outdoor clothing to go outside. They tend to all go outside together and at times, the popular play areas become crowded. Children need to negotiate about where they can ride their bikes. They enjoy 'filling up' at the petrol pump and making up role-play games. The playhouse is popular and children go inside in small groups playing together happily. A group of children work together with the bricks, making a structure on which to balance. An obstacle course takes shape around the area and children have fun going round, climbing and sliding cooperatively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a secure environment where staff take positive steps to ensure children's safety. They carry out risk assessments of all areas used by children each day. Children practise evacuation drills on a very regular basis and this ensures they learn about their own and other's safety. Staff work hard to provide a stimulating and child-friendly environment despite having to clear everything away each session. There is a good supply and range of play equipment. Due to the storage arrangements, it is difficult for children to self-select. However, staff plan a mix of interesting activities and get out corresponding toys and equipment. Children move about happily choosing where they play and mixing with others.

The manager and staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. The group has a clear written policy in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. This has recently been updated and is shared with parents. Some staff have accessed training in the subject and others are booked to attend. This ensures they have a good awareness of their role in safeguarding children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, outgoing and respond well to their environment. They enjoy a good range of experiences, which support their development and offer challenge. Staff give thought when planning activities to ensure they are appropriate and meet individual children's needs. Children benefit from a good deal of individual attention from the staff. They know the staff well and enjoy close and positive relationships with them.

The pre-school is putting Birth to three matters into practice and this benefits the younger children. The manager and senior staff have a good knowledge of the framework. The staff are keen to increase their knowledge of child development and have a good commitment to accessing suitable courses. Parents receive written information sheets about the Birth to three matters framework. Staff and key workers share information verbally about progress and plan to develop the children's folders. This sharing of information ensures parents are involved in the care and development of their children.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The manager has a very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the early learning goals. The senior staff have attended relevant curriculum training and they work together with their colleagues to provide an environment where children are keen to learn. As a result, children are progressing steadily across the six areas of learning. All staff are involved in the curriculum planning meetings and have input into the long-term plans. The weekly plans are clear, detail the learning intention, resources and support needed, evaluation and how staff can extend the activity. Staff work with the stepping stones to ensure the activity is appropriate for all ages of children. They observe children both individually and in group situations, making useful notes. These are thorough and help staff to plan children's next steps in learning.

Children are progressing well in the areas of personal, social and emotional development. They have formed good relationships with adults and their peers. They show independence regarding personal self-care for example taking themselves to the toilet and dressing to go in the garden. Most children enjoy helping to clear away the toys and equipment and show cooperation when moving the boxes to the door of the cupboard. However, there are limited opportunities for children to make independent choices during the session for example in relation to snack time and outdoor play.

Children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing well. Many children confidently initiate conversations and speak clearly about incidents and experiences. Staff spend a lot of their time talking with children and encouraging language. Children enjoy looking at books in the reading corner, which is comfortable with cushions to relax on. However, this area is cleared away mid session leaving no quiet area for children. There are opportunities for children to make mark during role-play and other activities. They help themselves to scissors, pencils, tape and an assortment of papers from the resource box. Children are learning to recognise the written word such as their names when they self register, their coat labels and from the various signs around the play area.

Children use mathematics during activities and routines such as snack time and parking their cars in the garden. They have opportunities to discuss shape, texture, measure and colour when

playing with sand water and paint. One child happily mixes the yellow and blue dough to make green. He talks to a member of staff about what it feels like and what he can make from it.

Children use their imaginations during play activities. During the inspection, they enjoy shopping at 'East Farleigh Greengrocers'. Children enjoy weighing the plastic fruit, serving others and making shopping lists. They transport items around in shopping baskets and trolleys. Later the 'Hairdressing Salon' is open. A group of children enjoy it when a member of staff comes in to 'have her hair done'. They use the props well and work together to develop the game.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children gain an understanding of the wider world through various topics and festivals. They recently celebrated Diwali where they tried on traditional dress, sampled food and made candleholders. The staff promote equality by providing opportunities for children to develop at their own rate and the provision of resources which promote diversity and difference. Children enjoy growing plants in pots in the garden but opportunities to understand about how things work are sometimes limited. Although children enjoy using the computer it is not always in use. Staff hope to develop the information technology equipment. Staff treat children with equal concern, speaking calmly and quietly to the children. In response children are respectful of others and older children often help the younger ones as they help to look after their environment.

Staff have a good awareness of equality issues and are fully committed to their policy of inclusion. Between them, they have a good amount of experience of caring for children with a range of additional needs. Although the group does not currently care for children who have learning difficulties or disabilities the staff are confident of their abilities. Children are settled and have positive relationships with staff and key workers who are aware of their individual needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff have developed strong and effective working relationships with the parents. The manager and her staff have a friendly yet professional approach, which ensures parents happily share relevant information about their children. Key workers discuss progress or issues with parents. The group has appropriate strategies in place to deal with any incidents of unwanted behaviour. Because staff ratios are high and children are well occupied their behaviour generally is good. Children have consistency and staff reinforce rules giving clear explanations.

Parents receive clear written information in the prospectus about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning. Good verbal communication ensures that parents understand how their children are progressing. Staff and key workers are readily available to talk to parents at each session. The staff make useful observations during the session which are later transferred into children's individual folders. These are available to the parents but are not used on a regular basis. The written information in children's development folders is developing and the manager is looking at ways to further share these with parents. The committee is keen to find out parents' views and does this by carrying out surveys, producing newsletters and termly parents' meetings. This ensures parents are able to continue their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All relevant and mandatory documentation is in place and appropriately maintained. Children's individual records are secure, confidential, and are readily available to parents. The group maintains written policies and procedures to keep parents informed about the service provided. These are comprehensive and updated on a regular basis. The staff plan and organise their time effectively. Despite the limitations of the premises, staff manage to provide a child-friendly and welcoming environment. Staff demonstrate a good regard to the care and well-being of the children. They plan a good mix of activities but at times, the routine is inflexible. Staff deploy themselves well and ratios are high which means children receive a good deal of individual attention which promotes their welfare.

Leadership and management are good. The committee takes an active role and is fully involved in the running of the pre-school. There have been recent changes to the management with the change of the committee chair. She is supportive of the staff and has a good understanding of her role. The new manager is enthusiastic and has good leadership qualities. She motivates her staff well and in return, they give their full support. This ensures good team working. Staff have the necessary knowledge and experience to undertake their roles. The group also benefits from a part-time administrator, which means that the manager and her staff can concentrate on childcare issues. Staff continue to improve and develop their practice through staff meetings, attendance of training and self-evaluation. They regularly discuss the curriculum and evaluate how they can ensure children's progress. This good practice enables staff to maintain good standards of care and education. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last care inspection, in 2004 the setting has followed previous recommendations. Accident and medication procedures have been amended and recording has been improved. A sick child policy is in place and is displayed prominently. Staff are aware of any child who has an allergy or special dietary requirement. Children all wash their hands in the bathroom after craft activities. The new manager has implemented a thorough risk assessment procedure. The group has looked at staff deployment and ratios are now high. There are good procedures in place for recruiting and vetting staff. More than half the staff now hold appropriate childcare qualifications. Staff have undertaken training on managing children's behaviour. All staff are aware of the content of the pre-school's policies and procedures and form part of their contract of employment.

Since the last nursery education inspection in 2005 the setting has followed the areas for consideration. Staff have increased their knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and stepping stones. The new manager has refined the planning and staff work together to provide a balance of activities across the six areas of learning. Observations and assessments of children on a regular basis ensures that staff identify children's next steps in their learning.

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.

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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):

- improve the toilet and nappy changing facilities
- Consider ways to further share children's developmental folders with parents [applies also to nursery education]

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):

- consider how to develop the daily routine and flow of activities to encourage children's independence and choice [applies also to care]
- extend the opportunities for children to develop their information technology and science skills

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