

Katherine Wheel Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127287
Inspection date	27 November 2007
Inspector	Stephanie Graves
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Registered person	The Trustees of Katherine Wheel 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?

Katherine Wheel Pre-school opened in 1989. The group operates from one room in a self-contained unit within the grounds of St. Katherine's School in Snodland, Kent. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The setting is open on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00, and on a Thursday and Friday 09:00 to 11:30, during term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for nursery education. Children mainly attend from the local area.

The nursery employs six members of staff. Of these, five, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a further qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are actively involved in learning about good health issues. For example, they develop an understanding of healthy eating through choosing nutritious foods at snack time. These are very attractively presented and include options, such as cubes of cheese, bread sticks, pineapple chunks and pieces of apple. Children confidently talk about their favourites and in conversation with staff, discuss their favourites, such as what they had for breakfast before coming to pre-school. Staff sit with children at snack time and talk about healthy eating, which also encourages children to talk about foods they like and dislike. Drinking water is readily available and children can help themselves throughout the session. Clear agreements are placed with parents to ensure children's individual dietary needs are met.

Children take part in experiences which help to develop their awareness of good hygiene practices. For example, they know when and why they need to wash their hands and use paper towels to dry them. Staff are vigilant and ensure children dry their hands properly before eating snacks and encourage them to do this by themselves wherever possible. This helps to prevent the spread of germs. Effective hygiene procedures help to prevent cross infection, including the use of antibacterial spray to ensure surfaces are hygienically clean. Children are well cared for if they have an accident or become unwell, because all staff have current first aid training, accident and medication procedures meet with requirements and any children who have contagious illnesses remain at home. This helps to prevent the spread of infectious conditions. Children have many opportunities to be active but can also rest, for instance, on soft cushions in the quiet area, which promotes their sense of wellbeing.

Children's physical development is supported well through the nursery education curriculum. They have access to an outdoor play area containing large apparatus, wheeled toys, bats and balls and other resources to help them to develop their physical skills and coordination. They learn about the effect physical exercise has on their bodies, for instance, as they take part in action songs and staff ask them if they feel 'tired' or 'puffed out.' Children also enjoy less active pursuits, such as looking at a book or playing a table top game. They are provided with many fine manipulative experiences to help them develop smaller muscle movements. These include mark making, construction, using one handed tools, threading and sorting. This means children's physical skills are promoted well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is considered well within the pre-school environment. They are supervised closely at all times and the building is secure, which means they can play and learn within safe boundaries. Toys and resources are checked regularly to ensure they remain safe for children's use. Staff ensure those available to the younger children are suitable and a stimulating range is available for all children, suited to their ages and stages of development. A written risk assessment and daily checks help to establish and reduce any risks of accidental injury to children. All the necessary facilities are in place to ensure their safety, including soft surfacing around the outdoor play apparatus. Children learn about keeping themselves and others safe because staff spend time explaining why certain procedures are necessary. For example, they are taught to pick up objects from the floor to prevent others tripping and children follow simple rules when playing on the outdoor apparatus. This includes only one child using the

mini trampoline at a time and learning to use the slide safely. The effective procedures in place help children to develop a good awareness of personal safety.

Children's welfare is promoted well within the pre-school because staff have an up-to-date understanding of the procedures necessary to safeguard them. They understand the signs and symptoms of abuse and know the procedures to follow in the event of a concern. Training has been attended and all staff know where to access important information. The procedures in place are based on current requirements and help to ensure that children's welfare and safety remain the group's priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive confidently and quickly make themselves at home. They are very content and involved as they choose from the range of stimulating experiences available. The pre-school is set out in areas where children can easily identify and select activities that promote all areas of learning. These include areas for construction, art and craft, small world activities, mark making, role play and an appealing book area. Children enjoy the involvement of the staff team who spend most of their time playing and talking with them. The atmosphere is relaxed and background music and songs helps to provide a homely feel. Staff have a good understanding of the range of experiences children need to progress. The pre-school has adopted the Birth to three matters framework and adapts activities to meet the needs of the younger children attending.

Young children are actively involved in all the play experiences provided and staff observe and assess their progress. They enjoy investigating through resources such as play dough, natural materials and art and craft activities. They are well supported and encouraged to lead in their play. Role play concepts encourage them to represent real life scenarios through their play as they access items including, toy phones, calculators, shopping resources and kitchen accessories. They eagerly take part in music and movement activities, which helps them to develop an ability to listen and respond as part of a larger group. Children's creations are attractively displayed throughout the setting, which helps to reinforce a sense of pride in what they have achieved. Children enjoy being outdoors in all weathers and, therefore, have opportunities to explore outside all year round.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well as they move through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Their learning and achievements are good in relation to their starting abilities, recorded in initial profiles. The staff implement the Foundation Stage requirements well. They observe and assess children's learning throughout their time at the setting and a transfer document is completed to help with the transition into school. Planning is well documented, covers all areas of learning and is differentiated to ensure the needs of all children are met. The next steps in children's learning are used to inform future planning. However, these are generally recorded for small groups of children rather than individually and means the links between assessment records and planning are not always clear. Activity plans help to ensure learning objectives are met and these are evaluated every week. This means activities are based on children's interests and learning needs.

Children are friendly and confident and interact well with staff and one another. They demonstrate independence when choosing their preferred activities by placing pegs on activity

cards. This visual guidance enables all children to identify activities and make clear choices from the experiences provided. They are not afraid to ask for help and staff support their learning well. For example, they promote children's good behaviour by reading stories about feelings and emotions. This helps children learn about concepts, such as, sharing, taking turns and considering the feelings of others.

Children's interest is promoted effectively because staff ask many questions to help them think and respond. This is evident during small group stories with the use of puppets, where children answer questions, contribute to story lines and help to recreate the main events. Because they are included in teaching concepts in this way, they remain interested and focussed. Children can freely select a wide variety of tools to make marks in a variety of situations. For instance, they thoroughly enjoy using paint brushes and water to mark make on surfaces during outdoor play. They learn to identify and link initial sounds with words and are encouraged to recognise and write their own names. This helps to develop pre-reading and writing skills. Children are confident when communicating and are learning to use signs and gestures. This enables them to communicate in different ways.

A good variety of mathematical experiences are available and children are gaining confidence with numbers, counting and recognising shapes. They enjoy matching activities, use language such as 'more' and 'less' as they fill and empty different sized containers with raw pasta. Children have many opportunities to practice simple addition and subtraction, for instance as they count one another at the start of the session, or sing a song requiring them to count back from five to zero. They learn to problem solve, for example, by working out how much wrapping paper they need to 'wrap parcels' in the role play post office. Children demonstrate curiosity as they push play dough through a tube to make a 'triangle' or make Christmas shapes with bread. They focus well when listening to audio sounds and identify noises including a 'fire engine', and a 'mobile phone', which helps to promote their concentration skills.

Children enjoy learning about living things and exploring in the outdoor area. They have planted their own tomato plants which has helped them learn about things that grow. They demonstrate good hand-eye co-ordination, for example, as they pour drinks, cut with scissors or drag and click the mouse when using the computer. They enjoy action songs and sing a mixture of familiar and new songs, including those related to Christmas. Children are creative and staff provide effective support and role play resources to extend their learning. These experiences help children to represent real life scenarios through their play.

The group plans and provides a very good range of activities, experiences and play opportunities, to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a bright and stimulating environment by attentive staff who care for them according to their individual needs. The younger children are regularly acknowledged, helping them to feel secure and settled. Even children new to the group settle quickly because they are regularly acknowledged and affirmed. This helps them to develop a sense of belonging. Children learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and others through toys, resources and experiences, which include positive images of diversity. Children are polite and respectful towards staff and one another, because behaviour management strategies promote positive behaviour. Staff are good role models who encourage good manners and help

to teach children right from wrong. They are heard to regularly praise them for their achievements and good behaviour. These measures promote children's welfare and self-esteem.

Children benefit from consistency of care because staff work close with parents to meet their needs. A good range of information is shared and parents are encouraged to visit the setting to speak with their child's key worker at any time. They believe their children receive very good care and they feel included and involved. This helps to maintain effective support for children between home and the pre-school environment. The provider takes positive steps to ensure that parents are kept well informed about all relevant policies and procedures.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents of children receiving funding for nursery education receive good quality information and have regular opportunities to share their children's individual progress records. The curriculum plans are displayed and daily feedback is given to parents, as they come into the pre-school to collect the children. Parents know they are welcome to visit the pre-school to share their special interests and skills with the children. These opportunities help to reinforce children's enjoyment of teaching and learning concepts.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are happy and involved at all times and play cooperatively together. They demonstrate a sense of excitement as they explore the stimulating experiences available. Children's social and communication skills are promoted very well. They are friendly and kind to others and can be heard making comments, such as, 'that's okay,' after somebody apologises for accidentally bumping into them. They have regular opportunities to take part in celebrating special events, including their birthdays. Overall, children are engaged in many purposeful experiences helping them to learn, progress and enjoy pre-school life.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are settled and cared for within a very well organised environment. They demonstrate good relationships with staff and have free access to a wide range of play and learning experiences. Effective systems are in place to ensure the adults working with children are suitable and staff training needs are continually addressed. The registration certificate is displayed clearly and although some staff details are not kept in line with requirements, the necessary records are all in place and shared with parents. These include daily attendance records for children and staff. The range of policies and procedures underpin the group's professional practice and help to ensure that children's welfare, care and learning are well promoted.

The leadership and management is good. Staff apply the Foundation Stage well and there are clear aims in place to promote the development of all the children. Although some improvement is required regarding the next steps in learning for individual children, the group ensure all children are observed and assessed against the areas of learning. As a result, good progress is evident. Curriculum plans include all areas of the curriculum and these are displayed for parents. Staff are dedicated to the children's needs and integrate care and nursery education well to promote successful outcomes in all areas of learning and development. The provision of toys, equipment and resources is very good and because these are appealing, children remain interested and focussed. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated along with the overall effectiveness of the curriculum. The setting works hard to maintain links with local primary schools, which helps to prepare the children for school life.

The provider is dedicated towards the ongoing improvement of the pre-school. This is evident in regular self-evaluation exercises and the group's reflective practice. As a result children receive very good care and many different opportunities to play and learn. The pre-school provides a professional service. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider received three recommendations. These included maintaining written risk assessments, devising a procedure to be followed in the event of a child becoming lost and including Ofsted's contact details in the information provided for parents. The recommendations have all been addressed. Written risk assessments and a lost child policy are in place, and parents are made aware of Ofsted's contact details.

At the last inspection of nursery education, three key issues were identified for improvement. These included developing staff understanding of the early learning goals and stepping stones to improve planning and to ensure all areas of learning are covered. The group were also asked to improve the methods of observation and assessment to show the next steps needed in children's learning. The key issues have been addressed, although a further recommendation has been left to ensure the next steps for individual children are more clearly identified.

The provider has taken steps towards improving the service provided and ensuring children are safe and well cared for at all times.

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 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 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 personal documentation for staff is retained in line with current requirements.

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):

- ensure the next steps in learning for individual children are clearly identified.

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