

# River Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	127500
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 April 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Tracy Larnach
<b>Setting Address</b>	River Methodists Church Hall, Common Lane, Dover, Kent, CT17 0RA
<b>Telephone number</b>	07974 995871
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	River Pre-School Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

River Pre-School Playgroup has been established for more than 30 years. It operates from the Methodist Church Hall in the centre of River, near Dover. The pre-school has access to the main hall and toilets. They use the pathway outside the hall and the playground at the nearby school for outdoor play.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It opens Monday - Thursday from 08:45 until 11:45, with an additional lunch session from 11:45 until 12:45. On Friday it opens from 08:45 until 11:45. It operates term time only.

There are currently 41 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 28 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications. They receive support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have the opportunity to learn about health and hygiene through the daily routine; for example, they are aware of why they wash their hands before they cook and know they need to wash their hands before lunch and after using the toilet. Staff provide liquid soap and paper towels to help prevent the spread of germs; however, before snack children are given sanitising solution which does not teach them appropriate hand washing procedures and is confusing for them. Staff use appropriate practice to promote hygiene; for example, they use antibacterial spray on the table and ensure cooking is done in a hygienic way; for example the children have individual bowls and spoons and discuss not sharing, although not always why. The pre-school and toys are kept clean and hygienic for children's play.

Information is provided to the parents about keeping children off who are sick, accompanied by a list of infectious diseases, this helps to prevent the spread of infection. There are enough staff trained in first aid which means there are always staff on duty to respond in an emergency. Written parental permission for emergency medical advice and treatment ensures staff are aware of parental wishes and are able to act in the best interest of children should they have a serious accident or become ill.

Children do not become hungry as snacks are provided by the pre-school and the parents provide lunches. Information about the children's dietary requirements is posted and staff are aware of any signs and symptoms should a child have a reaction so they can act quickly. Children have a range of snacks to try; for example, on day one of inspection they had rice cakes, carrots, peppers, raisins, grapes, bread sticks, dip and cheese, children also had the opportunity to cut bananas and apples into pieces for serving. This means they can discover new tastes and are learning about healthy choices. Staff sit with the children while they eat engaging them in conversation. However, although the snack time extends for the majority of the session, once it has been cleared away water is no longer available should a child become thirsty to ensure they remain hydrated.

Children move confidently and safely inside and out. They show a sense of space as they push pushchairs around the room with safety and control. Children have opportunities for physical play as they can freely access the outside area to ride bikes and other wheeled toys; however, this space is restricting. Staff use the local school's playground and visit the local park in the warmer weather to give the children opportunities for rigorous physical play. In addition, for part of the session they get equipment out to promote children's large muscle development; for example, a climbing frame with a slide. Overall, there are sufficient opportunities for children to participate in physical play for their physical well-being.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is secure as there is a system in place to ensure unwanted visitors can not come into the building. An arrival and collection policy keeps children safe. A risk assessment has been completed and a system is in place to ensure any safety issues are taken care of. A daily checklist is completed to check health and safety issues to ensure that the premises are ready for the children's arrival; however, it was not completed until after the session began on day one of inspection and ivy was observed on the wall outside. Toys are checked regularly to

ensure their safety. The register details the children present; however, times are not included so if a child comes in late or leaves early there is no record. The manager documents visitors to the premises but a visitors book has not yet been introduced. The staff have parental permissions on file; for example, for outings, emergency medical advice and treatment and photographs. Permission for the application of sunscreen had not yet been sought.

The staff have a satisfactory knowledge of child protection to ensure children are safeguarded; however, the policy does not include contact numbers and existing injuries are noted informally so staff may miss a pattern forming. There is a fire evacuation log and staff ensure all children are involved in evacuation so they become familiar with the procedure. Children learn about safety as the staff talk to them about keeping themselves safe; for example, staff remind the children to pick up the toys so they do not trip over and hurt themselves and they are taught to ride up and down the pathway without crashing, for their safety.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children quickly become involved in the activities as they arrive at the pre-school. Staff are developing independent selection; for example, crafts, games, puzzles and maths materials are housed in drawers for the children to select from. However, other toys and equipment are selected by the staff and placed on tables and the floor at the beginning of the session. Children have the opportunity to experiment, explore and create with different mediums; they enjoy sand, shaving foam and paint during the day and when glitter was added to the paint a child said, 'it is beautiful!'. Staff adjust the activities so they are accessible to the younger children but have not introduced the Birth to three matters framework to help them plan and assess the younger children's development. This is done using the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage which is not developmentally appropriate.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. The curriculum planning consists of an activity for each of the areas of learning which is added to or adjusted as needed based on what the staff see the children doing. Although there is a planned activity each week to provide challenges and move children on, the observations are used to document children's successes and as a result, children's next steps are not clearly identified and used in the planning. Children enjoy the activities on offer; for example, the staff put shaving foam on the table or bring out a range of collage materials which the children enjoy; however, these are not planned and so are not supported as well as they could be; for example, the shaving foam activity was not extended for more able children. Staff are working on their questioning techniques to provide children with opportunities to extend their thinking skills. However, at times the staff react to situations; for example, stories are read when children become noisy.

Children talk and interact well together and have made friends. They speak clearly and have good listening skills; for example, they listened during the planned activity, taking turns to contribute. They play imaginatively, using language to explore real and imagined experiences. They recognise their names and use them frequently; for example, to register, on their coat pegs and prior to selecting their snack; consequently some children attempt to write their names on their 'work' and more able children are forming letters. Children enjoy rhymes and

songs as they link sounds and letters. They understand that print carries meaning as they see print in the environment or write on envelopes. They enjoy stories; however, they do not often visit the book area to enjoy books independently and at times books are used as a time filler so the staff can begin to tidy away, which does not teach children to value them.

Children count during the session and staff discuss how many children are present and how many are staying to lunch so they understand that they count for a purpose. They discuss amounts; for example as they 'cook' which helps them learn about simple addition and subtraction. Children learn about making patterns through mathematical activities such as 'compare bears' as they sort and match the bears. They find out about capacity as they fill and empty containers in the sand. Children's imagination develops when they pretend to be the staff sitting at the desk with a calculator, 'we are doing numbers', they say as they press the buttons. In addition, they play in the role play area pretending to iron and take the babies out, 'it is raining', they say, as they race to get out of the rain. Children are creative as they explore media and materials; however, this is not extended to music so they can independently explore sounds.

Children observe changes; for example, during the cooking activity they watched the chocolate melt and become hard again as they mixed it. They explore mediums such as paint, mixing the colours and using different brushes to make patterns, staff add glitter which delights the children. Children build with bricks, practicing their design and making skills. Opportunities for learning about information and communication technology are limited to play phones and calculators at this time. Children talk about significant events in their lives, such as new babies and their holidays, beginning to find out about their own and others' cultures as they discuss each others' lives. Positive images are reflected in the environment and holidays and traditions from other cultures acknowledged so they learn acceptance of differences. Children's small muscles develop as they use 'push pins' to display their 'work' and tongs as they chose what food they wished to try for snack. In addition, they have opportunities to handle malleable material such as play dough. Photographs are posted at the children's level so they can see and revisit their past experiences.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive at the pre-school happily and are very sociable; for example, hugging their friends and asking, 'are you going to play with me'. Children are confident, they quickly approached the inspector to ask what she was doing there. Staff use positive methods of behaviour management and the children have helped to develop the rules which are reinforced. As a result, children behave well. Their self-esteem is promoted as they are given lots of praise and are able to proudly display their 'mark making' on the board. Independence is promoted as some opportunities for self-selection have been developed, children put on their coats and help themselves to tissues; however, self-selection is still developing and children must be accompanied to the toilet. Positive images are reflected in the environment and stereotypes are avoided; for example, photographs of dads doing the ironing and washing up are displayed in the role play area. Children have opportunities to learn about their local community and surrounding area when they visit the local parks, church and local places of interest. They also have visits from the community police officer, a fire fighter and a nurse to teach them about community helpers. Holidays and traditions are acknowledged from their own and other cultures to teach children about the wider world. A special educational needs coordinator works with outside agencies to develop individual educational plans as appropriate. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Parents spoken to are happy with the care and feel that they can readily approach any of the staff in the pre-school. A pre-school information booklet contains information about the six areas of learning and makes reference to the policies being available for parents on request; however, they are housed in a cupboard so are not easily accessible. The staff use a contact book which parents enjoy and this begins to show a 'picture' of their children's development. Parents can contribute to these; however, the entries have not been cross referenced to the stepping stones and the parents spoken to had not seen their children's records so are not formally informed of their children's progress. In addition, parents have not been involved in assessing their children's starting points when they begin pre-school. The pre-school has a complaints log; however, the complaints policy is not up to date to ensure parents are aware of what to do should they have a complaint.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The routine is organised to include a range of activities. The pace and routine of the session works well for the majority of the session; however, once children 'clean up' they have to sit for a long time. They complete the register, count, discuss the weather and the months of the year, as a result, they lose interest and become fidgety as the activities are meaningless. Recruiting procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with the children are discussed in the child protection policy, which makes reference to interviews, gaps in employment, frequent job changes and obtaining references; however, the recruiting procedures have not yet been fully developed and staff files do not show interview notes or references. However, all staff have been employed for over three years and have appropriate checks to show they are suitable. Both the committee and managers are aware that procedures must be rigorous and robust prior to any recruitment being undertaken. All the required documentation for the safe and effective management of the setting and for the welfare and care of children is maintained and stored securely. However, some lack detail; for example, the register, accidents, medication, complaints and statement of arrangements for the protection of children.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

Staff meet together regularly to discuss the pre-school. New appraisals are being developed to ensure staff strengths and training issues are identified. This means they can work together to improve practice. There are systems in place to monitor, review and evaluate the nursery education programme; for example 'key folders' are checked and an environmental rating scale has been used as a self-evaluation tool. As a result, they have worked on self-selection, developing a cosy area, an area for privacy, low display boards and snack time over the last year to improve the education programme and outcomes for children.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

After the last inspection there were two key issues identified pertaining to education and six recommendations made for care.

The first key issue was to extend the planning to show differentiation of children's ability and needs. Evaluate the effectiveness of the planning, linking the activities, observations and learning intention in all six areas of learning, to inform the future planning and targets. The

second was to provide further opportunities for all children, through the use of technology, positive images, music and sound, and during snack time to extend their independence.

Since the last inspection the planning has been reviewed and continues to evolve to meet the children's individual needs and improve the education programme. Improvements have been made to the room arrangement to provide opportunities for independent choice through self-selection and at snack time; however, opportunities to freely experience music and sound and explore technology are limited.

The six recommendations made were to ensure all accidents are signed by parent/carers and they are informed of when medication is administered; ensure hand washing procedures meet the environmental health requirements; extend staff's knowledge regarding the promotion of positive image resources; introduce regular healthy options for children at snack time; provide a safe system to view visitors at the main door and to update information for parents regarding children attending in nappies or pull-ups.

Since the last inspection the pre-school staff have improved hand washing procedures and introduced healthy options for children at snack time so children are learning about a healthy lifestyle. However, accidents and medication records do not always contain parent/carers signatures so this remains a recommendation of this inspection. The premises are secure for the children's safety so visitors can not access the pre-school uninvited. Positive images feature in the environment and staff promote an acceptance of differences. Information is given to parents regarding children attending in nappies or pull-ups; however, this is not encouraged unless special circumstances which does not promote equality of opportunity.

### **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 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 all medication and accident records are signed by the parents

- ensure the child protection policy contains the required detail and all existing injuries are documented
- ensure the programme of activities for younger children promote all areas of development, for example, with the implementation of the Birth to three matters framework
- review and update the complaints policy to ensure it reflects current legislation and is available to parents.
- ensure the daily record of attendance contains the required detail
- develop rigorous and robust recruiting procedures so that only the most suitable staff are recruited.

### **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 develop the system of planning and assessment, to ensure information gained through observation is used effectively to inform the planning and identify children's next steps in learning
- improve partnership with parents by developing systems to evaluate their children's starting points and ensure they have regular opportunities to contribute to their children's developmental records
- review the pace and routine of the session and organisation of activities, in order to effectively challenge, manage and support all children during the activities they complete and meet their individual needs

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)