

Tadpoles Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127671
Inspection date	08 February 2008
Inspector	Freeda Wildon
Setting Address	Sports Pavilion, St Mildred's Road, Ramsgate, Kent, CT12 4DE
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Registered person	Ruth Burton
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?

Tadpoles Pre-School is a privately owned pre-school and opened in 1995. It operates from a room of the sports pavilion in Minster, Kent. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school operates term time only, Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 11:45 and on Tuesdays from 12:45 to 15:15. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 31 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these 20 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school has experience supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven staff. Of these four, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are working towards a qualification.

The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a nurturing environment; staff are kind and caring. This benefits children and makes them feel secure. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that the premises are clean. Children learn about personal hygiene through the daily routine. Older children wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet; they do this automatically and younger children do so with gentle reminders from staff. Children learn why good practice is important through activities and discussions with staff.

Children's good health is promoted because they know about healthy eating and what foods are good for them. They are provided with a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables and other healthy snacks. Milk and water is offered at snack times and they are able to access water from a dispenser when they feel thirsty. Children understand changes in their bodies. For example, they tell staff that they felt 'puffed' after exercising. Parents are informed about accidents on the day through written confidential records. This allows parents to continue the care at home. However, the system of recording accidents is not confidential. A sick child policy ensures that children are protected from infectious diseases. The provider has in place the necessary documentation to seek parental permission and to keep a record of medication, as yet this has not been required.

Children enjoy physical activities both inside and out each day. Children have access to an outdoor area and on suitable days children free flow inside to out. They are able to use their bodies in a variety of ways to promote their large muscle development. Children compete with their friends in races and join in sports days with another setting. This helps to develop sporting skills. Children confidently use bicycles and tricycles and show good co-ordination when steering and pedalling. Children enthusiastically join in action songs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are welcomed warmly. Informal daily risk assessments ensure that children are able to play safely. The resources are carefully selected to enable the children to initiate their own play. The room is set out attractively into different areas of learning and children are able to access the activities independently because the resources are kept at a low level. The pre-school is secure so children cannot leave without an authorised adult. When the main door is opened for free flow play, and at arrival and collection times the provider ensures that staff are effectively deployed to keep children safe.

Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. Children learn how to keep themselves safe because staff give them gentle safety reminders throughout the sessions. For example, when playing on the trampoline and with chopsticks in the role play area. Written procedures and risk assessments are in place for outings to ensure children's safety when they are away from the pre-school.

Children's welfare is protected because staff are familiar with the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. Some of the staff have attended child protection training recently and have cascaded acquired information to other members of staff. There is current information to refer

and the child protection policy has been updated. The owner takes overall responsibility for child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and are eager to play and learn. Staff are kind and caring in their interactions; for example, they show sensitivity when children have been away for a while through illness. Staff nurture children appropriately developing their self-esteem. They love to snuggle up to staff and listen to stories. Children's independence is well promoted. They visit the toilet when they have the need and help to clean the tables after snack time. Staff encourage children to do things for themselves rather than doing it for them, for example putting on coats and shoes for outdoor play.

All children are having a wonderful time; lots of raucous laughter as they play with their special friends. They sing songs and sing 'Happy Birthday' to their friends when they pretend play in the sand making cakes. Staff then select and provides activities, play opportunities to develop their language and mathematical thinking use their imagination and develop social relationships. Although staff are aware of Birth to three matters framework and understand how young children learn the plans are usually for the group, rather than for individuals; the adjustment to activities to address children's individual next steps is done informally.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and contribute ideas at regular meetings to plan activities for the children. They consider their key children's individual learning needs and include activities they think will help them progress in their planning. Staff communicate effectively with children; they extend their knowledge naturally; discussing with them what they are doing and asking them thought provoking questions as they play. Staff support children with additional learning needs well, enabling them to take a full and active role in the activities. The resources are easily accessible and children exercise considerable choice over which activities they undertake. Children are interested and happily engaged in their activities. Staff help children respond to boundaries of behaviour as set down. They are beginning to understand the need for self-discipline and consideration for others.

Children are relaxed and settled. This enables them to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children take turns and co-operate with each other to achieve a common goal, for example, completing a giant floor puzzle. They are confident in initiating their own learning, they are excited by the interesting activities. Children enjoy being independent; staff are always close by to help children who need it.

Children talk confidently in small groups and at circle time; they listen appropriately. They select and read books; they enjoy listening to, and joining in familiar stories. For example, they join in with words and actions about the story 'Goldielocks'. Children have access to a good selection of books both fictional and factual and use books to refer to. Most children correctly identify their names as they self-register when they arrive. Children are able to talk about their likes and dislikes when they are asked what they thought about new equipment. Children are sociable, they chat with their friends and staff at the snack table. They chat about past events, for example, they recall the ingredients used to make pancakes and linked it with the story about pancakes. Children have many opportunities to write for a purpose, they write in the role

play area taking orders for the restaurant. Staff provide opportunities for children to learn that writing can be in other languages other than in English. Staff encourage children to look at print, making references to a 'Birthday chart' and to writing on packets of food brought in to celebrate Chinese New Year.

Children can count confidently and show increasing skills in recognising and using numbers to support their play. They confidently count how many children are present and discuss more and less. Staff use mathematical language and discuss shapes and sizes as children play in the sand. Staff introduce halves and quarters as the children share out sand Birthday cakes. At the same time they are developing an awareness of measure when filling and emptying containers. Children are learning about concepts of time as staff frequently refer to the time line and comparing it with the clock on the wall. Children learn through hands-on experience about living things. Photographic evidence shows children are interested in spiders and snakes visiting the setting. They plant seeds and watch the growth cycle. Children show interest in the bulldozer on a site near by and visit the site to find out how it works. This shows children's natural curiosity about their surroundings is supported by staff.

Staff make good use of the environment and provide a balance between supervised activities and allowing children freedom to create using their imagination, for example, painting and role play. They achieve well in this area because creativity is valued by staff. They are able to use the digital camera to record their art work and achievements. This shows awareness of technology. Children receive many opportunities to learn through their senses, feeling textures such as glue, feathers, sand and water. Children enjoy singing and dancing to music regularly. They enjoy vigorous exercise both inside and out. Children have good opportunities to develop their small muscle skills with a range of tools, such as, hammers, saws, scissors, cutters and knives at snack time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff are highly effective in the way in which they help children understand the effect of unwanted behaviour through use of puppets and discussion about the pre-school's rules. As a result, they have a good understanding of what is right and wrong. Staff have attended training workshop 'power of puppets' and use the puppets to encourage good behaviour and to help children understand about feelings. The puppet 'Jean Claude' helps children understand that it is alright to have time by himself. The book area is organised so that children can have time to be by themselves, with a friend or close to an adult. Staff take into account children's individual circumstances and treat them accordingly.

Children's achievements are valued; their hard work is displayed and children are proud to show off their work. For example, showing their art work to an adult before it is set aside for drying. Children feel valued because staff consistently praise and encourage; valuing their efforts. Children use the digital camera to record their achievements and these are shared with parents in their 'achievement books'. Children co-operate well and show concern when they share a sad story at circle time. Children make choices and decisions about what and whom they play with. Consequently, children feel secure. The setting offers an inclusive service; all are welcome. Staff are able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and have a very willing attitude. Children with additional needs and children with English as an additional language are supported well because staff work closely with parents and outside agencies. Children benefit from a range of resources reflecting positive images, such as the diversity tree, books and dolls which promote a balanced view of society. Children benefit from visits to the local

community to help them discover the world around them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are happy with the service and find the staff approachable. Parents receive good information on the Foundation Stage; the weekly activities plan is available to them. Parents together with staff complete and initial child's profiles to help staff provide an appropriate service for their child. The profiles in conjunction with the assessments records helps to plot child's progress. Parents regularly see the children's 'achievement books' and say that they find the information helpful. Staff value parents' knowledge and experience, and encourage them through notices to contribute to children's learning. As yet parents do not contribute to children's next steps, as a result, they are not fully involved in children's learning. A suggestion book is available to seek parents' views about the setting; no comments as yet. However, documentation shows that some parents are involved in evaluation of in some areas of learning, for example, the role play area.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the sessions provides a balance of individual choices, small group and whole group activities. The routine provides quiet times, active play and physical opportunities that children clearly enjoy. Procedures are in place to ensure all staff hold a current criminal records clearance and are suitable to look after children. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and they all hold a relevant qualification. They are encouraged to attend courses and update their training. Staff turnover is low but procedures are in place for the recruiting of staff. Students who do not have police clearance are not left alone with children.

All required documents are in place for the safe and effective management of the setting, and stored confidentially. The owner ensures that the number of staff working directly with children is higher than the guidance and minimum ratios are maintained at all times. This benefits children enormously. The registration document, insurance and staff photographs are displayed for parents to see. The operational plan which includes the setting's policies are accessible to parents. The complaints procedure for parents reflects the new regulation and a log is prepared to record any complaints to share with parents.

The leadership and management are good. The owner takes responsibility for the day to day management of the pre-school. Several of the staff have been employed by the setting for many years providing consistent care for the children. Staff work well as a team. The owner and the staff are committed to provide good care and education for all children. Each member of staff receives an annual appraisal which identifies any training needs. The self-evaluation folder contains notes of any monitoring visits from external advisors. Strengths and weakness are identified and an action plan implemented for improvement. As key workers staff assess children's development and plan their next steps. All staff contribute to the long and medium planning at staff meetings; they contribute at the end of the sessions informally to the weekly plans. The weekly plan is completed by a designated member of staff and not all staff are fully involved. The weekly plan does not clearly show individual children's next steps, their interest and learning needs, most of this is committed to memory. Staff know the children well and adapt the activities to meet the individual needs. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection two recommendations were made. They were to ensure that medication records contain sufficient details and ensure child protection policy contains sufficient detail. The medication records forms have been up dated with sufficient information and the child protection policy has been updated. Resulting to positive outcomes for children.

At the previous nursery education inspection there were two key issues identified to improve practice. These were to provide regular encouragement of more able children to recognise and form numbers and letters and write their own name during everyday activities and routines; develop the roll play area to provide an effective and stimulating resource that re-enforces all areas of learning, including current topics. Improvements have been made to the education program as a result, children are making good progress along the stepping stones towards the early goals.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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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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):

- continue to develop and implement appropriate systems of planning and assessment for children under 3 years by use of the Birth to three matters framework
- ensure that accidents are recorded confidentially

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 partnership with parents and carers by providing them with more opportunities to contribute to their children's development records and to children's next steps

- continue to develop the planning so that it clearly shows individual children's next steps, their interest and learning needs, and ensure that all key workers are fully involved in the short term planning [this also applies to care]

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