

Southern Cross Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130772
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Inspector	Lisa Toole
Setting Address	103 Trafalgar Road, Portslade, Brighton, East Sussex, BN41 1GU
Telephone number	07890 322105
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Registered person	Southern Cross 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?

Southern Cross Pre-school opened in 1982 and operates from two halls belonging to Southern Cross Evangelical Church, in Portslade, East Sussex. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open from 09:15 to 12.00, Monday to Friday, term-times only. On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, children can stay until 13:00 for a lunch club.

There are currently 41 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's overall health and well-being are being positively promoted through the care and attention of the pre-school staff. Good hygiene procedures are in place with positive steps taken to promote independent self care skills for the children. Effective measures are also taken to reduce risks of cross infection; accident and medication records are appropriately maintained and the majority of staff hold a current first aid certificate to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded. There is a minor weakness regarding documentation for children's health, relating to the lack of consent for emergency medical treatment, to ensure children are cared for in line with their parents' wishes. Emotionally, children are also well cared for; they receive lots of hugs and confidently snuggle up on a staff member's lap when they need reassurance.

Children's dietary needs are followed, with good procedures in place to ensure any allergies or health needs are known by staff. Children benefit from regular snacks of fresh and dried fruit, toast and a drink of milk or water. Children enjoy opportunities to pour their own drink at snack time and know they are able to access drinking water at any time, as part of a healthy lifestyle. Lunch times are sociable occasions where children and staff sit together and chat as they eat their packed lunches.

Children engage in a good variety of physical activities, both in and outdoors, to support their developing and growing bodies and promote their good health. They learn how to balance, slither and slide, hop and jump as well as riding tricycles and play vehicles around the hall. The climbing frame provides children with useful opportunities to take safe risks, manoeuvre their bodies in different ways and younger children feel a real sense of achievement when they succeed in climbing by themselves for the first time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

A warm, welcoming and child orientated environment is provided for the children, with displays of their work around the room, showing their contributions are truly valued. Posters and other displays also enhance the premises, helping to create a lovely atmosphere. There is plenty of space for children to confidently move around and play, with designated areas for activities such as role play, the interest table and craft. There is a book corner, with some comfortable seating but it is not especially well used by the children and staff to support their developing language and literacy skills.

There is a wide range of play resources and equipment to support children's play needs across all areas of learning. Equipment is well used by the children and they are able to access some of the resources themselves, promoting independent choice. The vast amount of equipment and lack of sufficient storage space results in some boxes being over-filled and some items stacked up, impacting on the children's safety. Children learn how to care for their environment by being encouraged to assist with tidy up time while staff ensure equipment is suitable for their use through regular maintenance.

Children's safety is protected because the premises are kept secure and there are effective systems in place at home time to ensure no child leaves the premises without an appropriate adult. Staff are also fully aware of the procedures that have to be followed if a parent fails to

collect a child, to ensure the child is kept safe. Children learn about their own personal safety through gentle reminders from staff, through practising fire drills and by learning about road safety and bonfire night safety through topic work. Regular risk assessments are carried out both in and outdoors and this too helps protect the children.

The staff have a good knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection, in line with current procedures, in order to safeguard children. They demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and how to make a referral if they are concerned about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and well cared for by the staff. They clearly benefit from the staff's dedicated approach to the children's learning and their wealth of experience. Children are offered a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities that supports their learning in both the birth to three years and the Foundation Stage. Children settle quickly into their play on arrival at the pre-school; they relate well to each other and all the adults in the group, showing that good relationships have been established. Staff show interest in what the children have to say and are doing, providing good support, with open ended questioning for much of the time. The children are able to make connections in a variety of experiences and activities, using their imaginations and creative skills. During the inspection, for example, they have great fun brushing paint on to their hands and lower arms, commenting how it feels squidgy and cold, whilst also relishing the opportunity to have fun and be messy.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding both of how children develop and of the Foundation Stage curriculum in helping children progress towards the early learning goals. The effective key worker system helps to ensure that each child's developmental needs are identified and are currently used to some degree to inform future planning and assessments on the children and this is an area for continued development, for the benefit of the children. Staff plan the curriculum over the long, medium and short term but do not always fully evaluate the curriculum to ensure it is appropriate for those children currently attending.

The topics and activities provide children with good opportunities to be challenged and make good progress in their learning, in a fun and stimulating way. Children have a great deal of fun searching for numbered Easter egg picture cards that have been hidden around the room, recognising written numbers and then making good attempts at recording them on paper. Children are confident counting to at least ten and have opportunities to develop their understanding of concepts such as simple addition as they add the number of children there are. They sustain attentive listening at story time, listening with enjoyment and participating where asked.

Children are attempting mark making for different purposes; many children enjoy writing their first name; they create patterns with various tools and do observational drawings. However, some of the focused art and craft activities are, at times, overly adult-directed, with too much focus on the end product rather than the experience of doing and this impacts on children's creativity. Real life experiences such as looking at real frogspawn and observing it as it changes into froglets provide children with interesting and worthwhile opportunities to learn about the

natural world. Children also delight in showing off the nests they have made for Easter, using clay and straw to replicate a real nest.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have many good opportunities to learn about equality, how to treat each other with respect and engage socially with each other, learning important messages about right and wrong. They are encouraged to express themselves and recognise that others think differently, helping them learn to manage their own behaviour.

Children with English as an additional language benefit from good support, both within the pre-school and through external agency support. This helps them feel included and helps them be able to fully integrate with their peers. Images are displayed around the room of our culturally diverse world and words in languages such as Farsi and Punjabi help children see print in different formats as well as supporting children's developing language and literacy skills. All children are able to access the activities and resources, with no gender stereotyping or discrimination. They greatly benefit from experiences such as celebrating a wide range of festivals and learning about other cultural beliefs as well as having visitors from the local community to support their topic work. Children with learning difficulties receive additional support, again from external agencies and through support from the pre-school's special educational needs coordinator, working in partnership with parents. Appropriate strategies are in place to promote children's positive behaviour and, on the whole, children's behaviour is good. They share, play cooperatively and relate well to each other, helping at tidy up time and responding to requests made by staff.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There is an effective settling-in process to ease the transition from home and parents and staff work together to ensure the children's individual care and developmental needs are appropriately supported. Written information is available to the parents about the curriculum and how the pre-school operates. Parents are offered regular feedback about their child and information about topics that the group is covering over the term is easily accessible.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the pre-school are good. The adult to child ratios and number of qualified staff are good and staff work very well together as a team, for the benefit of the children and to help ensure the pre-school runs smoothly. The staff team is very experienced, with most having worked within the pre-school for a number of years and this results in a well organised pre-school, with a good key worker system. The additional member of staff to cover housekeeping tasks also leaves the remaining staff free to concentrate on their role providing good quality care and education for all the children. Appropriate recruitment and induction procedures are in place and children are kept safe from any un-vetted persons.

Staff make good use of the available space and resources, though there is a need to ensure that the vast amount of resources do not present a hazard to the children through ineffective storage. The mandatory documentation that is required for the safe and efficient management of the pre-school is in place and is mostly well maintained. The registration forms for children lack some detail to ensure that staff have a thorough understanding of each child's culture and

religion and staff also do not have emergency medical consent for each child in case of a serious illness or accident. The setting 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 raised, relating to the information provided for parents about the group and the range of snacks provided for children. Since the last inspection the pre-school has increased the range of information provided for parents so they are fully aware of the care and education their children receive. Children now benefit from having a range of healthy snacks to support their good health.

At the last nursery education inspection two key issues for development were raised, relating to staff's confidence regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum and opportunities provided for children to learn how to solve simple problems. Since the last inspection the pre-school has provided staff with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum by attending training courses and staff now demonstrate a good understanding of this curriculum. Children now have opportunities to engage in problem solving activities as part of their mathematical development.

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):

- review the organisation and storage of play equipment and resources so that they do not present a hazard to children
- develop documentation relating to the children's registration forms so that all relevant information is recorded and implement procedures to seek emergency medical treatment.

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):

- review the provision of art and craft activities to ensure that they are more child directed
- continue to develop the systems for planning and assessment to ensure the curriculum is representative of children's needs, interests and likes and clear and regular evaluation is carried out of activities.

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