

Tackley Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133493
Inspection date	21 January 2008
Inspector	Jan Leo
Setting Address	c/o Tackley C of E Primary School, 42 St. Johns Road, Tackley, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 3AP
Telephone number	01869 331447
E-mail	
Registered person	Tackley Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Tackley Pre-School first opened in 1972 as a playgroup to cater for children from the surrounding rural areas. It moved to its present site in 1993 and occupies a Portakabin in the grounds of Tackley Church of England Primary School near Oxford. The pre-school is a non-profit making organisation run by a committee of parents. It is open for 39 weeks each year on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings from 8.45 to 11.45 and it stays open on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons until 14.45.

The group is registered to provide full day care for a maximum of 12 children aged from two to under five years and there are currently 28 children on roll. Of these, 18 receive funding for early education. The setting offers support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are currently two qualified members of staff working with the children who are supported by an additional part-time play assistant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children build secure relationships with the staff and feel settled. They receive a friendly greeting on arrival and staff cuddle those who are upset. The children follow a basic routine in order to know what to expect and build emotional security. The staff encourage the more confident children to support and help their peers, and as a result, distress is soon forgotten. The children benefit from regular fresh air and exercise, with activities being taken outside in all weathers. The children choose where to play and dress accordingly to keep themselves comfortable. The children watch adults clean the tables before eating, and they wash their hands independently to remove dirt and germs throughout the day. The toilets and washbasins are reasonably clean but the cubicle surfaces are dirty and compromise hygiene. The staff have a sound understanding of first aid and keep medical supplies up-to-date. They record all injuries clearly and share records with parents and carers to enable treatment to continue at home if necessary. The staff promote healthy eating by offering toast and fruit at snack time, accompanied by milk or water to drink. The children sit sociably together for meals and snacks, and generally eat off plates to contain mess and keep food clean. Those who stay for lunch bring their own packed lunch from home and eat it, picnic style, without plates, while sitting at the table. Staff sit with the children, talking about favourite foods to broaden their interest in what others eat.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The children play safely both indoors and out, because the staff deploy themselves well to oversee all areas, and join in activities to help children learn to avoid hazards. The children have adequate space to move around as they play and have several different activities running alongside each other. They use a wide range of robust resources, which are in good condition and appropriate for the age and stage of development of those who attend. The staff sort through the equipment at regular intervals to keep all in safe condition and ensure no pieces are missing. The pre-school practises fire drills each term, along with the school, but not all children and staff attend every day resulting in some missing the opportunity to experience emergency evacuation. All children appear on the register, with staff noting arrival times accurately. Staff breach regulations by not having any system for marking children out when they leave the pre-school, resulting in no means of determining who is on site after the morning session closes. Visitors do not sign in to record their presence, and staff do not sign out when they leave the premises for lunch, seriously compromising safety. The staff complete a standard risk assessment on an annual basis and they review accident records to identify hazards resulting in injury. The staff and committee work together to adapt practice and remove danger, in order to create a safer environment for the children. All staff have a sound understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children from harm, and know how to make a referral if they have concerns about a child. They have an incomplete child protection policy, with blank spaces for the names of those staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding issues. Additionally, staff do not routinely notify Ofsted when they have concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All children choose what to do and learn through play because the staff join in activities and explain things clearly. The main room is attractive with children's work and posters at low level to add interest. The children know where resources are and independently devise their own games using whatever is available. The children learn from each other, showing interest in what their peers do and joining activities whenever they wish. Some push their way into a group playing with tractors in the bran tray and receive reminders of how to share and take turns with the toys in order to preserve harmony. Some play happily alone, handling 'compare bears' with curiosity, uncertain of their purpose. Most chat freely as they play and strike up conversations with the staff to make their feelings known. The children experience physical activity in the school hall and successfully put on their shoes and socks with little or no help before returning to the classroom. The staff encourage children's efforts by praising their achievements and telling others how well they have done. As a result, the children are eager to try things for themselves. Sometimes, the staff talk over the children to discuss behaviour and personal issues, spelling some words to colleagues in an attempt to maintain some degree of confidentiality. The children look puzzled when they are excluded from conversations but, nevertheless, they feel comfortable with the staff and enjoy their day.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The relaxed approach suits most of the children well, with children deciding for themselves, what to do and where to play. The staff plan a varied day with activities to suit the interests of the children to ensure learning is relevant. The children receive clear explanations about what is to follow so that they know what to expect, and staff frequently introduce conversations about relevant issues to extend learning and aid understanding. For example, they ask if children can peep under the hatch to see the cook in the kitchen when one wonders what the shutter is for. All enter into a discussion about school meals, favourite foods and what the cook does as they try to sneak a look. The staff encourage children to be independent by highlighting their achievements to others and only helping when necessary. As a result, the children take responsibility for their personal care, locate resources successfully and create their own games without difficulty. The staff observe what children do and keep dated notes of their achievements to help when planning future activities. The plans include activities for the younger and older age ranges, and give a broad balance of opportunities. However, the current system of stockpiling observation notes for lengthy periods and infrequent updating of profile records results in no clear record of children's rate of progress and insufficient challenges for some of the more able children. In addition, there is no easy way to identify areas of weakness on which to focus. Because of this, whilst the children generally get on well together, there are regular incidents of pushing and unfair play due to children not being fully focused. Some children link well with others to build models on the floor, chatting freely to one another to share their ideas. One happily continues explaining about his lunar man with three arms who runs on wheels, despite his friend moving away. He impresses adults with his vivid imagination as he flies off into space bringing in a range of experiences from previous times. Some children use what they know as they sit at snack time, counting plates and identifying name labels on the cups. The staff seize some of these learning opportunities and get others counting or they sound out initial letter sounds of names to help children decide who each mug belongs to. The staff are always on hand to assist where needed but miss some opportunities to promote learning further. For example, when a child wanted to play with the radio, staff said it needed new batteries and he went on to play with something else. He was not permitted to try the radio, discover it did not work and explore the reason

why in order to gain a better understanding of modern technology. The children initiate most of the games to help them feel valued. Consequently, they understand that others have different views, needs and wishes and are developing a sense of right and wrong. The staff promote thoughtfulness and fairness to ensure children become sociable, accepted members of the pre-school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children form secure relationships with the staff and receive the level of support they need to join in the activities. The children learn to be considerate and confidently tell staff if something is wrong. The staff willingly accept children with learning difficulties and/or special needs and obtain additional help if necessary to liaise with the family and support the children. The staff skilfully devise ways of helping children to make friends by, for example, choosing children by name in circle games such as 'Farmer in his den', and getting children to hold hands to move around the site. The children learn simple rules to promote good behaviour and eagerly recite them before playing outdoors. Some know they must walk, and not run, down the ramp and others stress the importance of not hurting their friends. Older children protest over injustice and look to staff to sort out minor squabbles. The children ask for help politely and generally behave well for the majority of the time. The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff display some information on the wall and have a folder of policies for adults to see on request. There are discrepancies between the information contained in these documents and some information is out-of-date. Parents and carers talk to staff regularly about what their children do in order to keep up-to-date, and they can stay to settle their children and see first hand what the children do. The staff provide a suggestions book and a complaints book to enable adults to pass on any comments they have about the service, and they receive a useful brochure containing information about the setting's policies, operation and the nursery education. Parents and carers can contribute to their children's learning by providing resources related to topic work and they see all planning on the notice board. The children's profiles are not up-to-date to clearly indicate children's rate of progress and are currently of little value to parents or staff. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The children receive mixed messages about hygiene because they learn to follow good practice regarding hand washing but the environment is dirty in places. The staff organise a varied and appropriate day for the children and they supervise well to keep children safe. The record keeping is ineffective as a safety precaution, with no accurate record of children's hours of attendance, no record of visitors, and no record of when staff leave the premises. This puts all personnel in jeopardy if an emergency arises and breaches the regulatory requirement regarding record keeping. The leadership and management of the provision are satisfactory in respect of the nursery education aspect of the setting. The staff continue their personal development by attending relevant training and they plan for different levels of learning. The planning is clear but the information gathered from observations of children's progress is difficult to use in its current form, consequently, the planned activities do not always provide sufficient challenges. The staff and committee work on updating the pre-school policies on a rolling programme. They adopt policies from an advisory body at times, but do not ensure these match the needs of the group and contain the necessary detail to be of full benefit to anyone associated with

the provision. Some policies have no review date making it difficult to assess which is the most up-to-date version. The staff regularly review their practice and monitor any changes they introduce to check their effectiveness. They try to maintain standards but do not become fully familiar with changes in regulation to ensure their operational plan continues to meet the required standards.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, there were four recommendations made regarding the care aspect of the provision, and one to improve the nursery education. The setting was required to improve children's care by ensuring parents were aware of the criteria for selecting drivers for outings, provide more opportunities for children to develop independence, improve staff awareness of good practice regarding food hygiene, and clarify the clearance procedure for staff. The setting no longer takes children on outings requiring volunteer drivers, to avoid using adults with points on their licence. Children now routinely do things for themselves throughout the day. They successfully change their footwear and don coats for outdoor play, organise their games and select resources, with encouragement from staff to gain confidence. The staff now follow good practice when preparing and serving snacks, and they attend training at regular intervals to stay up-to-date with current thinking and make sure food is hygienically served to the children. The staff group has not changed for some time, consequently, no checks have been required for staff. The committee however, changes regularly and the provider is slow to notify Ofsted. As a result, the checking process is not promptly implemented to protect children from unsuitable adults.

Nursery education planning was highlighted as a weak area at the last inspection, with not enough extension of learning for the more able children. The planning is now clear but information used to plan future activities is difficult to assimilate and results in a lack of individual learning goals to ensure every child reaches their full potential.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- maintain an effective registration system showing when all children and adults are present
- complete the child protection procedure to indicate those responsible for taking a lead role in safeguarding children, and ensure staff routinely notify Ofsted of any concerns about the children in their care

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- develop progress records to provide a clear record of children's rate of progress, help identify any gaps in learning, and assist in plan for their individual next steps

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