

Pendennis Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148669
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
Setting Address	Hatch Ride Primary School, Hatch Ride, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6LP
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Registered person	Theresa Hazel
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 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?

Pendennis Pre-School is a privately owned provision, which first opened in the 1960's. It operates from an area within Hatch Ride Primary School, on the outskirts of Crowthorne, in Berkshire. Children have use of some school facilities, such as the school hall, playground and playing fields. The pre-school serves families from Crowthorne and a number of surrounding villages and towns.

The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 20 children from two to under five years of age. It generally accepts children from three years of age. There are currently 39 children on roll aged from two to four years. This includes 29 children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school is open each weekday during school term time only from 09.15 to 12.15 and also offers occasional afternoon sessions if numbers dictate.

A total of six members of staff work with the children, all of whom work part-time with the exception of the owner/supervisor. A total of four members of staff are qualified to Level three and Level two.

The pre-school has strong links with the Pre-School Learning Alliance, Hatch Ride primary school and receives support from the local authority early years team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The areas used by children are in a satisfactory state of cleanliness overall and are generally suitably maintained. Children are supported in developing appropriate personal hygiene practices as part of their daily routine. For instance, they understand that they need to wash their hands after using the toilet, after painting and before snack time. They enjoy using the foam soap provided and the use of paper towels minimises the potential for cross infection. The provision of steps within the toilet areas enable children to easily reach the wash basins and thus encourages them to be independent in their self-help skills. Children recognise when they need to wipe their noses and approach staff for help in finding a tissue if they cannot locate these themselves. Parents are notified of the setting's sick child policy and the exclusion periods for particular illnesses. This helps to protect everyone from the spread of infection. All members of the staff team hold a valid first aid certificate. Children receive appropriate care if they have an accident; staff complete an accident report which they share with parents. Parents countersign the entry although the report is not signed by the adult who dealt with the episode, to ensure a fully clear record that complies with all regulatory requirements.

Children have opportunities to play outside and thus, benefit from fresh air. This tends to be on a free flow basis during the summer months although currently this is not done at other times of the year. Staff do, however, try to ensure that children spend some time outside in each session, weather permitting. Children display good levels of spatial awareness as they competently manoeuvre the different wheeled toys provided. These include ride-on toys, scooters and two-person trikes; these allow for skill progression and enable children to work together. The pre-school is able to access all areas of the school grounds and can use the school hall on some occasions. This adds variety to the range of experiences staff can offer and means that children develop familiarity with their immediate surroundings. Children become excited at the prospect of going out to play on the school playground. They especially enjoy the freedom of running around and chasing one another. Staff supervise children carefully whilst they are outside although do not use these times to extend their learning.

Children help themselves to drinking water throughout the session which means that they do not become dehydrated. Some recognise that they are feeling thirsty when they come in after outdoor play and immediately go and fetch a drink of water to quench their thirst. The pre-school operates a rolling snack bar system enabling children to decide when they want to sit down for a drink and something to eat. They are provided with a different food item each day; for example apples, carrots or a biscuit. Whilst this approach ensures that children benefit from some healthy options, the lack of choice does not enable them to make decisions about what they would like and means that there is no alternative if, for example, they do not want to have a biscuit. Staff seek information from parents about children's dietary needs and any allergies they may have. They check this before undertaking any cookery activities and ensure that parents are notified in advance if children will be taking part in specific activities such as food tasting.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The area occupied by the pre-school offers a pleasant environment, with good levels of natural light and sufficient ventilation. Examples of children's work, both individual pictures and collaborative displays are well presented and help to make the room welcoming, although adult input into these is clearly evident. Space is at a premium which means that some activities such as sand, water and malleable resources have to be provided on a rotational basis but staff ensure that children have access to at least one of these every day. Children have sufficient space to move around freely and sit and play in comfort. They access a suitable range of equipment and resources that staff set out for them to explore. These are age appropriate, safe and are checked regularly to ensure they are well-maintained.

Good security and fire safety precautions contribute to children's overall safety. Outer doors remain locked or are alarmed and staff control access. Children participate in fire drills to develop their understanding of what they need to do in the event of it being necessary to evacuate the premises. When the fire bell sounds unexpectedly during the session, staff immediately implement their evacuation plan. Children line up straight away upon request with no fuss and everyone leaves the building promptly. The registered person undertakes an annual risk assessment of the areas used by children and these areas are also given consideration when the school undertakes its own risk assessment. A brief daily safety checklist is also completed. Use of appropriate safety measures such as ensuring low level sockets are inaccessible to children, wiping up any spilt water to avoid the possibility of children slipping, and careful staff supervision with headcounts being undertaken especially when children are outside contribute to children's overall safety. However, not all radiators are adequately protected to prevent the possibility of children burning themselves and the flooring in the kitchen poses a potential trip hazard to any member of staff accessing it. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as staff respond to situations that arise. For example, they explain that they should not push or run around indoors and that they need to sit on chairs properly or they may fall.

Children are safeguarded because staff have a satisfactory awareness of child protection issues and their responsibility. Most members of the staff team have undertaken relevant training at some point or other. The group has a copy of the Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection handbook readily available and has access to referral procedures. A child protection policy is in place, although this has not been updated for some time and parents are not made aware of the setting's responsibility if staff have any concerns about any of the children attending unless they ask to view the policy pack.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy; they play harmoniously together and enjoy themselves. Most children enter the pre-school well and separate easily from their parents and carers. Those who display a little reluctance are reassured by staff which soon helps them to feel at ease. Children are trusting of the adults looking after them; they freely approach them to chat, express their needs or show them their pictures. Staff are kind and caring and, as result, relationships between children and adults are warm and friendly.

Children mostly remain involved in the different activities on offer; for example as they explore the playdough, dress up, build with construction toys and take part in pre-planned activities. Staff sit alongside them and facilitate their play. Most resources are set out prior to the children's

arrival and they have the freedom to explore these. Children can also help themselves, if they wish, to a small selection of additional items that are stored in a low level open shelving unit or to construction toys that are kept in a low level cupboard.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Staff hold regular planning meetings and everyone has the opportunity to contribute their ideas for suitable activities; these relate to the weekly theme and are intended to cover the different areas of learning. Currently, the pre-school's system for planning and assessment is not fully effective although areas for improvement have been considered. Learning objectives are not always identified and activities are not evaluated. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is monitored by their keyworker. A sampling of their achievement records shows that staff have recently begun to record their observations of children more frequently, although the information gathered is not used effectively to identify the next steps in their learning and to inform future planning. Staff rely on their knowledge of children to differentiate activities and move them on in their learning although it is not always clear that this happens in practice to ensure children are well challenged. This may result in some aspects of their learning being missed and means that it is difficult to ensure children reach their full potential.

Staff sit with children and support their play; they talk with them and ask questions. However, opportunities to encourage children to express their ideas are not always fully exploited. For instance, staff do not make good use of registration and circle time to explore the week's theme of friendship. They do not seek children's input about what this means to them and to share their views with one another. Children do, in fact, have a very clear idea about who they regard as their friends as demonstrated by their eagerness to make friendship bracelets for other children. Those who make them for other children attending the pre-school session proudly go and present them to them once finished.

Children are sociable; they get on well with one another and play co-operatively. Most are very confident and others, who are less so, have their self-esteem boosted by staff which helps them to feel more secure. They show curiosity and interest; for example in the visiting inspector. They are familiar with the daily routine and the usual order of events. Children are developing good levels of independence as they put on their coats for outdoor play and manage the dressing-up clothes by themselves. They make their own selections from the different activities on offer and some children remain very engrossed in these and persevere to complete them to their own satisfaction.

Children talk confidently about their ages and how old they will be on their next birthday. They use numbers in the course of their play and count out the play money as they play in the role-play café. They are encouraged to count, both at whole group times and when working individually with members of staff. Children count competently; for example, the number of children present each day. They explore the concept of simple subtraction as they join in with number rhymes such as 'five little monkeys swinging in the tree' and call out the number left after each verse. Their knowledge of written numerals is promoted through daily discussions about the date. Children explore shape as they persevere to complete puzzles. They sometimes do these together and enjoy it when a member of staff times them to see how long they take. Children recognise and name colours. Some identify shapes using correct mathematical terms whilst others describe these in ways meaningful to them, such as using the term 'round' to describe a circle.

Children communicate with adults and other children. They talk about their home lives and what they are doing. Children enjoy listening to stories and they choose to spend time in the comfortable book corner looking at books, both independently and in small groups. Staff respond to this interest and go and read to them. However, the quantity and range of books available is very small which limits choice. Many children confidently locate their name card before snack time and some correctly identify the different letter shapes in their names and sound these out phonetically. Children make marks whilst accessing the drawing table and as they write letters to their families and friends; some children write their names using correctly formed letters and will attempt to copy out words that staff write for them. Some staff members are very good at encouraging children to have a go at writing their names on their pictures themselves but everybody does not adopt a consistent approach to this.

Daily calendar activities promote children's awareness of the passage of time and helps them to notice changes. They are very familiar with the days of the week and confidently announce that it must be Tuesday if yesterday was Monday. They discuss the weather and express the view that they need to display a picture of children wearing coats on the weather board as it is still cold. Occasional visitors to the setting and going for walks adds to the range of experiences children have and extends their awareness of their environment. Children enjoy water play. They squeal with laughter as they transfer water from one container to another and investigate ways of operating the water wheel. They explain what they are doing and why the wheel spins round. Children occasionally use the computer and explore other forms of technology such as a cassette recorder. They do not however, have daily opportunities to explore information and communication technology to support their learning. Children play co-operatively, especially when they dress up and engage in role-play. They use their imaginations as they act out stories using real or imagined experiences and allocate roles for one another. They enjoy free painting and experiment with the colours provided to create new ones. Some children watch what others are doing and then copy them. They design and construct models using stickle bricks and talk about their creations.

Children's motor skills are developing as they use the different tools and materials provided. They fill up buckets of sand and carefully turn these out to make sandcastles and handle pens, pencils and paintbrushes safely and with increasing control. They enjoy manipulating playdough, using their hands to flatten it and stampers to imprint patterns. They use needles to thread pasta and straws onto wool to create friendship bracelets and persevere to complete these.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are treated as individuals and with equal concern. All children are encouraged to take part in the range of activities on offer and explore the play materials available. They have some opportunity to find out about their own and other traditions and cultures through stories and planned topic work throughout the year; for example they learn about other countries or particular events such as Chinese New Year and Bonfire Night. However, on a day-to-day basis they have access to few resources that reflect positive images and different aspects of social diversity. They are encouraged take on roles of responsibility and to play an active role within the setting; for instance, when helping to tidy up the room before they go outside to play, they announce that it needs to be 'spick and span'. They willingly go to find a child, at a member of staff's request, to tell him or her that there is space at the snack table for them. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported as staff work with parents and other agencies

as necessary to meet their individual needs. One to one assistance is provided where this is deemed necessary, and staff make use of such aids as visual timetables.

The pre-school enjoys strong links with the adjacent primary school. For instance, children spend each Friday morning in the Year R classroom and they are regularly invited to join in with school events where these are felt to be appropriate. This helps children understand they are part of a wider community and leads to a good exchange of information for children moving on to school and a smooth transition.

Children generally behave very well. They gain understanding of the expectations for behaviour as staff take time to set the scene, for example before registration and story time. They remind children of the need to sit quietly and use their ears to listen. Minor squabbles over sharing toys are resolved with a minimum of fuss as staff explain the need to take turns. Children's self-esteem and confidence are fostered because staff praise them well.

Parents and carers are provided with some written information about the pre-school and they are able to access policies and procedures upon request. These are not, however, easily and independently accessible. Arrangements for the exchange of information are mostly informal. Parents receive a newsletter each half term which notifies them of the themes staff will be introducing to children. However, they are given no other information about what their children will be doing and the intended learning objectives. This limits the potential for them to share in their learning and support it at home. Plans are not displayed for parents to view. Parents are invited to come into the group to share their knowledge and expertise with children, or to add their name to the parent's rota.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education funding is satisfactory. Parents are informed about the different areas of learning and are made aware that they can ask for a book about the Guidelines if they wish. When their children first start at the pre-school they are told that they can look at the achievement records staff keep on children but they are not reminded of this subsequently. Parents do not formally contribute their knowledge about their children to their progress records. All parents spoken with during the course of the inspection stress that their children are happy at the pre-school and that this is important to them. They find staff to be friendly. However, they are unsure of how their children are progressing and, of those spoken to; none has actually viewed their children's achievement records.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by adults who have been vetted to ensure they are suitable to do so. Checks have also been undertaken on regular helpers and other adults who spend time in the setting. The registered person is very aware that the system for vetting staff has changed and the onus for obtaining criminal record bureau checks now rests with her. However, arrangements for obtaining these checks, for example in the event of any new staff being appointed, are not fully developed. Over 50 per cent of the current staff team are appropriately qualified, in accordance with Ofsted requirements. Staff work together as a team and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. They are willing to attend training to develop their knowledge although there is no formal appraisal system in place to identify future developmental needs and monitor practice and

quality of teaching. Pre-school sessions are planned to include opportunities for children to engage in free play, to be active, to relax and to engage in adult directed and whole group activities. They are generally well paced overall although some children do have a tendency to mill around a little towards the end of the free play part of the session whilst they are waiting for the last few children to finish their snack and they are not interested in revisiting activities they have already explored.

The registered owner is aware of areas of strength and some areas for development within the provision although, currently arrangements for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the group's nursery education provision are not sufficiently well developed.

Required documentation and other records that promote the health, safety and welfare of children are mostly in place. Records are stored securely and have regard for confidentiality. Written policies and procedures underpin practice although these have not been reviewed or updated recently to ensure they contain all necessary elements. For example, the group's complaints procedure does not reflect the latest revisions to the National Standards and correct contact information for the regulator is missing.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the setting's last care inspection, the registered person was asked to improve some aspects of record keeping. A record of visitors is now maintained and parents are made aware of the need to ensure that staff are notified of any changes in the information held about children's details to ensure that these are up to date and accurate. These measures contribute to the safety of children and the overall organisation of the setting. An informal system for induction is implemented but the registered person has still to devise a method of recording the staff induction process. This has been carried forward as a recommendation following this inspection.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was requested to devise and implement a system for recording children's progress and development, to provide children with opportunities to explore mathematics and to provide parents with information about their children's progress and development. Children use number and are encouraged to engage in simple calculations in everyday situations such as registration time. The other key issues identified are very much works in progress and continue to be areas for development and improvement. These have been carried forward in the form of recommendations made following this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 01 April 2004 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 accident records are countersigned by the person who dealt with the incident/episode
- improve arrangements for ensuring safety of the radiators and flooring in the kitchen area
- improve the range of resources and other items that reflect positive images of different aspects of diversity
- ensure systems for obtaining CRB disclosures are sufficiently well developed
- improve documentation by ensuring that all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary and are easily accessible to parents. Devise a method of recording the staff induction process.

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 planning and assessment procedures to identify the next steps in children's learning and use the information to inform future planning
- provide more opportunities for children to explore a range of books and investigate ways of enabling children to explore technological equipment on a more frequent basis
- improve arrangements for sharing information about children's progress with parents and consider ways of encouraging them to contribute to their children's progress
- improve systems for monitoring and reviewing practice and quality of teaching.

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