

Sunbeams Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	199434
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Inspector	Rachel Edwards
Setting Address	The Summerhouse, St Dunstan School, William Street, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 9BD
Telephone number	07960022058
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Registered person	The Trustees of Sunbeams Playgroup
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 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.

At the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sunbeams Pre-school has been registered since 1972. It is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community. It operates from a mobile classroom in the grounds of St Dunstan Primary School, Calne. It serves the town and rural area.

Children use the main playroom which has its own toilets and kitchen area. They have use of the playground and adjacent grassy area for outside play. They also use the school hall for physical play. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 Monday to Friday in term time only. The group also run a lunch club which finishes at 13:00. Children from the school nursery may also attend this.

The preschool is registered to care for up to 18 children from two years to five years in the pre-school and up to 32 children from three to five years in the lunch club, which uses the

school hall. There are 24 children on roll, none of whom currently receive nursery education funding. The group support children with additional needs.

There are two staff members who work with the children, both of whom hold a level 3 qualification in early years. The preschool is supported by the local authority early years advisory team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, bright and welcoming premises. Children benefit from the range of healthy snacks that the group provides. They help to prepare the food, for example, showing great skill and determination as they spread cheese onto muffins and pour their own drinks. Children sit together to eat but when there are too few staff, they do not sit with the children so that children do not always learn good social skills.

The premises and equipment are clean and children who are unwell may not attend. Both staff have current first aid certificates. They ensure that relevant medical history and dietary needs are collected from parents and recorded for each child. When there are sufficient staff present, they follow good hygienic procedures to protect children from cross infection. However, when there are too few staff, good procedures are not consistently followed, for example, children do not always wash their hands after using the toilet and they leave dirty tissues on the floor. This inconsistency does not help children to understand the importance of good personal hygiene and increases the risk of infection.

The pre-school are able to use the primary school's outdoor play areas, which include a woodland and pond area, playing field and tarmac playground. In addition they may use the indoor school hall. On days when there are sufficient staff, children are able to play outside or in the hall. They use a range of equipment such as wheeled vehicles to push or pedal and balls and they enjoy collecting and looking closely at natural objects and mini-beasts. However, there is no large equipment for children to practise climbing skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety is put at risk whilst at preschool. The fire door would not open at inspection and the emergency doorway is obstructed by toys. Children's attendance is not recorded until half an hour after most have arrived, so there is not a record of who is present during this time, which would put children and emergency services at risk if there was a fire. The main door cannot be fastened and there is a risk of children trapping their fingers and causing serious injury. The committee who manage the pre-school have not undergone the relevant checks to ensure they are suitable, as is required.

The recently refurbished mobile building is clean, bright and well maintained. Children play with a very good selection of high quality toys and equipment that are suitable for their age and stage of development and appear to meet safety standards. The room is well organised to allow children to become very independent in their personal care, such as visiting the toilet, and their learning, as they choose resources they need.

Staff have attended training and they have a good understanding of child protection issues. They are knowledgeable about the locally agreed safeguarding children procedures and would be able to act in children's best interests if they had concerns for their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children come willingly into the pre-school and happily separate from their parents and carers. Most settle quickly to their chosen activity and are confident to choose activities or toys they want to explore. For example, a group of three-year-olds are keen to help finish making a tree for the display board. There is a well established daily routine, which helps children know what is happening next and so feel secure in their environment, however, this is not always sufficiently flexible, for example, when too few staff are available to be with children during whole group story times. Staff are experienced and well qualified and they use the Birth to three framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance to support their work with young children. They use it to plan appropriate experiences and monitor children's progress.

Staff are warm and caring towards the children and are interested in what they say and do. When adequately staffed, they have time to talk and play with children and develop their communication and social skills well. However, when there are too few staff, children are too often left to play on their own, which at times leads to poor or aggressive behaviour going unnoticed and children's learning not being effectively developed.

Children become very independent both in their personal care and learning. The room is well organised so that children can choose resources they need. They enjoy washing up paint brushes and choosing books to look at. They are able to use the toilet with very little help, although they are not always sufficiently supervised to make sure they understand the importance of washing their hands. Children are not always well supported as they learn how to behave in a social group. When staffing is adequate children are given good guidance about how to behave, for example, sitting at the table to eat snack or sharing and taking turns. However, when there are too few staff, children do not receive clear consistent messages about acceptable behaviour.

Nursery Education

At the time of inspection there were no children on roll in receipt of nursery education funding, as the children were not old enough. However there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and they use this to plan a broad and interesting curriculum that covers the six main areas of learning. Staff make regular observations of what children can do and use these to monitor their progress towards the early learning goals. Staff know children well and adapt plans and activities to help all children move on to the next stage of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The group have an inclusive policy and all children are welcomed into the pre-school. They demonstrate a strong sense of belonging as they confidently and independently move around the room, for example, they find their own name card to show they are present. They are encouraged to make choices in what to play with and become very independent in their personal care, for example, putting on aprons, pouring drinks and visiting the toilet, most needing very

little help for such young children. Staff know children and their families well and are able to take home circumstances into account in the care they provide. The staff are aware that some children may have special needs and they work with parents and other professionals to help support these children. However, when staff numbers are insufficient, children with additional needs do not always receive the individual attention that they need to help them achieve as much as they can.

Staff act as very good role models in teaching children to behave well. They are kind, polite and considerate towards each other and the children. In response, children generally behave well, however on days when there are too few staff, some poor behaviour goes unchallenged so that children do not consistently learn clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour.

Children are beginning to learn about the different activities and the people involved in their community, for example, they regularly visit the adjacent school. All children are valued as individuals. Children learn to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences. For example, staff use books and other resources especially chosen to reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff are available to talk to parents informally each day. They have access to the group's policies and procedures and their children's records and receive regular newsletters. There are plans to introduce parents' evenings for parents to discuss, with staff, their children's progress more fully. However, parents do not receive good information about the Birth to three framework and the Foundation Stage of learning to help them understand more fully how their children learn.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The provider does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. Children's health, safety and some aspects of their learning and achievement are adversely affected by the poor organisation of the setting. It is a mandatory requirement of the regulations that the members of the committee undergo the relevant checks. Despite numerous requests from Ofsted, these have not been carried out. There has been a staff shortage for some time, which has led to the group not meeting the minimum staffing ratio on some days, which has adversely affected children's welfare.

Most of the required documentation is in place, although several policies need updating. The complaints procedure does not state that parents may ask to see the complaints log and the management were unaware of this requirement. Children's attendance is recorded but not until the children have been present for approximately 30 minutes, which puts them at risk if they had to carry out an emergency evacuation during this time.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff plan a broad curriculum which covers all areas of learning and they monitor and record children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are committed to improving the quality of care and education and they regularly attend relevant training. They welcome the support they receive from the early years advisory team.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, several recommendations were made to improve the quality of care and education. All the care related recommendations have been addressed. Both the play leader and deputy hold level 3 early years qualifications. Staff now plan a range of interesting activities and documentary evidence suggests that these are extended when older and more able children are present. A comfortable temperature can now be maintained in the playroom as thermostatically controlled radiators have been installed.

In addition, three recommendations were made to improve nursery education. The playroom has been re-organised, enabling children to be more independent in their choice of activities and resources, which is greatly beneficial to the children. Staff were asked to help children link letters to sounds and to develop mathematical understanding. As there were no funded children present it was not possible to observe the progress in this area. However, younger children are beginning to understand that print carries meaning and some recognise familiar words and letters. The children enjoy singing number rhymes which introduces them to the concept of one more or less. The group were asked to give parents more information about the curriculum and to involve them more in their children's learning. Progress has been limited in this area. Parents receive little information about Birth to three matters framework or the Foundation Stage curriculum. Termly newsletters inform them of current topics but they do not see the weekly plans which would help them continue children's learning at home.

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:

- ensure committee members undergo the relevant checks
- ensure fire exits are not obscured and are freely opening and that the main door is not a hazard to children

- ensure there are sufficient, suitable adults working with the children to meet the required ratio
- ensure the register is promptly taken and includes all adults present
- ensure the complaints procedure fully complies with Children Act regulations, especially in relation to sharing the complaints log with parents

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):

- provide parents with more information about the curriculum and planned activities and explore ways of further involving them in their children's learning

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