



Toybox Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	142877
Inspection date	03 October 2005
Inspector	Beverly Anne Self
Setting Address	Ansford Park, Castle Cary, Somerset, BA7 7JJ
Telephone number	(01963) 359600 or 0790 9921784
E-mail	linda-norman351@fsmail.net
Registered person	Toybox 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 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?

Toybox Pre-school opened 1986. It operates from the Swainson building, which is situated next to Ansford Community School in Castle Cary, Somerset. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 09.30 until 14.45 during term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 19

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area and surrounding villages.

The pre-school is run by a committee, who employ six members of staff. Three of whom work full-time and three work part-time. Four of the staff hold an appropriate early years qualification and one staff member is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a range of activities helping to contribute to their healthy growth and development. The children are beginning to learn about their own personal care and the spread of infection through clear hand washing routines, which are consistently encouraged by staff.

The children have many opportunities to develop their gross motor movements and muscle skills, through daily physical play, both in and out of doors. They have regular chances to run around safely developing co-ordination, using balancing and climbing equipment.

Children are offered a balanced snack each day and children who attend all day bring a packed lunch. The children talk about the contents of their lunch boxes, discussing what they like and dislike. They are starting to recognise their own needs regarding food and drink however, their independence is not fully encouraged when snacks are offered and drinking water is not available at all times for children to help themselves to drinks.

Staff have appropriate knowledge of first aid, ensuring medical emergencies can be dealt with effectively. All necessary records and documentation regarding children's health are in place, this means that their individual health care needs can be consistently met and respected.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment, where safety aspects have been carefully considered to reduce potential risks to the children. The play area is well set out to allow the children to move around freely and safely. The children help to tidy away the toys at the end of the morning, helping them to learn that there are consequences to actions, such as, if toys are left on the floor that they will trip over.

The staff are deployed well within the setting and appropriate adult:child ratios are always maintained. This ensures the children are closely supervised at all times, when enjoying indoor and outside play. The children are encouraged to learn about safety when at pre-school, for example, crossing the road safely when accessing the

outside play area, to help them develop their knowledge of personal safety and their own well being.

Staff have a good knowledge of child protection procedures and some have attended training courses to support this. They clearly understand their role in the protection of children, ensuring children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from an appropriately resourced environment, where they are generally well behaved, suitably occupied and interested in the activities available. The staff encourage the children to share what they know and talk about their own experiences. Staff ask questions to make the children think, helping to develop their vocabulary and improve language skills.

The children enjoy their play and are beginning to show confidence and some independence, although there are no opportunities for children to self select from toys and resources or make their own decisions about play and learning. They move between the set up activities, trying out different and new experiences, as well as choosing to play with favourite toys. Planned activities and resources help to encourage children's development and learning. The current topic is 'Autumn' and the children are making leaf pictures and rubbings, they are also talking about what sort of clothes you would wear at this time of year. They enjoy discussing how the leaves fall from the trees and what noises they make when you walk on them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children are encouraged to take part in a varied range of activities to help them make sound progress towards the early learning goals.

The children show confidence, playing well individually and as a group. They are familiar with the daily routine, lining up to go to the toilet and helping to tidy away the toys. They answer their name at circle time and are confident to speak in front of the group.

Children access books freely, turning the pages and describing what they see. They enjoy listening to stories at circle time, joining in enthusiastically and reciting known phrases. The children initiate conversations and use lots of eye contact when talking to adults.

The children are starting to show an interest in numbers and counting, through familiar songs and counting objects during play. They use mathematical language, such as, big and small, heavy and light when playing with construction toys. They can count to ten by rote, and some of the older children know 'which number comes next' when listening to stories at circle time.

Children have regular access to a television and video and use everyday technology,

such as a cooker, washing machine and toaster in the home corner. Photographs show the children learning about the wider world by meeting visitors from a nursery school in Zambia and through planned activities about the local village.

The children have access to creative activities enjoying cooking, painting, sticking and playdough. One child states when playing with the playdough that "I'm making pizza and putting squashed tomato mix on the top". The creative activities are supervised, but not always staff led, encouraging the children's self expression and creativity.

Staff have knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage, they plan activities and play opportunities for the children to enjoy. However, the plans do not show what children will learn from activities or how they are extended for more or less able children. Overall, the children are making adequate progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged to learn about the local community through planned activities and topics. They talk about the village in which they live and the local carnival. Photographs show that children are taken on outings to explore the village and their surroundings, learning how they fit into the community.

Children play well individually or together in small groups and encourage others to join in. They sit appropriately at story time and enjoy taking part in familiar stories and songs. The children show a good sense of belonging and feel part of the group. They help to tidy away the toys and line up to go outside, demonstrating that they are familiar with the daily routine. The children generally behave well, they are aware of the realistic boundaries that have been set and respond effectively to staff direction. Staff use lots of praise and encouragement and are positive role models for the children. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

A good partnership with parents contributes to consistency in the children's care and well-being in the pre-school. When children begin their placement parents are asked to complete a registration form to share what they know about their child. Information about the children and provision is regularly shared with parents through newsletters, a notice board, the prospectus and talking to staff at the end of each session. Parents are also invited to a 'key worker week', when they can read their child's records and discuss their achievements whilst at pre-school, this helps parents to contribute to their child's development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care is adequately supported by the appropriate organisation and satisfactory leadership and management of nursery education. The premises and

outdoor areas are organised to allow the children access to a variety of different play opportunities, to support development and learning. All required documentation which helps contribute to children's health, safety and well being are in place although, policies and procedures that are currently available to parents do not contain all necessary information. The pre-school is run by a committee who oversee the organisation of the pre-school, however they are not fully aware of their roles and responsibilities to help support staff at the provision.

Staff at the pre-school have appropriate experience and a sound knowledge of childcare, and are effectively deployed within the setting to support children in their learning. The staff benefit from an appraisal system to monitor their roles within the provision. A recruitment policy is in place, however information on the induction of new staff and how they will be employed lack detail at this time. Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care and nursery education inspections recommended that the pre-school inform Ofsted of relevant changes, devise an action plan to meet minimum staff qualification levels, provide a procedure for lost children and obtain consent from parents for emergency medical treatment. It was also recommended that they develop the planning to relate to the stepping stones and to include opportunities for children to experience technology and free expression in creative development.

Ofsted are now informed in writing of any changes and over half of the staff working with children hold relevant early years qualifications. A procedure for lost children is in place and parents sign a consent form for emergency medical treatment. The supervisor and staff are continuing to develop the activity plans for the pre-school to devise a system that is effective and informative. As a result, staff now hold relevant qualifications and necessary procedures and consent forms are now in place. Therefore, staff's knowledge and the children's safety have been improved.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 delivery and organisation of activities to provide opportunities for children to self select toys and resources, enabling them to make their own decisions about play and learning (also applies to Nursery Education).
- ensure all policies and procedures are updated in line with the National Standards and new legislation, and made available to parents.
- further develop employment and vetting procedures, and induction training for new staff.

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 and review the planning to show what children will learn from activities, and how activities are extended for more or less able children.
- make sure that all committee members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to support staff and ensure the effective running of the group (also applies to care).

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk