

Smallworld Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY267912
Inspection date	09 October 2007
Inspector	Valerie Block
Setting Address	Ashfield Infant School, Newlands Lane, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 3JG
Telephone number	01900 873973
E-mail	
Registered person	Smallworld Pre-School and Link Club Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Smallworld Preschool Ashfield is one of six nurseries run by Smallworld Limited in Cumbria. It opened in 2003 and operates from a modular building in the grounds of Ashfield Infant School. It is situated in the district of Ashfield near to the centre of Workington, Cumbria. A maximum of 26 children from two to eight years may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting includes a breakfast club, not currently in operation, and after school care. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 16.30 in term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from two to under six years on roll. Of these, 38 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area.

The nursery employs nine staff. There are eight staff members including the manager who hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because they are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill. The provider has a robust sick children policy that is seen to be followed in practice and staff ensure they have up to date information about children's health.

The setting has good systems to ensure that children with allergies are known by staff. Photos of the children and their allergies and health needs are confidentially displayed to remind staff of their needs. Children's health needs are met as the practitioners follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures.

Children are able to make choices and decisions about when they have their snack. This helps children to learn to make choices for themselves and increases their confidence and independence.

Children are aware of what constitutes healthy food choices and can explain what types of food are healthy. The setting have discussed healthy eating with them in previous activities and discuss food choices regularly with the children. The setting provide a healthy snack for the children, including fresh fruit and provide water bottles that the children can access themselves when they need a drink. This meets the children's health needs.

Children develop their physical skills as they access outdoor play on a daily basis even when the weather requires the children to wear coats and hats. Children enjoy riding on bikes, rolling balls and hoops as well as playing catching each other games. They learn about using and negotiating space as they avoid collisions and manoeuvre around each other.

Children's fine motor skills develop as children begin to learn to use a variety of mark making instruments, such as pens, crayons, chalk and paint brushes as well as scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safeguarded because staff satisfactorily understand their role in child protection and consider the needs of the children as paramount. Some staff have attended child protection training and this together with good written procedures ensures that children are safe.

The premises are clean, warm and welcoming. Children feel a sense of belonging as they see their own art work displayed and a good amount of colourful posters and pictures that they can relate to. The premises are organised so that children have access to a wide range of activities and play equipment that are safe and clean. The setting have daily checklists to remind staff to ensure that the premises and equipment are kept suitable for children.

The setting has a risk assessment in writing that is understood by staff, that addresses the main risks to children. For example, the premises are situated under large trees that shed a lot of leaves at Autumn time and can become wet so causing a hazard. The risk assessment notes that the leaves need to be regularly cleaned up to avoid accidents occurring. The children are involved in this operation and enjoy sweeping and gathering the leaves when out playing. This

helps children to learn about taking responsibility for the health and safety of themselves, their peers and visitors, as well as teaching them about working together cooperatively.

Recently, the kitchen cupboards that store hazardous materials have had their locks broken. The kitchen is not locked and children could enter the area unsupervised, although it is the policy of the setting that children are not allowed into this area. The staff have not updated the risk assessment to ensure that the kitchen is locked and so children are not sufficiently protected from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children happily come into the nursery greeting staff and friends. They benefit from the warm support of the staff who know the individual children and value them. Although some children have recently started attending this setting and are learning to manage their anxiety at being apart from parents, the children are settling in well and are sensitively supported when parents leave.

Children enjoy a suitable range of play opportunities and play equipment that is set out attractively by staff. Children enjoy playing with shaving foam in a tray where the previous day there was water. Changing this play opportunity keeps children interested in exploring the environment.

Children attending the after school service are made welcome and their needs are met satisfactorily as staff give them plenty of choice as to how they want to spend their time and ensure their needs are met.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning. Children develop good attitudes to learning as they are praised and encouraged for their efforts and for the most part engage with their learning environment, although some children sometimes lack purpose and become distracted.

Observations and assessments of children only adequately inform planning of activities to ensure that individual children are sufficiently challenged and their next steps in learning clearly identified. All assessment evidence is stored in the children's individual folders of work which are shared with parents. Written plans and the organisation of the room sufficiently cover the six areas of learning.

Children enjoy their time at the setting saying they like to come and play with their friends. They are starting to make relationships with adults and children. Children, in the main, begin to take responsibility for one another and to acknowledge each others' feelings. When children do not want to share play equipment, the staff remind them that they come to the nursery to be friends and play together.

Children confidently join in activities, talking to staff and other children about their play in a relaxed way. They choose play events and move about happily. Independence is encouraged as children go to the toilet independently and choose the time they will have their snack and help themselves to drink and food at this time.

Children become self-confident and develop their communication skills as all children are encouraged to take part in circle time, taking turns to talk about their home lives or to sing songs for one another. Children develop a sense of belonging as they are encouraged to become part of the nursery community.

Although the nursery provides a writing area, posters showing letters around the nursery and has labels on nursery areas and equipment, children have a limited understanding of the sounds of letters and letter recognition considering their stage of learning. This is because the setting has concerns that children may become confused by different methodologies used at the nursery and at the school the children will attend in the future. This has led to a reticence to teach children these skills at this stage. Reading is encouraged and children begin to enjoy stories and books.

The setting provide a well stocked reading area with soft cushions and chairs. Also posters with pictures in sequence tell well-known stories, such as the three little pigs. Children go into this area often, reading books and making up their own script to accompany the posters cartoon story.

Children are beginning to learn about numbers and practise counting during story and circle time. They count the children present and sing number songs using addition and subtraction. They begin to understand about space as they negotiate around corners and furniture when riding bicycles and scooters, and construct complicated models and enjoy jigsaws. They know simple shapes and can name them during activities.

The mathematics area of the nursery is not very popular with children as the activities and equipment there are not linked to practical everyday problem solving. Opportunities for problem solving and calculation in other events about the nursery are not presented to the children sufficiently.

Children use their exploration and investigation skills as they use all their senses as they play in the tray containing shells as well as playing with water and shaving foam. They use their designing and making skills as they construct buildings from interlocking shapes. Children use their imaginative skills as they draw pictures and make collages. They are invited to draw pictures of their families as the activity theme at present is about children's homes. These pictures are being displayed attractively on the wall and parents are invited to see them. This encourages children to participate in this group activity. Cameras, computers and other electronic equipment is available to children and they enjoy exploring these pieces of equipment, learning how to turn them on and to use the cursor and mouse to play computer games.

Children create their own roles in the home corner and pretend to cook and eat meals. They delight in taking part in music using various musical instruments as a group with staff so learning about rhythm and the joy of expressive art. Children show they are familiar with the routines and rhythms of the day and practitioners talk about events from the past with children so helping them to develop a sense of time and place.

Overall, children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals considering their starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Parents spoken to advise that they are satisfactorily informed about nursery activities, their children's progress and acknowledge the support they have received from the staff when settling in children who are anxious about being apart from their family. The setting give parents of nursery funded children information about the education programme in a variety of ways, including information in the parents' prospectus and a wall display about the areas of learning and how these are met through play. Children's starting points are established through informal discussion with parents, questionnaires to parents and observations carried out by the staff.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Members of the children's families are encouraged to share their skills with the children. Some have helped children to plant and tend vegetables in the nursery garden.

Staff follow the behaviour policy and focus on a calm positive approach and give clear explanations to children. Children in the main are well behaved. Children who have difficulties in behaving in an appropriate way, are given support from staff to improve this social skill. However, staff do not sufficiently assess their strategies to ensure that children with behavioural and learning difficulties are able to integrate successfully with the group and to also ensure that the children at the group feel secure.

Children learn to respect diversity as the setting encourages children to learn about differences through play. There is a wide range of play equipment that show positive images of diversity available in all areas of the setting. The nursery has an anti-discriminatory ethos that is represented in its written policy available to parents.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn about the natural world as they explore a tray of shells. Their faces show wonder as they talk about the shapes and colours and hold the shells to their ears to hear the sounds of the ocean. Children also begin to learn about right and wrong as they follow instructions from staff and are reminded of the rules and boundaries when they tidy up.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the premises, equipment and schedule of the children's day is effective and benefits the children. Children are safe and protected because procedures are in place to protect children from persons who have not been vetted. The setting has a good recruitment procedure to ensure people with access to the children are suitable. The manager and owner have also developed good staffing procedures to ensure that staff continue to be suitable and understand their role at the setting. She has also ensured that all relevant information from various sources is made available to staff and parents. For example, she has been very proactive regarding updating her complaints procedure to meet current requirements. There is also a commitment to continual training and improvement which benefits the children.

Most of the staff are qualified in early years childcare and have attended training to deliver nursery education so providing satisfactory care for the children. There are robust systems to arrange relief staff cover to ensure that the quality of care for children is protected should there be staffing problems.

The provider has to some extent considered the areas of improvement for her nursery to increase the quality of care and education for the children. The leadership and management of the nursery satisfactory.

Records, policies and procedures, which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children, are well maintained and stored confidentially. The setting has also developed further documentation to ensure that parents have good information about the children and the setting.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to review the premises risk assessment. This has been done and so children are kept safe. The provider further agreed to revise documentation. All required documentation is now in place and so children's needs are met.

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.

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):

- take steps to ensure that children with learning difficulties have their needs assessed and that any necessary input is organised to help them be included and benefit from the setting
- ensure that the risk assessment is reviewed regularly and as necessary to ensure children's continuing safety.

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):

- extend the staff group's understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning to enable them to develop systematic planning, observation, assessment and evaluation so all children are sufficiently challenged to build on what they already know and can do
- further review the provision of activities and teaching to promote literacy; linking letters and sounds and mathematical calculation.

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