

Sunnyside Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221764
Inspection date	19 February 2008
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe
Setting Address	Bar Lane, Stapleford, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB22 5BJ
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Registered person	Sunnyside Pre-School 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 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?

Sunnyside Pre-school Playgroup has been established since the 1970s. It operates from a self-contained classroom at Stapleford county primary school in Stapleford, Cambridgeshire. The setting is a registered charity managed by a voluntary committee of parents.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open five days a week from 09:00 to 11:30 during school term times. There is an optional lunch club on some days. The setting offers three afternoon sessions, two for younger children and one for those children who are due to attend school. All children have access to the school play ground for outdoor play.

There are currently 47 children aged between two and five years of age on roll. Of these, 28 receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs six staff. Three of these including the play leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is currently working towards a higher qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children use the toilet independently and use soap and paper towels afterwards to wash and dry their hands. This helps to promote their understanding of good hygiene practice. However, although children wash their hands before snacks and sit at clean tables to eat, before their food is served they share books, blow their noses and sometimes handle other equipment, which means there is a risk of cross-infection. All staff hold suitable first aid qualifications so they administer appropriate treatment in the event of minor accidents. Any accidents or incidents are recorded and shared with parents or carers.

Children enjoy fresh air and exercise each day as they use the school playground, where, for example, they pedal bikes and other wheeled toys and learn to manoeuvre safely. Regular use of the school hall gives children the chance to increase their physical skills by using balance beams, soft play and climbing frames. Children's small muscle control is developing well as they use a range of suitable equipment, such as construction toys, scissors and writing tools.

Food offered at snack time does not always contribute to children's understanding of healthy eating. Although they sometimes benefit from fresh fruit they often eat biscuits and seldom have a choice of foods, neither can they demonstrate their independence by taking an active part in food preparation on a daily basis. Instead of children eating food from plates, snacks such as biscuits or fresh fruit are served directly onto the tables, sometimes using a paper towel. This means food is not presented hygienically or in a way that helps to stimulate their interest in healthy foods.

Milk and water is available at snack time and children can access water during the session so they satisfy their thirst independently. Occasionally children benefit from food related activities, for example, they make pizzas or help to prepare vegetables from the nursery garden. Information is collected on children's allergies or special dietary requirements so children eat safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is promoted adequately by staff who supervise them as they play and monitor their arrival and departure. Although the outer door is secured by means of a high level handle thereby preventing children from leaving the premises, it does not prevent unauthorised access to the setting when sessions are in progress. Despite the setting being on a school site, there are few precautions in place to prevent members of the public accessing the buildings, therefore children's safety is compromised. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as they practise the emergency evacuation procedures and staff keep records of fire drills so potential hazards can be identified and rectified.

The rooms used by the children are warm and welcoming. Wall displays show a reasonable range of children's work and promote their self-esteem. Resources are of good quality and organised well so children can access them easily. Risk assessments include the checking of toys and equipment to make sure children play safely.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as practitioners attend appropriate child protection training so they know about the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Appropriate policies

and procedures mean staff know how to refer any concerns, whilst parents are informed about the setting's role and responsibilities in the prospectus.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy attending and settle to their activities promptly as they arrive at the setting. They show good relationships with practitioners and greet them with pleasure and affection. Most are happy to participate in the play opportunities provided and generally show they are secure and happy. Children are familiar with the routines, for example, they gather together for circle time ready to listen to a story. Free play activities are well-organised and interesting, for example, a well-equipped craft table means all the children can be creative with scissors, pencils, sticky tape and glue. However, the structure of the routines means children are not always able to take advantage of these resources in order to follow their own interests and develop their skills independently.

Adults listen to the children and respond positively so they feel valued and well-cared for; as a result children approach them confidently for help and are keen to engage in conversation with the adults around them. Staff sometimes sit with children to support them in their activities, for example, helping to make a jigsaw puzzle and offering praise and encouragement when they complete their task successfully. Younger children benefit from a suitable range of activities, which are planned using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Key workers liaise with parents and carers to make sure those children settling in feel secure and supported.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Practitioners have sufficient experience and knowledge of the Foundation Stage, but do not apply what they know effectively to ensure the quality and consistency of teaching. This affects children's learning. Staff plan a variety of activities over a period of time so children can access a reasonable range of learning opportunities. Free play activities in particular are well planned and resourced so children are interested and engaged, but their ability to take advantage of these activities is inhibited by the organisation of daily routines. This limits their opportunities to follow their own interests and make independent decisions about their play and learning. Although staff engage with children in warm and friendly ways, they frequently miss opportunities to help children speculate or experiment, for example, by asking children if they can notice changes in their body when exercising.

Planning is linked to the six areas of learning and identifies the stepping stones. Key workers know the children well and collect information from children's observations to help them to identify children's next steps for learning. However, because many of the activities involve the whole group, there is little room for differentiation which means some activities lack challenge and interest. This occasionally leads to challenging behaviour as some children become bored and aimless. Parents and carers have some opportunities to become involved in their children's learning and they are asked to contribute what they know about their children both informally and through planned meetings.

Children demonstrate a sound understanding of numbers, counting and calculation. They readily use numbers in their play, such as counting the marbles for the marble run and identify shapes such as rectangles, circles and squares. Children play matching games and competently sort

objects for size and colour. They develop their technology skills as they use telephones, calculators and programmable toys during their play.

Children are developing good listening skills as they competently follow simple instructions to carry out small tasks like tidying away. They know the routines of the day and show they can sit quietly when needed. They enjoy books very much, eagerly accessing them independently and some listen with interest at group story time. Children's early writing skills are developing as they use marks to represent their ideas. They understand that print carries meaning as they use mark-making in practical ways, for example, making lists, writing menus or taking messages in the 'travel agents'.

Children express their imagination in a range of art and craft activities; they create models with reusable materials and use paint, pencils and crayons with enthusiasm. They make up their own scenarios in role play using resources like dressing up, play food and small world toys. However routines sometimes prevent them from developing their ideas as they do not always have time to finish what they are doing. Growing plants, fruit and vegetables in the pre-school garden helps children to develop their understanding of the world around them, they watch caterpillars turn into butterflies and show what they have seen in art work or photographs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with the parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage and have regular opportunities to find out about their children's progress. Practitioners actively involve parents and carers in their children's learning through newsletters, meetings and daily conversation.

Parents are asked for their feedback about the quality of the care and are invited to take part in social events or fundraising. A daily whiteboard displayed in the entrance explains about activities and any changes so parents and carers are well informed. Parents speak positively about the setting and the staff, which contributes to children's overall well-being. Settling in procedures enable staff to collect important information about the children, such as likes and dislikes and parents are invited to keep their children company until they are secure. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive positive support from staff. One-to-one help is provided where necessary and staff liaise with parents and carers in order to meet children's individual needs. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Generally children behave well, they are polite and keen to engage with adults and each other. Mostly they share resources appropriately and participate in the group activities willingly. However, on occasions children become distracted, mainly during group activities which fail to hold their interest or take into account their age and stage of development. This sometimes leads to unwanted behaviour.

Children learn about the wider world as they study other countries and look at their holiday destinations. They help celebrate relevant festivals, such as Divali or Chinese New Year, using the expertise of parents and carers. A reasonable range of resources provides children with positive images of diversity, such as books, puzzles and small world toys. Regular visits in the locality helps children build links with their own community, for example, they post letters or visit the church.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Practitioners demonstrate a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, which adequately promotes the continuing development of the children. Planning and assessment systems are sound, ensuring children benefit from a reasonable range of positive learning opportunities. Adults work well as a team and they have opportunities to attend training to improve their knowledge and understanding of how children learn. However, there is no formal process in place to monitor the quality and efficacy of the activities and how these contribute to children's learning and play. This means some aspects of the provision, such as enabling children to develop independent learning, has not kept up with current good practice.

Satisfactory recruitment processes help keep children safe. The committee take up appropriate checks on staff who work with the children to make sure they are safe and suitable to work with children. Guidance is given to students and volunteers to make sure they understand their roles and responsibilities. Practitioners plan the environment and the deployment of resources, making sure children have sufficient suitable play opportunities that promote their development. Overall children's needs are met.

Children's overall welfare is safeguarded by the setting's policies and procedures, which are implemented by practitioners to make sure the children are kept safe and secure. Documentation is kept securely with due regard for confidentiality. The committee ask parents for their ideas and opinions, which are then used to develop the self-assessment tool so the setting can continue to improve the quality of children's care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to improve the system for registering children's attendance. Since then the register has been extended to include children's times of arrival and departure. This ensures children can be safely accounted for in the event of an emergency.

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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve hygiene routines at meal times to prevent cross-infection and ensure children have the use of appropriate utensils, including plates
- continue to develop the range of healthy and nutritious foods, improving children's opportunities to make choices and encouraging them to eat healthily by presenting food in attractive and appealing ways
- improve systems that prevent unwanted visitors.

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 activities and everyday routines to ensure that children follow their own interests and make independent decisions about own play and learning (this also applies to care)
- develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision for early education to ensure that children benefit from a rich learning environment that enables them to develop to their full potential.

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