

Pepperbox Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY252321
Inspection date	07 December 2007
Inspector	Carole Argles
Setting Address	All Saints School Site, Common Road, Whiteparish, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 2SU
Telephone number	01794 885832
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Registered person	Pepperbox Preschool
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?

Pepperbox Pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee and has been operating in its current premises since January 2003. The pre-school runs from a mobile classroom in the grounds of the village primary school in Whiteparish, near Salisbury, in Wiltshire.

The pre-school is registered to provide care for 20 children aged three and four years. There are currently 20 children on roll, of whom 17 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities but currently there are no children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days per week during school term times. Sessions are from 08.45 until 15.00, but from 08.45 until 11.30 on Mondays and Fridays.

Four staff work with the children, of whom two hold a relevant early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are effective measures in place to promote the children's good health and to minimise the risk of infection spreading between them. The premises, equipment and toys are kept clean. Parents are reminded not to bring their children if they are ill or infectious and information about common childhood illnesses is displayed for them to read. Staff implement sound procedures to ensure that any required medication is administered safely to the children and share details of any accidental injuries to them with their parents. The children learn good hand hygiene routines and always wash their hands before eating.

The children receive healthy snacks which including a variety of fruit or salad vegetables, and perhaps a breadstick or a piece of toast. They can choose a drink of water or milk and bottles of drinking water are always available for them to take when they are thirsty. Parents provide a healthy packed lunch when children stay all day. Some members of staff hold a food hygiene certificate and they ensure that food is kept stored appropriately in the refrigerator. They are careful to ensure that children's dietary requirements are respected and there is a policy of no nuts at the pre-school. Meals are sociable times with the staff and children sitting and talking together. The children begin to learn about the importance of eating a healthy diet. They take part in cooking activities, making a variety food such as samosas and cakes. During the summer months, they grow plants including beans and tomatoes which they have the opportunity to eat.

The children play outside in the fresh air daily, bringing boots and coats so that they can go out when it is wet. They show good control and coordination of their movements as they climb, jump and balance when using the large apparatus. They pedal tricycles and demonstrate a developing sense of space as they carefully negotiate a course and avoid obstacles. Staff help them learn new skills giving assistance when required, for example, holding children's hands to give them confidence as they walk across the posts. At times, the children use areas of the school playground where there is ample space for them to run freely and use smaller equipment including balls and bean bags. The children enjoy being active and are eager to go out to play and these activities contribute effectively towards helping to keep them fit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are well-maintained, bright and warm. They are welcoming to parents and children alike with many displays of posters and artwork, and informative notice boards for parents. Children have named coat pegs to help them develop a sense of belonging at the pre-school and each child is greeted by the staff as they arrive. Staff use the space well by having areas dedicated to quiet activities, such as using the computer or looking at books, and areas where the children can take part in pretend play or art activities. There is a wide range of toys and equipment which are safe and suitable for the children to use. Many items are stored on shelves so they can select them individually or ask staff to reach boxes for them.

The staff have a sound understanding of how to promote the children's safety and they are well supervised at all times. They carry out regular risks assessments to ensure that the premises and equipment are safe. Suitable safety equipment, such as a low impact surface under the climbing equipment and heater guards, are provided. The provider has plans in place to address

some minor hazards which have been identified in the outside area. The children have regular opportunities to practise the fire drill so that they understand what to do in an emergency. However, although staff maintain an attendance register this is not always completed promptly and consequently this poses the risk that they do not have an accurate record of the children present in the event of an incident. Through discussions with staff, the children begin to think about safety and about the possible consequences of their actions. For example, they were discussing why they need to take care when using scissors and whether they should cut towards themselves or away.

There are suitable procedures in place to safeguard the children from harm or abuse. The staff know how to act if they have concerns about the welfare of a child in their care. Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with the children. The premises are kept secure and staff are vigilant to ensure that children are only collected by people who their parents have authorised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children enter the pre-school happily, parting readily from their parents and settling quickly at the activities set out for them. Most are confident and they have a warm and relaxed relationship with the staff who sit and talk with them about what they are doing, themselves their families. Consequently, the children are developing good communication skills. Their achievements are recognised and praised and they develop good self-esteem. The children play cooperatively together, often collaborating in an activity, for example, when using the sand tray or in the pretend play area. They are developing independence with their personal care, washing their hands and putting on their coats.

The staff plan and provide an interesting programme of activities for the children, which support all areas of their development. However, at present they do not systematically observe and assess what the children can do or record their progress. There is no written information about the development of some children. There is a broadly suitable routine to the children's day, which is a balance between free choice from the activities set out and adult-led and group times. The children are usually interested in what is provided for them and keen to take part. However, after lunch, they have a quiet time looking at books. This is followed at the start of the afternoon session by a group activity watching a video. Some children do not wish to do this but staff offer no alternatives. This does not make effective use of the children's time.

Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory. The senior staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum but others have more limited knowledge of it. However, all staff work well with the children promoting their independence and asking them questions which encourage them to think. They plan and provide varied curriculum, which supports all areas of the children's learning. However, at present, the staff do not implement the systems for tracking their progress. Therefore they cannot use this information to plan the next steps in their learning or be sure that they are providing appropriate levels of challenge for each child. At times, the activities are not appropriately matched to the understanding of the children. However, except at the beginning of the afternoon session, the children are well occupied and enjoy what they do.

The children are confident, talking readily with others about real and imaginary ideas and offering their opinions. For instance, a child tells staff that they do not like the milk because it is too creamy and is offered another cup. They show sustained involvement on self-chosen tasks, for example, when colouring a picture or making a Christmas card. They understand that there are times to sit quietly for the snack or a story. However, on occasions some children become restless during group activities and do not concentrate on what is going on. Sometimes the staff not involved in the activity talk loudly together and distract them further.

The children understand that marks can carry meaning and many can recognise their names and other familiar words. They enjoy books and stories and sometimes choose to sit with a member of staff so that they can look at a book together. The children are beginning to link sounds and letters and enjoy saying the rhyming words in stories. They shape and manipulate playdough using their hands and simple tools and they handle small objects, carefully placing pieces on their collage pictures. These activities help them develop the hand-eye coordination and muscle control required for writing skills. Sometimes the staff gently remind them how to hold a pencil correctly. At times, there is a somewhat restricted range of resources for them to use in these activities, for example, colouring pictures and coloured pencils but no plain paper so that they can draw pictures using their own ideas. However, the children's developing skills are often put to good use and they were cutting out Christmas tree shapes for their collages and writing in their cards and naming their pictures.

The children have opportunities to learn about the world around them. They explore sand and other materials, and investigate objects using magnifying glasses and magnets. They join construction pieces to build and make models. They begin to find out about their community, recreating what they know in their pretend play in the home corner or with miniature world toys. Recently, a police officer came to talk with them about safety and fireworks. However, they go on few outings or walks to learn more about where they live. Staff raise their awareness of diversity in the wider world, talking with them about different customs and festivals.

The children are interested in numbers and spontaneously talk about numbers of personal significance. For example, a child says "I'll be four next birthday" when he sees the number four. Many are beginning to count correctly linking numbers to objects and numerals up to ten. They solve simple number problems and calculations in practical activities. For example, at registration time, the children counted the number of girls, boys and adults present and worked out how many there were altogether using bricks to represent the people. The children take part in a variety of art and craft activities which include painting and collage and they have recently tie-dyed tee-shirts. They can recognise and name colours and, in an adult-led activity, were discovering what happened when they mixed different colour paints. A child explained how he had made grey by mixing black and white.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are confident and develop positive self-esteem because staff praise their achievements and are interested in them as individuals and what they have to say. The children enjoy helping others and being selected to be the 'special helper' when they have responsibilities such as handing out the food at snack time. The children find out about their own beliefs, culture and traditions and those of others in society through a range of activities. Recently this has included making samosas and diva lights when talking about the Hindu festival of Diwali, as well as preparing for their Christmas concert. There is a wide range of resources constantly used, which show the children

positive images of diversity. This includes books, dressing up clothes and other pretend play toys. This helps the children develop a tolerant and accepting attitude towards others.

The staff work closely with the parents, exchanging information to ensure that the children's individual needs are met and their wishes are respected. Any children who have learning difficulties or disabilities receive able support from the staff who work well with their parents and other outside agencies. Together they monitor and plan the children's care and learning and ensure that they are included fully in the activities. Additional adult support is provided for children if required. The premises are adapted to ensure access for all. Parents have ready access to copies of the policies and procedures so they understand how the pre-school operates. However, the procedure for dealing with any written complaints from parents does not reflect the current legislation.

Most children behave well and play cooperatively together, sharing fairly and taking turns. Staff treat them with respect and courtesy at all times and expect children to copy their example by being polite and saying "please" and "thank you" to others. They have a sound understanding of positive ways to help children learn to manage their own behaviour. Through explanations, they help the children understand the possible consequences of their actions on others and what is expected of them. They effectively use distraction and offer alternatives when children show unwanted behaviour and praise and a reward system so that they know when they have behaved well.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. They are kept up to date with events through newsletters and each half-term they receive an outline of the activities being provided for their children. There is a friendly relationship between staff and parents and they take informal opportunities to exchange information about the children's care. However, there is little detailed information available for them about their child's development and progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are encouraged to attend social events, for example, concerts and parties. However, there is limited information available to encourage them to take an active role in supporting their children's learning, for example, through activities they can do together at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The sessions run smoothly for the children because the staff work well together, ensuring that the room and activities are prepared in advance. The pre-school is well staffed, so the children benefit from plenty of attention and support. Staff organise the resources and use the space effectively to support the children's needs. Most of the required policies and procedures are in place and implemented appropriately to promote the children's welfare and safety. However, the complaints procedure has not been up dated to reflect current legislation and the provider and staff do not know how to address and record any written complaints received from parents. The statutory records and consents are maintained, although at times staff do not ensure that the register accurately shows which children are present.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Recently there have been many changes to the staff and committee, who are establishing good working relationships. The staff meet regularly to discuss any issues relating to the running of the pre-school and to plan the activities. They are committed to their own development and undertake relevant training and this benefits the children. With support from the local authority Early Years Team, they have correctly

identified areas of the pre-school provision for further development and are putting plans into action to ensure that this is achieved. This includes reviewing the systems for planning, assessing and monitoring the children's learning and progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the provider agreed to ensure that at least half of the staff hold an appropriate childcare qualification, to add additional details to the complaints and child protection statements and to ensure that the premises are secure. The provider was also asked to develop the assessment and monitoring systems and use the information gathered about the children to inform future planning; to link the activity plans to the early learning goals, and to provide more opportunities for the children to balance and climb, and to use information and communication technology to support their learning.

Since that time, there have been staff changes and now both the manager and her deputy hold suitable childcare qualifications. This meets the qualification requirements and benefits the children because they have a sound understanding of how to support their learning and development. The provider has installed new apparatus in the outside area so that the children can develop their climbing and balancing skills. A computer is available to support the children's learning. The main school gate has a high catch which the children cannot reach. A new fence and gate has been erected around the pre-school's outside play area, promoting the children's safety and ensuring that they cannot leave unsupervised. The staff are aware of the required amendments to policies and procedures, although copies available to the parent do not show these changes.

The staff plan a wide range of interesting activities for the children and make links in their planning with the early learning goals and the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, systems to monitor and record the children's progress are not implemented effectively. Therefore, the staff do not have accurate information to use when planning the next steps in each child's learning, or be sure that they are providing appropriate levels of challenge for them. At present, staff do not evaluate the activities to establish how effectively they have supported the children's learning. This remains an issue for further development.

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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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 that the record of attendance is completed promptly so that there is always an accurate record of children present on the premises
- revise the procedure for addressing and recording any written complaints from parents in line with the current legislation
- review the routine of the day, particularly the start of the afternoon session, to ensure that the children are well occupied and make good use of their time

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 implement the systems for assessing and monitoring children's progress towards the early learning goals and use this information when planning the next steps in their learning
- extend the partnership with parents and their involvement with their child's learning by increasing the information available for them

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