

Fyfield Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY269973
Inspection date	24 January 2008
Inspector	Sarah Williams
Setting Address	Scout HQ, Fyfield, Essex, CM5 0RG
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Registered person	The Trustees of Fyfield Pre-School
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Fyfield Pre-school opened in 1992. The group operates from the Scout Headquarters, in the centre of the village. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens for four mornings a week, during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30.

There are currently 25 children aged from three to under five years on roll. All children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area and surrounding villages and towns.

The pre-school employs seven staff. Four of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted because staff follow sound and consistent procedures that are documented and shared with parents. Children wash their hands before sitting down for their snack, and after they use the toilet. They are helped by the posters reminding them how to wash and dry their hands. Children who become poorly are cared for until they can be collected by a parent or carer. Those who are unwell are not admitted, to help prevent the risk of spread of infection.

Children who need first aid are treated by trained staff and the details recorded for a parent or carer to sign. Currently there is no written consent for the staff to seek emergency medical advice or treatment should a child need it.

Children enjoy a range of healthy snacks from the well-thought-out menus. They are offered a choice of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as crackers and various spreads, and other seasonal items relating to topics or festivals. Drinks are water, which is available at all times, or milk. Children's dietary needs and allergies are known to staff, who ensure that no unsuitable foods are given.

Children's physical development is promoted by the provision of activities to encourage them to move and use their bodies, whether out of doors, when weather permits, or in the main playroom. Each day an activity such as parachute games, riding the bikes and scooters or a dance session is included. Children respond enthusiastically to a professional dance teacher who leads a music and movement session, inspiring the children to move in different ways and recognise the effects of exertion on their bodies. Small motor skills and fine muscle control is developed through free use of small equipment such as construction kits, small world toys and the art and craft tools such as mark-making equipment, cutting and rolling tools for dough, and containers to fill and empty with sand or water.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm welcoming environment that is safe and well maintained to provide a suitable environment for them to play and learn. The premises is shared with other user groups but the pre-school have designated display and storage space. Low-level units contain the children's personal drawers, and floor cushions provide the children with comfy space to look at books, or flop down to relax. However, tables and chairs are mainly adult sized, which limits children's independence and comfort when taking part in table based activities and at snack time.

Children are kept safe and secure due to well-implemented policies. The premises are secured when children are attending and the main door can only be opened by a staff member. Fire safety equipment is in place and children take part in regular fire drills, which are recorded. On outings, staff are careful to observe a high ratio of adults to children and follow the group's policy with regard to safety.

Children's welfare is considered and there is a designated staff member with responsibility for safeguarding children. Parents are made aware of the group's approach and the child protection policy is available with full details.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are helped to settle in when they first begin attending, and parents can stay or leave the children for short periods if they wish. All children follow a programme of planned activities based on the Foundation Stage, designed to help them make progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the different aspects of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan the varied range of activities. Children are given the opportunity to play freely with the range of equipment set out for them for the first part of the session. They are seen to be engaged and self-motivated, absorbed in activities and directing their own learning. The timetable is designed to be flexible, however, at times children are mainly adult directed and taught as one large group; at these times their capacity for choosing and decision making, and thereby developing independence, is limited.

Activities are evaluated and the information gained is used to plan future sessions. Each child has a carefully thought out target sheet so that key workers and other staff know exactly what each individual child is working towards. Their achievements are recorded on the development profiles, which parents can see at any time on request as well as at the open sessions.

Children generally understand what is expected of them in terms of behaviour; they respond well to staff's gentle interventions and listen to explanations to help them behave positively.

Children are developing their competencies across the four aspects of communication: speaking listening, reading and writing. They use language to communicate with one another as they play and work, and can ask to have their needs met. They are comfortable to use the books either in the book area, where there is comfortable seating, or as part of topic work and activities. Children have name cards and a named place mat at snack time. These, along with posters such as the map of the area, shows children the uses of print in a day-to-day context and helps them become aware of letter shapes. They follow a scheme to learn letter sounds and, as they progress, begin to join these together to make simple words.

Children begin to see connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They match and sort and are use mathematical language such as 'more than', 'one more' and 'one less' to help them to solve problems across a range of practical activities such as games, puzzles and in their imaginative play. Cooking introduces ideas of weights and measures, and children learn about capacity and volume through water and sand play. They count at different times, for example to see how many children are present.

Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first-hand experiences in an interesting environment. They enjoy watching a car being taken away by a tow truck and are fascinated when they learn that the scrap metal will be recycled to make a household item. They have begun to learn about recycling and how they can make a difference to their environment.

Children confidently use the computer to underpin their learning across all areas, with the range of educational programs provided. Other technology such as a digital camera and compact disc player are used frequently, and the role play area offers opportunities to try out domestic items

through play. Visitors to the pre-school help children learn about the wider world and they exchange travel stories and talk about home and family at circle time.

Children are able to be creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play. A dressing-up cupboard has exciting potential and children use the clothes and props to add to their imaginative games. Music and movement sessions are lively and fun. A puppet theatre gives a voice to otherwise shy or quiet children, and develops imaginative play. Sensory development is promoted when children go for walks and outings, noting changes in the seasons and weather. Animals are brought into the setting and children learn about their care needs, lovely photographs help them recall these and other events.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a good sense of belonging and are warmly welcomed as they arrive for sessions. Named coat pegs help them hang up their coats and stow their belongings. Children's details are taken before they start attending and the key person makes contact with the parent and child so that they have a friendly face to relate to from the start.

Children benefit from very well established links with the main feeder primary school. They make visits to attend assemblies and special events, and children from the school visit the pre-school to watch their play at Christmas time. This eases the transition between pre-school and school and allows the children to develop an idea of what they will be expected to do once attending school.

Children enjoy the free play sessions when they freely choose activities from the range set out by staff. They are independent and active learners, making decisions and choices, and following their interests to complete self-chosen tasks.

Children with additional needs or who have identified learning difficulties or disabilities are supported: specialist trained staff work with outside agencies and other professionals, as well as parents, to ensure that support is in place when needed.

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children develop self-esteem and are articulate. They are able to ask for help when they need it and communicate with staff and other adults in a friendly and confident manner. Children's behaviour is generally good; staff are vigilant and apply consistent and simple rules to help children know what is expected of them.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from a strong and effective partnership with parents. They are able to discuss their child's development and can stay at sessions to help if they wish. Parents with specialist skills and interesting occupations are invited to share their experiences with the children, helping to bring aspects of the wider world into the pre-school environment. They are supportive of fundraising efforts and see the results as equipment is provided for the children's benefit. Parents can access the group's policies and other useful information, and regular newsletters keep them informed of changes and special events. Currently the procedure enabling a parent to make a complaint lacks up-to-date contact details for Ofsted.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by adults who have undergone checks and are vetted to make sure they are suitable to have contact with children. New staff follow an induction procedure so that they are aware of what is expected of them within their specific role. Staff training records and certificates are available in a staff folder, available on request.

The pre-school is well organised and staff have regard for the permitted ratios of children to adults. An operational plan is in place and parents can access this to see policies and procedures. Paperwork and documentation to support children's care and welfare is in place. Policies are reviewed as necessary to comply with National Standards requirements; most are in place and a few need amendments to bring them up to date.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Recent major changes in staff and committee has been somewhat unsettling in terms of the management structure. Things are settling down now and a committed set of parents and staff are building a team with the aim of strengthening and progressing the group, based on the ethos of learning through play. The staff team obviously enjoy the contact with the children and take an active part in the play and learning process. They are positive and optimistic and looking to the future with exciting projects, such as the outside play area, which will enhance and extend the learning environment for the children.

An appraisal system looks at professional development and staff attend training courses when they need to, either day courses or a certificated study programme to gain a qualification. Staff report that they feel well supported and are able to bring new ideas into the group.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to consider how to increase the children's independent use of books. This has been achieved by improving the accessibility of books and providing comfortable seating for the children's use. Selected books are also placed near to activities to stimulate children's interest and help them make links, for example, books about animals are placed near the farm set.

The provider was asked to review the organisation of the session so routines do not restrict children's learning opportunities. A timetable is in place which sets out free play and adult-led parts of the session: this is designed to be flexible. However, at times children's free choice and active learning is limited by the teaching style, when children are expected and encouraged to take part in whole group activities and routines such as snack time, circle time and the physical play time, which are largely adult led and can take up the larger part of the session.

The provider was asked to expand the lost and uncollected children policy to give parents and staff clearer understanding of procedures. This has been done and the revised policy is available to parents.

Nursery education

The provider was asked to improve the planning and staff practice to more effectively challenge more able children and support younger children's learning. Planning now includes differentiation

and the individualised target sheets help to focus the activities to children's stages of development.

The group was asked to increase the use of purposeful free play activities to enhance children's creative development and provide more opportunities for children to learn through play. The first hour of the session is dedicated to free play, when children have the choice to play where they wish; creative activities such as painting, role play, musical instruments and puppets are included every day. However, as detailed above, the larger part of the session sometimes has fewer choices for children.

As a result of actions taken, children's welfare, care and education are improved. Recommendations are included with this inspection report.

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 written consent is obtained for each child to enable staff to seek emergency medical advice or care
- provide sufficient numbers of child-sized chairs and tables to allow flexible arrangements for children to play and eat together.

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):

- review the use of time and resources throughout the session to maximise children's free choice and decision making during play, and during routine activities such as snack time, to promote independence and active 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