

Elveden Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218140
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Inspector	Lynne Milligan
Setting Address	Thomas Alleyne's High School,, Dove Bank, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, ST14 8DU
Telephone number	01889 561838
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Registered person	Christina Ruth Hollins
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Elveden Pre-school has been in operation since the current owner has been there, since 1998. It is situated on the premises of Thomas Alleyne's High School, in the centre of a small rural market town. The group serves the local and wider community.

There are currently 13 children aged from two to four years on role. This includes four three-year-olds and four four-year-olds. Children attend for morning sessions. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health is compromised because staff do not take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection. Some hygiene practices are poor, for example, the tea towels used are unclean and both children and staff use these to wipe their hands after washing or cleaning. Children

also wipe their faces and runny noses on them. Therefore, the risk of cross-infection is strong. Kitchen surfaces and the floors throughout the premises are kept adequately clean. However, staff give little thought to the organisation of the food preparation area as this is used to wash their hands, clean paint brushes and prepare snacks. Although children sometimes help to clean tables, they are not learning a consistent message about cleanliness and hygiene due to the practices of staff.

Satisfactory arrangements are in place to encourage children to eat healthily and make healthy choices about what they eat. Children are offered fresh fruit regularly at snack time and on some days they are offered toast. Children are also given a drink of water or fresh milk at snack time, although, fresh drinking water is only available at other times if children request a drink. Special dietary needs are met in discussion with parents and carers.

Children benefit from having opportunities to play outside in the fresh air whenever possible. Activities are provided during these times to sufficiently promote children's physical development and large muscle control. Children's fine manipulative control is encouraged as they use small tools and equipment indoors. For example, the children carefully spoon powdered paint into their containers full of water when mixing paint ready for their wall display, developing control and co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Whilst there are some adequate safety precautions in place to protect children from harm, children's welfare is at risk of not being fully protected because all staff do not fully understand their role in child protection. Although, they are aware of signs and symptoms that may alert them, they do not have sufficient confidence and knowledge of the actions to take should they have concerns about a child. However, the provider is aware of child protection issues and there are appropriate written policies and procedures in place.

Children are cared for in a sufficiently warm, welcoming and child-centred environment. Some priority is given to safety so that children can freely and independently choose from a wide range of good quality resources which are mostly clean, safe and age-appropriate. However, the sand pits, both indoors and out, are not clean. This has the potential to put children's health at risk. Daily checks are carried out to ensure that children are safe. The arrival and collection of children is appropriately managed to ensure their safety. Children learn about safety as they practise emergency evacuation procedures. They learn through gentle reminders and meaningful explanations about the safety of themselves and others such as about not throwing sand and being careful when sitting on the mat if kicking legs in the air and other children are close by.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Staff have a weak understanding of how children develop and do not use the 'Birth to three matters' framework adequately to ensure sound developmental outcomes for children under the age of three years are achieved. Children are grouped together with the funded children, and as a result, their needs are not fully met. Although a key worker system is in place, this is used loosely, and as a result, some children are struggling to keep up, are not completely involved and are overshadowed by the more able children.

Consistent routines are generally followed across the pre-school and this helps children to be settled and confident. They know what happens next throughout the session, for example, they know that once they have tidied away, it is time for snack. Staff spend most of their time working directly with the children and because of this children have good relationships with them and thrive on the attention that they are given. Staff are generally engaged in the children's play. They encourage children to be involved in the activities provided, for example, whilst painting they ask children about the colours, showing them what grass looks like when they use their brushes in a certain way. Some activities such as outdoor play, are supervised to ensure that children can play safely and staff do become more involved as they encourage children to throw the frog bean bags to see if they can land on each other.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. The manager has insufficient knowledge of the Foundation Stage and little understanding of how young children learn and progress. Planning covers most areas of learning and although it links to the stepping stones, it does not differentiate for the diverse capabilities of children. The activities are not adapted to suit the educational needs of individual children. The system for assessing children's progress is weak. Current assessment records for children receiving funded nursery education do not represent children's individual approach to learning and their achievements, and do not show planning for the next steps in each child's learning. The information from observations is not used sufficiently to assess how children are progressing towards the early learning goals. Subsequently, staff's understanding of when children's learning needs to be extended are insufficient.

Staff use adequate means to sustain children's attention, they sit with children, ask questions and help to expand their play in most areas. Children's reading skills are sufficient through a small range of books. However, not all children can identify their names without support and are not familiar with identifying letters out of sequence. Staff spend time reading to children during circle time, although their understanding and imagination of stories is not always encouraged, as some children are bored by the extended reading session. Children's awareness of the community and the wider world is increased through some activities and the positive attitude of the staff. There are topics to help children learn about other cultures such as learning Chinese New Year and Diwali. They learn about nature and about how things grow and change through activities such as growing daffodils and cress from seeds and finding out about why frost appears. Children's behaviour is managed satisfactorily and they enjoy being in the calm and caring surroundings. The pre-school room and the outside play area are adequately organised and offer a suitable environment with a sound range of developmentally-appropriate resources, which are accessible to children and promote children's learning in most areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Staff do not have a thorough knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities to help children learn about the world around them and the diversity of it. Staff are not confident in their awareness of the festivals and cultures of others, although, do celebrate some festivals, Chinese New Year and Diwali, and promote customs such as Mother's Day, through art and craft activities. Resources to promote positive images of gender, culture and disability are not readily available to children, although, the setting does have some resources such as books and dolls. Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered. There are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities are integrated fully into the setting, although, the individual needs of all children are not always fully met.

Children behave well. Staff manage children's behaviour effectively to help them learn right from wrong and play harmoniously together. Children have good relationships with adults and each other, and generally play well together. Adults are consistent in their strategies to manage unwanted behaviour. They use discussion well to remind children to share and take turns such as when children are impatient whilst waiting for their turn to scoop the paint out of the pot. Good behaviour is promoted and encouraged. Staff also praise children verbally when they have shared or helped another child or when they have tried hard in an activity.

Staff recognise the benefits of working in partnership with parents and carers and they are encouraged to help out by volunteering to work in the setting when they go out on visits to the library or farm. Information is provided to all parents of children attending the pre-school to keep them informed about the setting when they start. However, they are not offered further information in order for them to be well informed about any changes such as amendments to policies and procedures. General information such problems that may have occurred, are discussed verbally at the end of the session when children are collected.

Partnerships with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education are inadequate. Although planning is displayed, parents are unable to view it easily and it is not completely filled in so parents can see what their children will be doing. There are no other systems in place to keep parents informed of their children's developmental progress and staff do not take any steps to encourage parents to ask. They do not provide feedback about children's achievements unless there is a developmental concern or if parents ask. Consequently, parents and carers views and concerns about their child's learning is limited.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Registration systems are not completed to ensure an accurate record is maintained of the hours of staff and children's attendance. A record of visitors is maintained. Children are cared for by staff who know them well. In addition, parents and carers help out when they are required such as visits to the town or library. Staff time is used well and they spend most of their time working with the children. Documentation relating to children and staff is stored securely to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. All necessary documentation, necessary for the safe and efficient running of the setting, is in place. Although policies and procedures are available to parents and carers when their children start at the pre-school, systems to further ensure they are kept updated are insufficient. Consequently, they are unable to make informed choices about their children's care.

The leadership and management is inadequate. The setting does not have effective arrangements in place to assess its own strengths and weaknesses. Staff are enthusiastic about improving their childcare qualifications but do not follow this up with continuing development of their childcare and education skills and knowledge such as their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. There are no systems in place to monitor the nursery education provision and as a result, children are not making good progress towards the early learning goals. Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was required to provide a procedure to be followed in the event of allegations of abuse or neglect by a member of staff and to ensure that staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. Although staff are aware of signs and symptoms that may alert them, they do not have sufficient confidence and knowledge of the actions to take should they have concerns about a child. They also do not have up to date documentation or contact numbers in relation to the local safeguarding children's board. The child protection policy now contains a brief statement of the procedure to be followed in the event of allegations of abuse or neglect by a member of staff. However, staff's understanding of this procedure is weak. In addition, they were asked to encourage parents of children under three to access their child's written development record to ensure that they are fully aware of their child's development and progress. Opportunities to share information about their child's development through brief discussions are now provided if parents request this.

NURSERY EDUCATION

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was required to increase opportunities for children to link letters to sounds through a range of planned and spontaneous activities, and to encourage and develop children's understanding of the changes that occur in the body following exercise, particularly when exercising out of doors and to encourage parents to access their child's written development record to ensure that they are fully aware of their child's development and progress in the Foundation stage. Circle time is now used where children share their experiences, listen to stories and sing simple songs. Confidence is promoted as children are encouraged to listen to each other and take turns at speaking. Children are not supported in their understanding of how the body changes during exercise, especially when outside. As a result, children are not able to recognise the changes that happen to their body when they are active. Other than displaying the plans in the pre-school room, there are no other systems in place to keep parents informed of their children's developmental progress and staff do not take any steps to encourage parents to ask. Feedback is not about children's achievements unless there is a developmental concern or if parents ask. As a result, parents and carers are not aware of their child's developmental progress through the stepping stones.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- put in place procedures to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-school, including the effectiveness of the nursery education provision
- ensure there is a system to register children's and staff's attendance on a daily basis, showing hours of attendance
- develop further the systems for recording existing injuries
- improve hygiene practices in order to prevent the spread of infection when children and staff are drying their hands and when organising areas to prepare snacks
- review aspects of safety with regard to the cleanliness of sandpits both indoors and out
- obtain current documentation and contact numbers in relation to the local safeguarding children's board and develop staff's understanding of the procedure should an allegation be made against them.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- develop planning and assessment procedures so that learning intentions for focussed activities are clear and that children's development can be clearly and effectively monitored and tracked through the stepping stones
- improve challenges for the more able children to develop their literacy skills so that they regularly use writing as a way of communicating and for the more able children to label their own pictures and recognise their name
- develop the arrangements to work in partnership with parents and carers to involve them in their children's learning and keep them informed about their children's developmental progress.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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