

Fledglings Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	650013
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Inspector	Ann Marie Cozzi / Lynn Clements
Setting Address	Epping Upland CE Primary School, Carters Lane, Epping Green, Epping, Essex, CM16 6QJ
Telephone number	0781 2518393
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Registered person	Fledglings 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 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Fledglings Pre-school opened in 1984. It is situated in the main hall of Epping Uplands primary school. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding communities.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children at any one time. There are currently 29 children on roll from two and a half to five years. This includes 14 children in receipt of early education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group opens four days a week during school term times. Sessions run Monday to Thursday 08.55 until 11.25.

Seven members of staff work with the children. Five hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

There are some systems to protect children from cross-infection. For example, there is a sick child policy in place and staff ensure children clean their hands before eating food. However, the current cleaning routine of resources is ineffective, this results in some toys accessed by children remaining dirty.

Whilst there are records kept relating to the administration of medicines and the reporting of accidents, there are some missing parents and carers signatures to acknowledge entries of accidents. As a result, their well-being is not protected. In addition children's health needs are not always safeguarded, this is because children's individual records are not regularly maintained and staff do not make sure that appropriate medication is kept on site should an emergency situation arise. Some members of staff have completed relevant first aid training. This enables them to provide appropriate care in the event of an accident.

Children have access to drinking water at all times which assists in ensuring that no one remains thirsty. There is a wide selection of snacks available to children including healthy options such as fresh fruit and vegetables.

There are satisfactory opportunities for children to engage in physical play. They have some access to an outdoor area and use a variety of apparatus, including a tunnel, climbing frame and wheeled toys. Children demonstrate increasing competence whilst using single handed tools and equipment, such as glue sticks and a variety of different type and sized paint brushes to create their own three dimensional models. Children are able to move around safely, avoiding each other and obstacles. They have adequate opportunities during the session to rest or be active.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Some risk assessments are in place, however, they do not take a child's eye view of the inside and outside of the premises and are therefore ineffective in ensuring that all hazards are minimised. As a consequence, children are not kept safe or secure from low-level hazards, such as access to the storage rooms, electricity cupboard, poorly maintained and unidentified lagging materials, trailing wires, plastic bags, sharp objects and chemical cleaning products. In addition the playgroup does not ensure sole use of the setting. This puts children at significant risk and as a result their safety and security is compromised. A visitor record is in place and fire drills are regularly carried out and recorded.

There is plenty of child-sized furniture and a comfortable area for children to rest. The maintenance and decor of the setting is satisfactory. However, the toilet area and water for hand washing are not maintained at an adequate temperature. Staff display some children's work and photographs of them undertaking activities.

Some staff demonstrate a basic understanding of the categories and indicators of abuse. However, their knowledge and understanding of procedures approved by the Local Safeguarding Children Board is poor. In addition to this the policy in place has not been updated to ensure information is relevant and continues to meet legislative requirements. As a consequence, children's welfare is not fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enter the playgroup confident and happy. They enthusiastically access a satisfactory range of planned and spontaneous activities. Children enjoy playing with resources which include role play, small world, construction and wheeled toys. Malleable resources such as craft and play dough promote children's manipulative skills, imagination and senses. Whilst staff have completed training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework the systems to support children under three years continue to develop. Children's observations and assessments are not yet secure. As a consequence, activities do not always effectively support their individual development in order to promote effective progress.

There is a key worker system in place and interaction between the children and staff is caring and positive. There is a balance of child-initiated and staff-led activities. The free-flow system and organisation of the environment encourages children to make decisions about what they would like to do next. Children receive plenty of praise and encouragement from staff which raises their self-esteem, for example, when a child shares news from home at group time, this is acknowledged positively by staff saying 'well done, good boy'. The use of reward stickers further supports children's achievements. As a result, this assists in helping them to develop positive attitudes to future learning.

During activities children demonstrate their curiosity as learners, sharing ideas and asking questions, for example, when a member of staff cleaned the microwave oven children tried to decide if the left over food inside was beans or soup. There are chances for children to develop their vocabulary as staff provide many opportunities for them to practise their thinking and listening skills. For example, during cooking activities, group sessions and snack time.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Overall, staff have sufficient understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn through play. They organise varied activities which promote the children's independence and decision making skills. Staff support children in their play and learning, particularly in small group work, for example, during cooking activities. They are interested in what the children say and do, taking time to listen and respond positively to their suggestions and ideas. Children are confident in their relationships with each other and staff as they move freely around the hall making choices about their play. Children's achievements are linked to the stepping stones. Some systems for recording their progress are in place.

Children receive opportunities to take part in singing and rhymes. They mimic the world around them and develop their imagination whilst dressing up, for example as they become super heroes. Children enjoy visiting the role play area they enjoy making meals for each other and answering the telephone. Children are encouraged to participate in a range of number and problem solving activities, for example, during an activity they weigh and measure ingredients whilst making play dough. There are some low-level labels in the playgroup which help to promote children's understanding that text carries meaning. Some children recognise their name card and independently write their names on their own creations. Differentiation for less able children continues to develop.

There are opportunities for mark-making which include painting and drawing activities. Children develop their physical skills as they use a range of single-handed tools, such as paint brushes,

pencils and dough cutters. Children are able to discover, explore and investigate information technology as they use the computer and battery operated toys. They also problem solve, working out what happens when they press a button. Children develop their sense of balance and coordination whilst climbing over and through the tunnel. Although, indoor opportunities are not always consistent in facilitating vigorous play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children enjoy a relaxed atmosphere and a supportive environment where praise and encouragement is constantly present. They are confident and are encouraged to explore different cultures through activities, resources and discussion. Children's independence is promoted within the daily routines. For example, at snack time children are encouraged to butter their own cracker.

There are currently a small number of children on roll with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Systems are in place to support children and their families. Meetings prior to placement provide opportunities for members of staff to work with families in the best interests of the child.

On the whole, children behave well. They learn to cooperate with each other, as they join in cooking, small world and role play activities. Staff use plenty of consistent praise and encouragement to help increase children's confidence. Children are learning to share and care for each other, encouraging others to join in their games and make room for them at activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The system in place for liaison with parents and carers is generally informal feedback which is shared verbally. Parents and carers are invited to the playgroup committee Annual General Meeting, staff report that they make themselves available to them prior to the start of the meeting. However, there are no systems in place in order to effectively share children's progress with parents and carers. There is a complaints policy in place, however, it does not include the correct regulator's contact details.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is satisfactory. Parents and carers have access to some planning which is displayed on a notice board outside the hall. Information about the Foundation Stage is provided in the welcome pack. Parents and carers are told about their children's records of assessment and can ask to view these at anytime. Although, there are no formal systems in place to encourage participation or to share information about their children achievements at home to provide the key-workers with a picture of the whole child.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The provider demonstrates a poor knowledge and understanding of the National Standards, as a result, the management of care does not effectively take account of the overall safety, welfare and development of children. For example, children are exposed to low-level hazards and the consistent disruption of persons known and unknown entering the setting. In addition, the manager has failed to notify Ofsted of significant events, such as structural alterations, changes in committee members and other issues which may adversely effect the smooth running of the setting.

Required records and permissions are in place, however not all records are regularly updated and maintained consistently, for example, reviewing and recording changes in children's individual medication. In addition many policies and procedures are not implemented in practice nor have they been regularly updated. Therefore they do not reflect current requirements in legislation. This does not ensure the safe and efficient running of the provision or promote positive outcomes for children. Overall, children needs are not met.

The leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. Staff are supported by regular meetings and some have attended training, such as embracing diversity and coordinating special educational needs. This assists in developing their confidence, knowledge and understanding in these areas. The manager works along side staff to oversee practice. She holds discussions with them each morning about the forthcoming days activities. Although there are some monitoring systems in place these continue to develop. The deputy takes responsibility for planning the Foundation Stage curriculum. The manager works with other professional organisations, such as health visitors and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA).

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection, to improve the standard of care, the playgroup was required to: ensure children have more variety of foods for snacks, including fresh fruit; ensure children use appropriate hand washing facilities to avoid cross-infection and that systems are in place to keep records of all medication administered to children;

ensure documentation is updated as required by the National Standards to include the risk assessment, behaviour management policy, child protection policy and a lost/uncollected child policy.

The management team have ensured that children have a good selection of healthy options including fresh fruit and vegetables, the provision of hand washing facilities are developing to ensure that cross-infection is prevented, there are now adequate systems in place for the recording of medication administered to children, there is now a behaviour management and uncollected child policy in place, however, the child protection and lost child policies are not updated as required and therefore do not promote the safe management of the setting.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the playgroup were required to: develop the assessment records to enable staff to effectively plan the next steps in order to help children make progress towards the early learning goals; further develop the planning to include more effective short term planning linked to the stepping stones. This will provide more challenge and differentiation for the older and more able children; provide regular opportunities for children to link sounds to letters, to develop and extend the use of calculation in everyday activities and for children to learn about the cultures and beliefs of others.

Children's assessment records and planning are linked to the stepping stones. As a result they are making sufficient progress towards the early learning goals, there are regular opportunities for children to link sounds to letters, develop and extend the use of calculation in everyday activities and for children to learn about the cultures and beliefs of others. This extends opportunities for them to explore communication language and literacy, maths and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 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:

- improve staff understanding of the National Standards and ability to meet them
- ensure that staff observe what children do and use their observations to plan the next steps for the children's play, learning and development
- promote the good health of children and take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection, this refers to ensuring effective cleaning routines are in place for toys and equipment
- ensure that accident records are maintained appropriately, this refers to ensuring that parents and carers sign to acknowledge the entry
- promote the good health of children and take appropriate measures when they are ill, this refers in particular to adhering to agreed procedures and making sure that children's emergency medication is available at all times
- ensure that the toilet area and hand washing water is maintained at an adequate temperature
- ensure that the registered premises are for the sole use of the facility during the hours of operation
- take positive steps to promote safety within the setting and ensure proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents
- conduct a risk assessment of the premises and ensure that this is reviewed if there is a significant change or if you suspect that it is no longer valid, an action plan with timescales identifies action to be taken to minimise identified risk
- comply with safeguarding children procedures approved by the Local Safeguarding Board and ensure that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures in to practice

- ensure that staff work in partnership with parents and carers to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group and information is shared
- ensure 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 maintained
- ensure that you notify the Chief Inspector of significant events where it is reasonably practicable to do so, in advance of the event occurring, and in all other cases as soon as reasonably practicable, but not later than 14 days, after the event has occurred this refers to any structural alterations, anything that adversely effects the smooth running of the setting, changes in committee members.

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

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