

Paston Playdays

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY263021
Inspection date	30 January 2008
Inspector	Susan Sykes
Setting Address	Paston Ridings School, Paston Ridings, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE4 7XG
Telephone number	07939 669957
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Registered person	Family Welfare Association (The)
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?

Paston Playdays Pre-School opened in 1997 and moved to its current location in 2003. It operates from a mobile classroom in the grounds of Paston Ridings Primary School, Peterborough. The group has use of three playrooms plus a kitchen, office and toilet facilities. They are able to use the school playground and playing fields for outside play. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 27 children on roll. Of these, 24 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for whom English is an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times and children from two years and six months are welcome to attend. Sessions are from 08.45 until 11.45. The group also offers a lunch club for the older children from 11.30 until 12.30.

Four full-time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. One member of staff is working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is protected due to the good practice followed by members of staff. They teach children the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines, such as washing hands after using the toilet or before eating. However on occasions some children are not fully monitored when using the toilet facilities, therefore do not wash their hands or rinse them without soap exposing them to potential infections. A firm ethos of encouraging sick children to stay at home reflects the written policy, ensures their well-being and protects other children from cross-infection. Staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and a well-stocked first aid box ensures they can respond to minor injuries.

Children increase their understanding about a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy nutritious snacks such as fresh fruit or crackers and spread and this understanding is consolidated through activities such as making fruit kebabs. Adults are vigilant to ensure they take account of the parents' wishes and the children's choices and dietary needs. Children develop their social skills through eating their snacks together at the table and this time is used to talk about healthy eating. However, staff prepare the food for children which is a missed opportunity for children who could increase their independence skills by preparing their own snacks. Children can access drinks whenever they need to, which keeps them hydrated and helps them recognise and respond to their body's needs.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contributes to their good health, both indoors and out. They enjoy, for example, music and dance activities as well as physical exercise indoors. Outdoor play is positively encouraged and promoted in the pre-school throughout the year and children's health benefits from the fresh air and exercise that this brings. The pre-school has use of the school's playground and this is used well when accessible. It is equipped to provide children with a varied range of activities. Children are able to run around, climb on the climbing frame, use balancing bars and utilise the 'pirate ship' and 'train'. They ride bikes and scooters and learn to negotiate a path between other children and equipment. These types of activities help children to develop their physical skills and develop a positive attitude towards exercise. Children have good opportunities to use small-scale equipment safely to develop their finer manipulative skills, for example, threading, jigsaw puzzles and using scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where staff are always on hand to greet them and their parents. All rooms are set out ready for children to start to play and many resources are stored at children's height to enable them to make choices and follow their own interest in play which in turn encourages their independence. Children's work is displayed around the pre-school, developing their sense of belonging in the setting.

Children are cared for in a secure and safe environment. Visitors to the pre-school are monitored and recorded before gaining access. Steps are taken to identify hazards through daily risk assessments. Other in-depth risk assessments are also undertaken and the pre-school works closely with the school to identify and address potential hazards. Resources and toys are of good quality, sufficient in quantity, age-appropriate and clean. Children are beginning to develop their understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves safe within

the setting to promote their safety. For example, they know not to push each other as they go down the steps from the mobile or as they are asked not to run inside the building. However, this is not always followed through with an explanation to consolidate their understanding of what is required behaviour.

All staff have a good understanding and knowledge of the signs and symptoms that may alert them to child abuse and procedures to follow if they have a concern. The detailed written child protection policy is shared with parents and details the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. This helps to ensure staff act appropriately to safeguard children. Staff remain vigilant to existing injuries that children have from outside of the setting and record and use this information appropriately and confidentially, working closely with other agencies to safeguard children. Clear procedures if an allegation is made against a member of staff are in place and understood, thus children are always cared for by suitable persons.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children separate well from their parents and carers as they come into the pre-school and are happy, secure and settle quickly into their own routine. They feel a sense of belonging as they put their coats onto their pegs, self-register and join in as a group to welcome everyone which acknowledges each child present making them feel valued. Their daily experiences at the pre-school are enhanced by staff who are caring and participate in their play experiences supporting and guiding as appropriate. This creates a positive, caring environment where children receive consistent care. Children are confident and their self-esteem is bolstered as they are given praise and encouragement from staff, for example, as they tidy up toys or achieve in their chosen activity, such as writing tickets for passengers to go on the train. Relationships between staff and children are positive. Staff extend learning with appropriate questioning, for example as they talk together at registration time about the letter of the week, encouraging children to think about sounds and letters.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of how children learn and progress. They use effective methods to maintain children's interest as they take part in activities, sitting with them, asking questions and extending their play. There is a good system for recording children's progress through detailed observations. However, some records are not maintained robustly to ensure a continuous assessment of the child's achievements which may hinder their progress to the early learning goals. Each child has an individual learning plan and key workers have regular meetings to plan for children's next steps, which are clearly identified. Planning of activities ensures aspects within the areas of learning are covered and that it is adapted for the differing abilities of children. Children's interests are acknowledged and fed into the planned activities. All children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are respected and receive appropriate emotional support to achieve their goals. They are developing trust in relationships and a positive self-image and are confident to approach adults within the pre-school including the inspector who was invited to join in their games. Consequently they are forming good relationships with their peers and adults, leading to their growth in self-assurance.

Children are interested and keen to engage in play and learning, building their self-esteem and concentration skills. They have a developing sense of their own needs as they move around the environment confidently choosing what they want to play with. They are becoming

increasingly sociable as they play cooperatively, for example as they play outside on the train which develops further as more children join in, deciding the destination, visit the pink lambs and write tickets for each other. Children care for each other as, for example, they seek adult assistance for their friends who require help on the climbing frame. They learn to take turns and share resources as they engage in activities such as bathing and feeding their dolls or play together with the cars and garage.

Children are developing communication skills as they engage in conversation with their friends and staff who actively listen. They speak confidently in group scenarios such as registration or story time where they participate in the actions and pre-empt what will happen next. The book corner is welcoming and children enjoy looking at books and sharing stories with staff. This develops competence in language and begins to form the early links to literacy. Children confidently use tools and resources to make marks both indoors and outdoors. For example, they use paint brushes and water outdoors demonstrating that they are beginning to understand that marks have meaning whilst other children write their own names unaided with paper and pencils.

Children gain an understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Cooking, sand and water activities develop children's sense of size, weight and capacity. Children demonstrate their understanding of numbers as they count each other at registration time or build constructions from the 'inter-star' resource, spontaneously counting how many pieces they have used. They use tape measures to measure their height and sort through the box of gloves and mittens to find a matching pair developing mathematical concepts and language.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed through resources and activities that explore cultures and celebrate festivals. Festivals such as Christmas, Eid and Diwali, Chinese New Year or St Patrick's day are celebrated in a meaningful way and are relevant to children's backgrounds. A range of resources build their understanding of information technology such as electronic keyboards and remote control cars or everyday objects such as telephones, tills or the toy cooker. They have opportunities to express themselves through a variety of media, such as junk modelling, play dough or free-painting sessions. Children's creative thinking is firmly encouraged through role play as they re-enact everyday scenarios in home corner or the 'office' or extend it further as they are actively encouraged to lead play ideas, such as visiting 'pink lambs which need feeding and become bigger', helping children to enhance their understanding of the world around them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed and feel a sense of belonging as they take part in the routines of the setting, such as sitting together for registration or tidying up resources before story time. Staff are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action is taken to identify and support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children with English as an additional language have systems in place to support them as staff undertake research about the child's home culture and support them with enhanced individual learning plans. Translations of policies, procedures and other information for parents are accessed so that parents can become fully involved in their child's care in the pre-school. Children become aware of their own and other cultures through topic work, resources and the use of books.

Children behave well in the pre-school. A consistent approach to behaviour management in the pre-school means children are clear in what is acceptable or what is not, for example, sharing

resources with each other and showing respect for their friends. Constant praise from staff enables children to flourish in a positive environment. A named person in the pre-school oversees the strategies and behaviour management policy to further enhance this aspect benefiting children who can try different experiences in a positive environment.

Children are encouraged to share, play together and respect each other. They are given opportunities to appreciate other cultures and express themselves through a variety of mediums. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is being fostered.

Children benefit from the working partnership between their parents, carers and staff to provide effective care. For example, information regarding children's individual needs, such as allergies or dietary requirements, are collated and recorded. This contributes towards maintaining their well-being and safety. Parents receive information about the setting in the information leaflet and regular newsletters. Children's records and assessments are always available for parents to view upon request, although this is not always promoted to parents effectively. Parents speak positively of the service the setting provides and of the staff in the setting. Children see these positive relationships between staff and parents, which supports their sense of emotional security.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. The provision obtains information from parents at the start of the early years education. However, parents' contribution to their child's initial developmental assessment is limited as information obtained mostly concerns physical and care needs. Furthermore assessment systems are not fully effective to include parents' accounts of their child's progress and some parents are unaware of the stepping stones and early learning goals that their children are progressing through. This lack of involvement limits the role of parents as educators. Parents do, however, report their children enjoy pre-school and they feel they are kept well informed.

Parents are provided with an informative booklet that contains guidance on the six areas of learning, activities and routines. Parents are kept informed about what their children have been doing during the sessions through informal discussions at the end of the session and a good relationship exists between parents and the staff. This assists in helping children feel secure. Further formal meetings each term with parents keep them generally informed of their child's progress. The records of progress contain many photographs which support parents who have English as an additional language.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy in the setting and their needs are met appropriately. There is a good level of qualified staff who work with the children and the adult to child ratio is met. Regular staff meetings ensure staff are being suitably developed and any issues in the pre-school can be addressed making sure children are provided with appropriate care and education. The manager has a clear vision that she wants to continue to enhance their practice to benefit children. The manager demonstrates an understanding of the group's strengths and weaknesses and has responded well to past recommendations to improve their practice. Recruitment and induction procedures in place ensure that new staff are suitably vetted before working with children and therefore children's safety is maintained. The written policies are implemented and promote the outcomes for children. The organisation of the environment is good, effectively using all areas of the building. Staff are very well deployed in order to ensure children receive appropriate

levels of support at activities. The staff work well as a team and the session runs smoothly. The required documentation is maintained to a good standard.

Leadership and management of funded children is good. The manager and staff are committed and professional in their approach to providing children with good early years play and learning experiences. They work closely together to ensure the day to day running of the pre-school goes smoothly and provide an environment for children to be happy and flourish. Good staffing ratios are maintained throughout the session ensuring children are well supervised and supported during play and learning activities. However, the monitoring systems in place are not fully effective in identifying the weaknesses in nursery education, for example recording children's progress in the areas of learning is sometimes sporadic. The manager has worked with the local authority in the past to develop the quality of nursery education and has a positive attitude in implementing strategies to enhance their practice which benefits the children's care and learning.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to ensure documentation meets current standards; that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice; request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment; ensure the complaints policy contains Ofsted's address and telephone number and review accessibility of the office area to increase children's safety. They were also asked to review the use of the key worker system to aid planning and assessment; review short term plans to clearly show what the children are intended to learn from the activity and how they will be challenged. Ensure focused activities cover all areas and relate to the stepping stones; that assessments are used to help plan for individual targets and inform the short term plans; provide more opportunities for children to write for a purpose in their free play and develop recognition of their name. The timetable of the day to provide a balance of child and adult-initiated play also needed reviewing.

All documentation in the setting meets current requirements, including permission to access emergency advice or treatment and a concise complaints policy which contains Ofsted's address and telephone number. Children have no access to the office, a safety catch positioned highly on the door is always used and furthermore children do not have access to the cloakroom in which the office is positioned without adult supervision. Children have access to a range of resources which promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice; staff have attended training in this area and the pre-school celebrates a wide range of cultures and festivals.

The key worker system is effective in ensuring children's nursery education needs are met. Focused activities include learning intentions and individual learning plans for each child acknowledge how children will be challenged to extend their learning. Planning effectively covers all areas of learning. Children have many opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, to engage in writing activities. The structure of the session means children can participate in free play and adult-led activities effectively. Parents receive some information regarding their children's progress, however this is not fully effective in keeping them fully involved on a continuous basis of their child's nursery education and requires 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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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 health and hygiene routines are promoted at all times by making sure children wash their hands and have access to soap.

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):

- improve information for parents regarding the Foundation Stage, how their children are progressing along the stepping stones and how parents are involved in their child's education
- review the systems in place for monitoring the continuous assessment of all children.

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