

Tadpoles Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509532
Inspection date	21 January 2008
Inspector	Penny Wood
Setting Address	Green Lane, Frogmore, Camberley, Surrey, GU17 0NY
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Registered person	Tadpoles Pre-School Group
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 satisfactory. 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?

Tadpoles Community Pre-school has been registered since 1997. It operates from a classroom on the site of Frogmore Infant School in Blackwater, Hampshire. Children enjoy access to an outdoor play area. The group operates five days a week during term-time only. Morning sessions operate between the hours of 08:45 and 11:30 and afternoon sessions operate from 12:45 to 15:30, with the exception of the Thursday afternoon session which operates from 12:15 to 15:00.

A maximum of 24 children aged between two and under five years old may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 75 children on roll, of which 55 are in receipt of funding for early years education. The group employs six members of staff, of which four hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing an appropriate understanding of hygiene routines which reduce the spread of germs and infections. They willingly wash their hands during the session, particularly after completing crafts and before eating, and they enjoy showing the staff how clean their hands are. Staff maintain good hygiene procedures during the day, ensuring the equipment and toys are suitable for children's use.

Staff follow the group's sickness policy in order to protect children from the spread of illness. Children benefit from the medical care they receive from staff that are trained in first aid. However, the group do not have written consent from parents to allow them to seek professional medical advice or treatment to ensure they follow parent's wishes should a serious accident occur. All health documentation is in place and completed with the required detail. Records are shared with parents ensuring they remain informed of events and the care children receive.

Children are physically active. They benefit from regular opportunities to use the outdoor area and the school hall. Good opportunities to enjoy the fresh air and to be physically active encourage children to develop their large muscle control and their co-ordination skills, particularly when using equipment such as the climbing frames, tricycles, balls and hoops. Children benefit from the good range of equipment available, including school resources which are suitable for the age range of children. Children move with spontaneity and control. When running around, they are gaining good control of their speed and direction; they avoid collisions with their friends by weaving their way around each other with skill.

Children enjoy a healthy snack of fruit during the session, which is provided by parents. Staff encourage children to develop their independence through pouring their own drinks, with support available to boost children's confidence when doing so. Snack time is a social time for the children, who enjoy sitting together in the snack bar, chatting freely about their play and experiences. Records of children's allergies ensure children only access foods that are suitable for their individual dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children confidently enter the pre-school which is prepared and ready for their arrival. The calm atmosphere and the good range of activities available promote a welcoming environment for the children. Staff regularly check the toys for hazards ensuring they are suitable for children to play with.

Daily and detailed annual risk assessments of the premises aid staff's awareness of potential hazards, with steps in place to ensure action is taken to minimise risk. Within the building and outdoor area, precautions are in place to reduce hazards, such as locks on cupboards, doors and playground gates in order to prevent children from accessing unsuitable areas. Children are developing an awareness of safety during activities. For example, they are reminded not to walk around with scissors in case they hurt themselves or others.

Regular practises of the emergency evacuation procedure, both in conjunction with the school and on their own initiation, ensure children are developing an awareness of the action to take

on hearing the fire alarm. The group practise the procedure on varying days of the week to ensure all staff and children experience the procedure and gain awareness.

Good strategies ensure staff are aware of the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child's safety and welfare. Records of concerns and existing injuries are completed in-line with the child protection policy in order to monitor children and to protect staff from allegations of abuse. Both the manager and deputy are confident in how to refer concerns to the relevant authority in order to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident within the calm pre-school environment. They enter with ease with support readily available from staff to encourage new children to quickly settle into the routines. They enjoy a good balance of adult led activities and those which they initiate themselves. Children approach the range of activities with enthusiasm and enjoy exploring the storage units which contain a wide range of further toys and activities. Activities and resources are age appropriate, with all children happily occupied throughout the session. However, the group do not currently have a system to record the younger children's development prior to commencing their nursery education at three years old to ensure all children are making appropriate progress.

The high ratios of staff ensure children receive very good support during their play and activities. Staff move effectively to support children, yet allow children who are involved in their play time to explore at their own leisure. Children benefit from consistent levels of praise and encouragement which boosts their self-esteem.

Children readily engage each other and staff in discussion, encouraging the development of their language skills. Staff's good questioning techniques encourage children to respond both using single word answers and answers which require the construction of a sentence. Furthermore, questions encourage children to develop their cognitive skills through using their thought processes to reason and predict. For example, staff asked children to suggest what would happen if they used a sieve as a hat when it rained, to which children excitedly replied that she would get wet because it has holes in it.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from a good range of child centred opportunities which cover all areas of learning. As a result they are making good progress within the Foundation Stage. Good systems are in place to document children's learning, for example, through planned and spontaneous observations of them at play and through the reflective journal. Individual development records reflect each child's progress. At the end of the term, staff review children's progress, with areas for future development identified for each child.

Children are keen participants in activities, whether independently or within a group. They are developing good relationships with each other and are happy to join together for group activities. The enthusiastic presentation of activities such as story time gains children's attention and adds interest. For example, the introduction of props which staff gather together with children's help allows them to participate in stories and adds a visual element for the children to follow. Those children who struggle to settle for long periods are appropriately occupied, reducing any negative impact of the group as a whole.

Children are developing high levels of independence, such as pouring their own drinks, to putting on and hanging up their aprons when participating in craft activities. Children are confident, which at times is promoted through the sensitive provision of activities, such as providing an opticians role play area as a result of children beginning to wear glasses.

When playing a snail racing board game they throw dice, matching the di colours to pieces on the board and moving the snails the corresponding number of places. They confidently use mathematical language, such as long and short, and compare words for big, such as enormous and massive. Children enjoy using programmable equipment, moving a robot bee from one shape to another. On the computer, they are able to match an object to an outline shape, gaining very good hand-eye co-ordination skills when using the mouse.

Children enjoy using their exploratory skills. They roll cars down slopes, reasoning why one car moves faster than another and establishing that the cars won't roll when the board is flat. They use their imaginations well, replicating real life activities such as role play in an opticians, with children trying on different glasses as the patient and the optician writing notes with a pad and pen.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are developing a strong sense of belonging to the group. For example, they each have their own named coat peg and are comfortable with the daily routines. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their surroundings, and when signalled by staff through several loud claps that play time is over, they help to tidy up.

Children are developing an awareness of the world around them through the celebration of cultural festivals and a good range of resources which depict positive images of race, gender and disability. Good strategies ensure children's individual needs are met. For example, staff visit each child in their home and gain comprehensive information about a child's disposition, abilities, likes and dislikes prior to joining the group in order to be able to provide appropriate levels of care. Clear strategies ensure children with additional needs are welcomed and suitably included within the group.

Children behave well because of the support they receive from staff, the interesting range of activities available and because of the age appropriate strategies and rules used to manage their behaviour. Group rules are supported by a display of photographs showing children helping to tidy up, listening during a group activity and being helpful and kind to others. Staff actively encourage children to share and take turns, welcoming children to join ongoing games and activities.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive clear information regarding the group's policies, routines and the provision of nursery education within a prospectus. Helpful hints on joining the pre-school offer parents information regarding the availability of books which can be taken home for parents to read with their child, contributions children are able make to 'show and tell' and where to find information such as the policies and procedures. Staff complete a reflective journal of each day supported by photographs of the children during the session, which is available for parents at home time. However, parents who use a childminder or extended family to collect their child from pre-school do not have information about their child's day readily available to them. Parents are welcomed to open events whereby they are

able to discuss their child's development. The group are beginning to develop systems to extend children's learning at home, although this is not consistently part of their weekly routine. The group have good systems in place regarding the management of concerns raised by parents. For example, through their complaints policy and the system for recording complaints received in writing. However, this system does not routinely record which National Standard the complaint refers to and does not maintain confidentiality.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the high ratios of staff, most of which hold a relevant early year's qualification. Good recruitment and induction procedures ensure staff are suitable to work with children and aware of their role and responsibilities. Staff deploy themselves effectively within the room, moving to where children benefit from their presence. The room is well organised, with defined areas for play and activities, such as a home corner, craft area and a snack bar. All regulatory documentation regarding the children is in place and most maintain confidentiality. Children's records are stored securely, and requested documentation is readily available.

The management committee is active within the group, organising fundraising events and holding regular meetings to discuss issues and changes within the group's policies and procedures. However, the requirement to submit relevant documentation to the regulator (Ofsted) regarding changes within the management structure does not meet with regulatory requirements. As a result, the regulator is not aware of who forms the legal body responsible for the group and the required checks are not initiated to ensure those concerned are suitable to be involved within a childcare provision.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager and staff work well as a team when providing nursery education. All undergo an appraisal process in order to address issues in practice and to recognise staff's strengths. Staff undergo regular training opportunities, particularly in-house and in conjunction with their advisory teacher. The group are open to input from external agencies in order to improve the quality and experiences for children. Management have systems in place to review and evaluate the provision of nursery education, with recent new initiatives put in place to introduce a child centred learning environment. The group have developed good relationships with the adjoining school in order to prepare and smooth children's transition into the reception class.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group have made improvements within their provision based on the recommendations that were raised at the last inspection.

At the last inspection for care the group were asked to develop the programme of support for children who speak English as an additional language. The new manager has clear strategies on how the group would support children, such as liaising with the parents regarding familiar words in the child's own language, to seeking support from an external agency. At the last inspection for nursery education the group were asked to review the organisation of group sessions to ensure that children do not sit for periods which are overly long. During this inspection the group times were well managed, with most children engaged in the activity. Children who struggled to maintain concentration were appropriately occupied elsewhere reducing the disruption to the group, whilst meeting the child's individual needs.

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 written consent is gained from parents to allow further medical advice or treatment to be sought in an emergency
- improve the system for recording complaints received in writing to ensure the record contains all the required detail and confidentiality is maintained
- continue to develop the systems for monitoring the younger children's progress and development in-line with the Birth to three matters framework
- ensure the committee adhere to regulatory requirements, particularly the prompt notification to Ofsted of changes within the management structure.

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):

- continue to develop the systems for sharing information with parents and extending children's learning at home.

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