

Stoke Damerel Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 117155 |
| Inspection date | 14 March 2008 |
| Inspector | Julie Wright |
| Setting Address | Rear Of Stoke Damerel Church, Paradise Road, Stoke, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 5QL |
| Telephone number | 01752 605390 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Stoke Damerel Pre-School |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Full day 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stoke Damerel Pre-School opened in 1979. It is managed by a parent committee and operates from the parish rooms at the rear of Stoke Damerel Church, in Stoke, Plymouth. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local community.

The pre-school is registered to care for up to 26 children aged between two and five years, at any one time. There are currently 59 children on roll, who attend for a variety of sessions. This includes 45 children who are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 09.00 until 15.00, during school term times. The group supports children who have English as an additional language.

There are seven staff employed to work with the children, all of whom have relevant early year's qualifications. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted through the implementation of relevant policies and procedures. For example, the clear sickness policy and suitable nappy changing practise prevent the risk of cross-infection for children. Staff encourage children to develop independent skills and follow good hygiene routines. Children learn about dental care during a topic, which includes a visit from a dentist. Accident and medication details are appropriately maintained to promote the safety and welfare of children. The majority of staff have a current first aid qualification.

Children take turns to have their snack in small groups. They look for their seat at the table, identified by individual place names. Children help to pour their own drinks, which promotes independence and coordination. However, children are served with prepared bowls of food, which limits their personal choice and the opportunities to help with simple tasks. Some of the children bring a packed lunch for the extended sessions. Staff have Food Hygiene certificates, although there are inconsistencies in hygiene practise. For instance, tables are cleaned prior to meal times and children eat from their lunch boxes. However, they are not given plates and some children place their food directly onto the table. Sufficient staff supervise the children at lunch time, although they do not take opportunities to promote learning for children.

Children benefit from outdoor play and enjoy going for local walks in the fresh air. They bring wellies so that they can play out in wet conditions. Staff provide a suitable range of equipment to promote physical skills and coordination. For example, children use wheeled toys, hoola-hoops and play action games with the parachute. They have access to a variety of tools and equipment which develop hand to eye coordination and fine motor skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure and welcoming environment. They are greeted by staff and are happy to come in. Children are familiar with the setting and show confidence as they move around. The main room and resources are suitably organised for children and they quickly engage in play. The office also provides space for small groups of children to take part in a specific activity. For instance, to encourage children's speech and language development. Areas are defined to link with the areas of learning and promote children's general development. For example, creative, imaginative and construction resources are readily accessible. The book area is comfortable and children enjoy having stories with a member of staff. However, at times the noise levels in the rest of the room are not conducive to children listening and concentrating. The premises and resources are maintained in a suitable condition.

Children become aware of safety in topics which involve visits from the police and the fire service. Children begin to understand about 'stranger danger' and road safety. Suitable evacuation procedures are in place and children take part in regular fire drills. Staff complete risk assessments to minimise hazards to children. They make daily visual checks to ensure that play areas are maintained safe.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the staff have a satisfactory understanding of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. They attend relevant training to ensure that their

knowledge and information is up to date. There is a policy handbook which provides parents with the relevant information on protecting children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop warm relationships with staff and are generally well stimulated during the session. They are familiar with the basic routine, which provide times for free play, some structured activities and outdoor play. Children respond well to staff and understand which groups they should join when prompted. For example, the colour coded groups at snack time. They willingly and enthusiastically join large group activities, such as for singing and action rhymes. Children make independent choices in where they want to play and have a suitable variety of activities. However, learning is not consistently promoted with staff interaction. For example, for some children the free play periods are too long and they become less constructive in their play. In the structured activities, with staff attention, children are focussed and interested. At these times children have more benefit as their learning is encouraged and supported.

Children form friendships with each other and play reasonably well together. Some of them confidently organise themselves as a group and play together imaginatively. For example, they pretend they are driving a vehicle and then play in the 'home corner'. They select dressing up clothes and run around pretending to be a favourite character. There are intermittent periods of constructive play and a calm atmosphere, although these are not maintained throughout the session. Staff plan a suitable programme of activities in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning indicates age-appropriate activities, which relate to current themes and topics and promote children's interest.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In some areas staff provide suitable levels of support to children's learning and development. At times they interact well with them and encourage children's thinking and understanding. For example, during creative play children talk about colours and the materials they are using. When staff organise group activities the children are actively engaged, although at other times their learning is incidental and not fully promoted. Opportunities to consolidate children's learning are not consistently provided. For instance, staff take children individually or in small groups to do number recognition activities. Children then play independently, but there are limited opportunities to further promote mathematical development. Staff make observations on the children and maintain assessment records of development.

Children develop confidence and are sociable in the pre-school setting. At circle time children listen and take turns to speak, for example when they look at the weather and days of the week. However, this is not done on a daily basis. They enjoy stories and interact well as they re-enact a popular tale. Children use a variety of writing materials and begin to understand that print has meaning. There are signs, pictures and symbols around the room. Toy boxes and drawers are labelled with words and pictures so that children can select independently. Children learn their own names as they begin to recognise familiar letters and then link letters to sounds.

Children become familiar with numbers as they count in songs, stories and some organised activities. Although, in general free play mathematical development is not consistently promoted. Children have access to appropriate resources which encourage the use mathematical language.

For example, they can fill and pour from containers in the sand. They use construction toys to make towers and interlocking lines, however, without staff attention they do not actively consider capacity, measure, compare or calculate. Staff do not consistently encourage mathematical development in everyday activities, for example at snack or lunch time.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world in a variety of activities. They have access to technological equipment and can discover how things work. For example, some children skilfully operate the computer and control the mouse carefully. However, not all children are competent and require adult support. Staff are not consistently aware of this or available to provide the attention when required. Children enjoy pretending to take photographs with the toy cameras. In the role play area they show their understanding as they play with replica appliances. Themes and topics promote children's interest in people, places and nature. These include visits from persons in the community or outings for children, such as a trip to the local aquarium.

Children take part in a suitable range of activities which promote physical skills and development. They often play outside with age-appropriate resources. Children show a clear sense of space in music and movement sessions or action games. They develop competence in their control of scissors and writing materials. Hand to eye coordination develops as children thread objects onto laces.

Children express themselves with the use of musical instruments and sing songs from memory. The role play area is occasionally resourced to link with a topic, although it is mainly a 'home corner', used freely by children. Some of them play constructively and imaginatively, however, at times others become disruptive. Children concentrate well in creative activities and are pleased with their achievements. They use various media and manipulate malleable materials into different shapes, such as dough.

Overall, children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals, given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are discussed with parents and staff know the children well. Regular discussions take place to promote their consistent care. Children begin to see similarities and differences within different communities and cultures. They have access to a suitable range of resources which promote equal opportunities. They see posters and displays around the room which reflect different cultures, religions and scripts. A number of children speak English as an additional language. Staff seek key words of the parent's first language for some of the children, however, these are not used in the session. Staff have some dual language books for children, which helps to promote inclusion.

Children understand the routines and follow simple instructions. They respond immediately when staff ring a bell which signals them to stop and listen. Children quickly form into groups when asked and are willing to participate. They are generally cooperative and reasonably well behaved, although some children become noisy and disruptive in their behaviour. Staff describe some suitable methods to manage behaviour, including the provision of external support and advice. However, not all of the strategies are thoroughly effective. For example, staff intervene at appropriate times to diffuse a situation or ask children to be less noisy. Staff then return to an activity leaving the potentially boisterous children to continue. Reward stickers are given

to each child after 'tidy up' time in recognition of their help. Although, not all of the children contribute or help, so they have less understanding of the purpose of the reward. Staff promote children's self-esteem as they use positive language during the session to praise and encourage them. Children's social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development is fostered in the setting.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff promote positive working relationships and have good communication with parents. They provide relevant information on the childcare policies and procedures. There is a notice board and regular newsletters, which inform parents of children's activities and events. Parents are invited to contribute towards resources and become members of the committee. There are some opportunities for parents to be involved in children's learning. For example, some children take books home which helps parents to be included in a literacy project. Parents provide photographs for the children's development record and children occasionally bring items from home, such as a teddy for their 'Teddy Bears Picnic'. Effective introductory procedures are in place and parents appreciate the 'open days', when they discuss children's progress. They are aware that staff make observations on the children, however, they do not have opportunities to contribute towards the on-going records of assessment. Parents provide positive feedback and value the care given.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff plan suitable activities and provide a variety of resources for children. Although, the organisation and implementation of the programme is not consistently effective. Staff to child ratios are above minimum requirements, however, staff are not always effectively deployed to ensure consistent support to children. For example, at times several staff may be doing tasks, such as clearing up and preparing, leaving one member of staff directly with the children. Staff are simultaneously involved in activities with small groups of children, which means that in other areas children have limited staff interaction and support.

Staff monitor and evaluate their provision at team meetings and appraisals. Training needs are identified and they attend relevant courses to update their knowledge and awareness. The setting is working towards a recognised Quality Assurance award. Staff are fund raising in order to develop 'free flow' play for children and improve access to outdoor play. Vetting and recruitment procedures are in place, however, these are not sufficiently robust to fully ensure that children are cared for by suitable persons. Records and documentation are appropriately organised and maintained in suitable order. These contribute to the health, safety and welfare of the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure that the registration arrangements show when children, staff and visitors are present, and organise the daily programme to ensure that children are kept fully occupied. Since then staff have improved the registration system to ensure that the required information is recorded. Staff have reorganised snack times to ensure that children do not have to queue or wait for long periods.

Key issues from the nursery education inspection were to improve the organisation of the daily routines to ensure that children are not left unoccupied, or waiting for the next activity for unnecessary lengths of time. To ensure children have enough opportunities to use the creative

resources without adult direction or intervention, and to use practical activities in the daily routine to encourage children to calculate and solve simple problems. Since then staff have made some amendment to the routines, although a further recommendation is made. Children show their individual creativity as they have independent access to creative materials. Staff have put up signs and numbers to show children how many can play in a specific area. Children can then work out if there is a space or an apron available to use. However, other opportunities for children to calculate and problem solve are limited.

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- improve the vetting and recruitment procedures to ensure the health suitability of staff
- improve the arrangements at snack and lunch times to ensure consistent food hygiene practice and provide learning opportunities for children
- develop the opportunities for children to become aware of and have respect for each other's culture and language, to further promote inclusion.

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):

- further develop the opportunities for parents to be involved in children's learning and also to contribute to the on-going records of assessment (also applies to care)
- improve the organisation and deployment of staff, the routines and structure of the session, to ensure that the programme of activities is effectively implemented and that children are consistently and constructively occupied (also applies to care).

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