

Whitchurch Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106278
Inspection date	03 March 2008
Inspector	Joyce Bowler
Setting Address	Whitchurch CP School, School Road, Whitchurch, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 9SR
Telephone number	07812 856353
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Whitchurch Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Whitchurch Pre-school registered in 1994 and has been running for over 25 years. It operates from a building in the grounds of Whitchurch Community Primary School. The setting is led by a committee of parents and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The group has sole use of the building when operating and shares the premises with a toddler group and the after-school club which is included in this registration. The after school club known as 'WACY' is managed by a sub committee of the pre-school committee. There is a secure outdoor play area. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times from 09.15 to 11.45 and is registered to care for up to 26 children aged from two to five years. Currently, there are 34 children enrolled, 32 of whom are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The after school club runs from 15.20 to 18.00, Monday to Friday for up to 16 children aged from five to eight years. The setting has six members of staff working in the pre-school, five of whom have early years qualifications. Both groups welcome children who have learning difficulties, physical disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted by staff, all of whom hold first aid qualifications. This indicates that children's minor injuries would be treated appropriately. A first aid box is kept in the play room and an additional kit is kept for use outdoors and on outings. Children's health is protected by the recording of medication together with permissions from parents for staff to seek emergency medical advice and treatment. Accidents and incidents are recorded accurately and promote confidentiality for each family. Children's health needs are protected by staff who follow good hygiene procedures in order to prevent the spread of infection, for example, they check the fridge temperature daily. All children wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. They routinely use the wash hand basin in the playroom after messy play, such as planting with compost. Children use disposable paper towels to dry their hands which limits the risk of cross contamination. Staff working at the pre-school and the after school club have access to suitable cleaning products and disposable gloves for dealing with accidents and spills.

Children's dietary requirements are followed and staff provide a good range of snacks mid-way through the morning sessions. Children are provided with a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables together with a plain biscuit and a small amount of protein, such as cubes of cheese, to keep their energy levels up. The after school club children enjoy a healthy snack which sustains them until teatime at home. They have a choice from foods in four food groups, carbohydrate, protein, fruit and vegetables and occasional sweet or savoury treats. Both providers avoid the use of over processed foods with additives. Children have access to fresh drinking water throughout sessions.

The pre-school provides very good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. There is a good range of physical activities on offer which contribute to their good health. They have regular access to fresh air in the enclosed outside space. Use of equipment, such as bikes, scooters, push along toys, balancing stilts and a climbing frame, enables children to develop their large muscle groups. Activities, such as gardening, cookery, art and craft and learning to use writing materials helps children to develop manual dexterity. The indoor room is large enough for energetic and large group activities, for example, playing parachute games when poor weather prevents outside play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe at the pre-school as staff implement risk prevention procedures effectively. They maintain a written risk assessment document and this covers activities, equipment and areas used. Children are protected by measures to reduce risks and these include good front and side door security, recording of visitors, use of radiator covers, exclusion from the kitchen, use of socket covers and maintaining good staff ratios when children are playing indoors and out. All cleaning materials are kept out of children's reach. Children are learning to keep themselves safe as they are reminded to walk down the stairs to the outdoor play area by holding on to the rail. They are reminded to be careful when they leave the premises with parents and are learning basic road safety awareness. Areas are used well to provide safe access to floor play, table top activities and messy play. Staff have plans to create a shaded area outside and improved access via a ramp when sufficient funds can be raised. Children are able to access resources safely. Most of these are set out before children arrive, however, there is

further equipment in low level storage behind curtains. Other equipment is stored in a cupboard which is out of bounds to children owing to the height of the shelves. The emergency evacuation procedure is displayed and fire drills are recorded. Safe collection procedures are in place to ensure that children are collected by nominated persons only.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the pre-school has a clear statement of procedures to follow in the event of a child protection concern. This includes what to do in case of an allegation against a staff member. Procedures are in line with guidance set out by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children join in and play happily together at the pre-school. They benefit from a well balanced Foundation Stage programme which encourages them to explore a variety of activities and to learn as they play. Children respond well to the friendly and approachable staff team who offer support during play as necessary. Children are actively engaged throughout sessions and the happy and relaxed atmosphere is conducive to them learning and making friends. The after school club offers a variety of activities which include games, craft, active play and opportunities to have fun together as well as the chance to relax at the end of a long school day. Children enjoy dressing up, group games and outdoor play and have their own range of equipment as well as some shared with the pre-school. Currently, they are hoping to sell the football table in order to buy a multi-games table which children have expressed an interest in.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and finding out and this is fostered by staff who provide a stimulating range of activities and themed work. Written plans show a good balance across the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Photographs illustrate past activities and events and it is evident that both staff and children enjoy exploring themes. These are supported effectively by appropriate resources and equipment. Current planning has been adapted to cover the Early Years Foundation Stage which is to replace the current national framework in September 2008. Medium term plans show how themes, such as spring and dinosaurs, are broken down for each age group with examples of activities, ideas for help from home and the use of resources. The short term plans include the six areas of learning, core activities, learning outcomes and adult involvement. It is possible to see that the planning in use is equally effective under the current framework. A new style of assessment is being established. This details how children are progressing across the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in each area of learning. The new system is beginning to show a balanced picture of children's progress and staff have noted that it will be easier to identify any gaps, areas requiring extra challenges and the individual needs of specific children. Staff demonstrate skill when managing the sessions and adopt a flexible approach which best suits the moods and interests of each group of children attending the session. For example, the daily routine may be changed to offer outdoor play earlier and story time can be adapted to help children to learn to sit and listen for longer periods. Staff support stories with puppets and resources which help children to concentrate and to be involved. Each activity and area is supported by written information notes for staff, volunteers, parent helpers and students to use to understand the learning intentions and adult roles.

There is a good emphasis on children developing their personal, social and emotional development. Staff focus on helping children to develop personal confidence, to behave well

and to learn how to play cooperatively and to take turns. Children show progress and are able to learn to play independently, to make choices and to enjoy social opportunities at snack time. Most activities and resources are chosen and set out by the staff team and there are limited opportunities for children to self select. Although children may request other toys, games and equipment and can access it from under the curtained storage they tend to make choices from the prepared room. There are some resources set out in open storage for free choice, for example, games to promote maths skills, but children are not routinely consulted to inform planning or the selection of equipment and activities. Children's communication, language and literacy is developed very well. Conversation is encouraged and children enjoy airing their own thoughts and ideas during circle time, at snack and when engaged in play. For example, discussing what it is that plants need to grow and what happens next in the Jack and the beanstalk story. Staff incorporate simple signing as an aid to communication during play. Children are able to link sounds to letters and are learning the first sounds of their own and others names. They have ample opportunities to draw and to label work and early writing tasks encourage good pencil control. Maths skills are integrated well throughout sessions and additional planned activities focus on specific skills, such as weighing, comparing and problem solving. Children are using maths language relating to size and position during construction play. They are learning to recognise numbers and to count, for example when singing action rhymes ,such as 'Five currant buns' and counting numbers of children and adults present at register time. They are learning to sequence events by watching the changing seasons and by following the lifecycle of a frog. They have access to a large tank of developing tadpoles and the surrounding nature table is resourced well with books and objects to support their learning. Children's art and craft work is displayed around the room. It is evident that they have access to a good variety of media and have created individual collages and group work to exhibit as part of planned theme work. Singing forms part of the everyday routine and children are familiar with a selection of rhymes and songs which they sing together with energy and enthusiasm. There are very good opportunities provided for children to develop their imaginations and to enjoy role play. The 'home corner' is often transformed into a play situation which is linked to the current theme and is well resourced. Most recently it has been a flower shop and currently is a garden centre complete with plants, seeds, vegetables and tools ready to be bought and sold. Children are learning about the world around them via planned themes. These often relate to children's interests, such as dinosaurs, and incorporate local events, people and celebrations which children can relate to. Children have explored their local environment and created models of their homes and places of interest in Tavistock. This included a local coffee shop which was recreated outside. Photographs and written plans illustrate that staff create a very good range of activities which are supported by stimulating resources for this area of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are helped to settle in and to feel welcome at the pre-school as staff work closely with parents and carers to provide appropriate care. Staff obtain comprehensive information from parents on registration forms and the newly introduced, 'All about me' forms. These are also used to inform planning for each child. Children settle in well as parents are encouraged to visit with their child on taster sessions. Many children are already familiar with the building as they have attended the toddler group with parents. As this is a community group parents are invited to help at the group with younger children. This helps new children to become familiar with staff, premises and the routines. Children demonstrate that they are aware of procedures at the group and routinely follow self registration on arrival, are able to get their own drinks when thirsty and know what to do at tidy up time. The equal opportunities policy is implemented in

practice as staff respect and value each family's differences. They reflect local customs and celebrations in their annual calendar as well as those from other cultures. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There is a well established procedure in place to support children with additional needs and those for whom English is an additional language. A special needs coordinator, or SENCO, is appointed. The SENCO liaises closely with parents and carers as well as allied education and health agencies to ensure that children's individual needs are met. Staff monitor children's progress effectively in order to identify any learning difficulties or physical disabilities at the earliest stage. Home links are extended for children with additional needs and appropriate support is offered. For example, children with limited speech and language are aided by use of pictures to enable them to communicate with staff and to let parents know what they have been doing at the pre-school each day.

Children's behaviour is monitored well and staff are aware of the changing dynamics of the group and the different approaches necessary for children according to their ages and stages of maturity. Staff ensure that sessions reflect the needs of each group of children. For example, children who are more energetic and enjoy lots of active play are given opportunities to explore this by use of free access to the outside area and whole group games. In order to balance this out staff build in short sessions of quieter activities for these children in order to help them to develop their concentration skills. In this way good behaviour levels are maintained by meeting children's needs and helping them to play well in a group. Any disruptive behaviour is minimised to the benefit of all children. Children respond well to requests to help at tidy up time and staff act as good role models by helping them to join in.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff build good working relationships with parents and value the information which is shared. They have recently introduced 'All about me' sheets which provide vital extra information to that obtained on the registration forms. This improves links between home and the pre-school. An excellent prospectus supports the work carried out at the pre-school. It provides parents with comprehensive information about the group in a clear and user friendly format and includes good quality information regarding the Foundation Stage. This is backed up by regular newsletters over the course of the year and when specific news needs to be exchanged, for example, on the introduction of the key person system. Permissions from parents are obtained to ensure that children are cared for in accordance with parents' wishes. These include permissions for first aid, emergency treatment, taking of photographs, going on walks and to outside events. There is an effective exchange of information at drop off and collection times. Parents are aware that formal written assessments are made on their children and that these may be viewed at any time. The notice board in the foyer contains information which relates to the pre-school, the after school club and local events and information. It includes photographs of all staff and a complete list of all policies and procedures available. A written complaints procedure is shared with parents, however the contact details for Ofsted are out of date.

The after school club ensures that good links are maintained between themselves, the school and parents. Staff are aware of children's behaviour at school and their individual play needs and interests. Parents receive a welcome pack and the committee meeting minutes are displayed on the club notice board. Staff have obtained parents' email addresses in order to improve communications. This is especially relevant for busy parents who may be short of time when collecting children at the end of the day.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children in both the pre-school and after school club are cared for by staff who are suitably qualified and vetted. This includes any relief staff. Staff update their knowledge by attending training. Records show that staff have attended courses recently on the Early Years Foundation Stage, making observations and the code of practice for children with additional needs. The after school club staff have links with the local play work advisers and the pre-school liaises with local authority Foundation Stage and child care support staff. Both settings have operational plans in place. All policies and procedures required by registration are in place. The attendance registers are maintained correctly, showing accurate times of arrival and departure, and ratios are adhered to. The registration certificate is displayed.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. A committee of parents leads the pre-school and a sub-committee runs the after school club. Both committees delegate the everyday running of the settings to the staff who work directly with the children. The pre-school committee is responsible for all employment issues, fund raising and the quality and content of information provided to parents. An administrator is employed. The pre-school annual general meeting is due and all policies and procedures are being reviewed in advance in order for them to be adopted at this meeting. There is no staff appraisal system in place which limits the effective evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-school. The committee has a history of successful fund raising since the last inspection which has resulted in improvements to the outside area and equipment. The management of the pre-school is overseen by the staff at the group. They meet regularly and are able to identify improvements needed to raise standards of care and education in the group. For example, they are evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum. There is no written staff induction procedure, however staff offer friendly and helpful support to students and volunteers throughout sessions to enable them to understand their roles and responsibilities and to become familiar with routines.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to address issues relating to staff qualifications, documentation and record keeping. An action plan was devised to ensure that staff hold appropriate qualifications and that there is always a member of staff present who is qualified to level 3. Parents countersign accident records and all fire drills are recorded. Information regarding both the pre-school and after school club is accurate and there is a procedure in place to follow in case of a child being lost.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to improve the information provided to parents and the system for assessing children's progress. The prospectus now includes comprehensive information regarding the Foundation Stage which enables parents to learn about the curriculum provided. Further details are displayed on the notice boards. The assessment system has been reviewed and although the current system is in its infancy it does show how children are progressing across the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

As a result of actions taken, all issues have been addressed in full resulting in improvements to organisation, record keeping and the partnership with parents.

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 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 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):

- provide parents and carers with up to date contact details for Ofsted

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):

- develop further opportunities for children to grow in independence by self selecting activities and resources
- establish a staff appraisal system.

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