

Plumstead Common Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509637
Inspection date	06 March 2008
Inspector	Marcia Robinson
Setting Address	65 Admaston Road, Plumstead, London, SE18 2TX
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Registered person	Plumstead Common 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 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?

Plumstead Common Pre-school is a registered charity, owned and managed by an elected parent committee. It opened in 1983 and operates from a church hall with access to a kitchen and toilet facilities. A fully enclosed garden is also available for outside play. The pre-school is situated in the London Borough of Greenwich and serves the local community.

The pre-school is open for two sessions, each weekday from 09:15 to 12:15 and 12:15 to 14:30, during term time only. They are registered to care for 24 children from three to under five years. There are currently 24 children on roll, of these 22 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs, and children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs six staff of whom four, including the manager hold early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and hygiene needs are promoted very well, this is because staff ensure that the premises and toys are maintained to a good standard of hygiene. Through staff promoting consistent routines and positive role modelling, children are developing good levels of awareness and are able to be independent in their personal care. For example, children have easy access to liquid soap and paper towels and they use a platform step to reach the wash hand basin, in the toilets. Staff remind children to wash their hands before snacks, although children automatically wash their hands after using the toilet. Children's understanding of the procedure for hand washing is further supported by a pictorial display in the toilets. This is particularly useful as a reminder to children that washing their hands reduces the risk of infection and cross contamination.

Children's health is also promoted well by staff who implement good hygiene procedures in the kitchen when preparing and storing food. For example, fruit and vegetables are washed before they are served and some staff hold food hygiene certificates, which supports good health and hygiene practices. Hygienic nappy changing arrangements are minimising the risk of cross infection and children who are sick or infectious, stay at home, helping to protect the health of all the children. The staff have the knowledge to respond appropriately if children have an accident as the majority of them are trained to administer first aid. This is supported by suitably stocked first aid kits for use in the kitchen and children's play room, including one which is taken on outings. Clear records are kept in respect of accidents and medication and these are shared with parents and carers.

Children make the most of fresh air and have good opportunities to develop their physical skills to develop healthy bodies. They have free flowing access between the indoors and outdoors, where staff set up a good range of interesting activities and apparatus, such as climbing frames, clip boards, balls, hoops and imaginative play areas using boxes, tubes and foam pipes. The provision for physical and outdoor play is well planned for within the Foundation Stage for the setting. Children are active or restful through choice, in-line with their individual needs and parents and carers wishes. This is further promoted with a cosy and comfortable book corner that is carpeted and equipped with small cushions.

They learn to make healthy choices in what they eat through the 'café' style snack system. Children choose when to have their snack, indicating they have done so by finding their name labels. They decide what plate and cup to use and develop skills as they pour their own milk or water. They choose from a healthy and balanced range of snacks, including crackers and a good selection of raw vegetables or fruit which is arranged attractively on a centre plate. The social occasion as children sit together, with a member of staff, encourages language and confidence in talking about preferences and their home lives. Consequently, their well-being is promoted. Children take part in imaginative food related activities, such as making vegetable soup. A display board showing children and staff engaged in a food tasting session using exotic fruits such as papaya, forms part of the group's healthy eat policy and promotes good lifestyle habits. Children are encouraged to spread their own crackers with butter or cheese spread, pour their own drinks and put their cups in a bowl when they have finished drinking. Fresh drinking water is freely available to children from a water station, throughout the session. Consequently, children are learning to be aware of their thirst needs and their self-help skills are positively promoted. Relevant documentation with regard to health, including consents

and effective procedures in place to ensure that children with special dietary requirements are well catered for, are in place and up to date. These positively safeguards children's well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The pre school is bright and welcoming to children, parents and visitors. A well presented notice board with useful information about the setting, posters and photographs of the children in their activities, creates a child-friendly atmosphere. Children benefit from playing in premises that are well maintained, with large enough windows, to enable children to benefit from natural light and fresh air whilst playing indoors. Children participate in activities fully as furniture and equipment are of an appropriate size. These include a paint easel, sand tray and low tables and chairs. Regular checks and cleaning routines keep the very good range of toys and resources in good condition, which promotes children's safe play.

Children are kept secure while on the premises, because the front door is locked throughout the session and a member of staff remains at the entrance to greet parents and carers on their arrival and departure. A password system is also used to ensure that children can only be collected by authorised persons. Good levels of supervision and appropriate safety equipment is in place, including electrical socket covers, a safety gate and guarded radiators. The pre school has a comprehensive health and safety policy in place to ensure that staff and parents are familiar with procedures for keeping children safe. For example, staff conduct daily safety checks and regular risk assessments of both the indoor and outdoor areas, to ensure the premises are maintained to a generally good standard of safety. However, one aspect of safety has been overlooked. This is in the garden, where there is a low level bench to prevent children from gaining unsupervised access to the shed and garden tools. However, this precaution, is not sufficiently secure to ensure children's safety is fully promoted. Children's knowledge about personal safety is encouraged by gentle reminders from staff to not run around while eating as they could hurt themselves, road safety activities and regular fire drill practises. This positively contributes to children developing a sense of danger so they learn how to keep themselves safe. All required documentation, including safeguarding, lost and uncollected children procedures as well as attendance registers for children and staff, are in place, which contributes to children's safety.

Children are well protected as all members of staff hold an up-to-date Criminal Record Board Disclosure. They demonstrate a good understanding of child abuse and of their role and responsibility for recording and reporting concerns in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The group's child protection policy is up to date and includes procedures to be taken should an allegation be made against a member of staff. Consequently, children are safeguarded well.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly and happily on arrival at the pre school and show familiarity with the routines, such as sitting at the table to eat their snack. They enthusiastically and eagerly participate in the variety of activities provided. Some examples include completing jigsaws, sharing books and building with a selection of construction toys. Children freely move from one area to another and are spontaneous in their play and interactions with other children and adults. The carefully chosen resources, such as large cardboard boxes, foam tubes and the play

castle are fun and sufficiently challenging, which helps to develop appropriate levels of concentration. The planning of activities and experiences is led by the children's play and interests and includes a very good balance of child-centred and adult-led experiences. This has a positive impact on the range of play and learning opportunities provided. The staff have recognised that the system used until recently, to record children's progress was not completely effective. The new system of observing children and evaluating these observations to inform future planning, is developing well. An example, of this is where the group are currently working on linking the planning of activities and recording of children's development with the Birth to three matters framework, for children under three. This has a positive impact on adapting the planned activities to meet individual needs. Staff interact really well with the children through plenty of open ended questioning. They are in tune with the needs of the children and show a good understanding that sometimes, children need to explore and play independently. Trips to places of interest within the local community broaden children's experiences. An example of this is a visit to the woods where the children recently went as part of their adopt a tree project. Children delight in using their imagination, for instance, when singing Old McDonald, they pretend to Oink like pigs. A variety of creative activities, including painting and making jelly promote self-expression whilst having fun. Children use counting and numbers well in everyday play situations. An example of this is where they count the cups at snack time. The children are happy and confident, involved and interested in their play, helping them to thrive in the setting.

Nursery Education.

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and its implementation. They clearly explain how they support children's learning through a wide range of play experiences, both inside and outside. Planning covers each of the six areas of learning, which is reflected in the short, medium and long term plans. The staff are generally clear about the purpose of the activities available, although the teaching and learning intentions of focus and adult led activities lack in-depth detail, such as relevant questions and vocabulary that are required to support children's learning. In addition, planning does not cover the aspects of the early learning goals, which means that areas of learning could be lost or they may not be covered in enough detail. Staff however, are starting to evaluate children's progress and plot their progress on the stepping stones assessment. They frequently record observations of the children's achievements and they in turn are consistently transferred to the children's assessments and are used to inform planning for the next steps for children's individual learning.

The environment is arranged into different areas where children are able to keenly extend their play through the readily accessible resources, for instance they will bring additional resources, such as gloop into the role play area. This encourages free choice and independence. Children use their imagination well where this is further extended into purposeful play. For example, whilst playing with the play castle the opportunity to sustain children's interests is naturally utilised. An example of this is when an adult suggests that they could use rope to help them to get out of the water and with the children then initiating this further by drawing water snakes. Communication skills are fostered well through various activities, including songs and rhymes. Staff are exceptionally well skilled in promoting children's vocabulary and make very good use of all situations, including snack times to have discussions and to encourage children to express their ideas. This results in competent speakers and listeners. Although, staff demonstrate that linking sounds to letters is promoted through the children's snack time routine, songs and story times, further opportunities would benefit the children as these experiences were not seen at the inspection as part of children's everyday routine and

experiences. Children's personal social and emotional development is fostered extremely well. Children are confident with each other and staff as they greet each other with pleasure. They have secure supportive relationships with their key workers and other children and enjoy their company. Children engage in the experiences offered with interest and enthusiasm and are able to sustain good levels of concentration and finish activities. Children care for each other, for instance they ask if they can help to build trains and cars together in the garden. They are developing very good levels of independence, they prepare themselves for outdoor play and access the bathrooms independently. Children are confident in small and larger groups, including performing a nativity concert for family and friends. They discuss past events and are gaining a sense of time, as an egg timer is used to notify children of tidy up time and for taking turns when using the computer. Children enjoy looking at books, both independently and as part of the whole group. Staff offer suggestions and make excellent use of open ended questions, to challenge children's thinking and develop their ideas. They develop good mathematical skills through a variety of activities and daily routines. These include using the weighing scales, making patterns and sequences out of small coloured bricks and using language, such as, bigger and smaller. Children's creativity is nurtured as they experiment with different media and explore their own ideas, using gloop, sand and water. They use information and communication technology to support their learning, for example, they use the telephones and shop till in the role play area and they have everyday access to a computer where children confidently drag and drop the mouse to complete counting and alphabet games. Children have good opportunities to learn about living things as they grow and care for plants from seed and explore the lifecycle of tadpoles and the frog. There is a broad and balanced selection of resources, which are used effectively to enable children to progress well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The setting appropriately supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. A few of the staff are able to speak other languages and this helps communication with parents and children alike. All relevant information about children, as well as key words in children's home language is obtained from parents and carers at registration. Staff and parents work alongside each other, to help with children's settling in process. This includes a gradual settling in procedure which is tailored to meet individual needs. Consequently, children's emotional well-being is met. Furthermore, the system of key workers to an identified group of children fully supports children's individual needs. Children have many opportunities to celebrate festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. This is complemented with food tasting sessions from around the world and through children using a good range of resources and play materials which show positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported within the group and are allocated a one to one worker when required. The pre school's special needs coordinator works closely with parents, staff and other professionals to assess, implement individual educational plans and monitor children's progress and development.

Children behave extremely well, they know what is expected through familiar routines, and clear explanations from staff. They are happy and confident, showing concern for each other as they play harmoniously together. Staff act as positive role models, by talking to children in a kind and caring manner and by giving lots of praise and encouragement to promote their self-esteem. As a result children are learning to share, take turns and play well together.

The staff team have developed good relationships with the children's parents. Parents find the staff friendly, welcoming and approachable. They receive good information about the setting through the notice board, displays of the children's work and photographs of them in their activities. They also have access to the group's policies and procedures. Staff and parents share positive verbal information every day about the children's care, development and progress. This contributes to the continuity of care provided. There is also a complaints procedure available to parents, which includes the regulators contact details.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. New parents receive an induction meeting and are provided with a welcome booklet where they are given information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn through play. Regular newsletters, parent committee meetings and informal daily discussion ensures parents are kept informed about the activities and learning experiences taking place. Parental feedback is encouraged through a variety of ways, including the use of questionnaires. This gives the provider the opportunity to evaluate the care and education offered in order to continually improve the service. Staff ensure that children's profiles and assessment records are available for parents to view at any time. They hold formal meetings, at regular intervals where information about children's progress and development, is shared between the key worker and the parents and carers, giving them the opportunity to share their knowledge of their child's learning and make any further comments. Good parental involvement is highly beneficial to the continuity of care that the children receive. Examples, of this is where parents are involved in visiting the setting to talk to children about their home cultures, help with activities including reading stories and supporting the group with special events and outings. Parents can also borrow books to share with their children at home, through the pre school's book lending scheme. Consequently, this helps to foster clear links between home and pre school. All parents and carers spoken to during the inspection were very positive about the care and education provided for their children. This effective partnership with parents ensures they are actively involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. Recruitment and vetting procedures are carried out by a committee which include following up references and ensuring all are suitably vetted to work with children. However, applicants are not asked to confirm their suitability, both mentally and physically, to care for children, for instance, by completing a health declaration form. Consequently, there could be health related issues, which the committee are not aware of that could have a negative impact on children's welfare. The manager shows a commitment to the professional development of her team, encouraging training in all areas. This is complemented by the manager who attends regular training and who along with her deputy is studying towards a Level 4 qualification. The manager has a sound understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and of the Foundation stage curriculum. She is starting to prepare for the changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2008. This enables her to foster good practice throughout. Examples, of this is through regular team meetings and individual supervision sessions, which are starting to evolve. This ensures systems are in place to monitor the pre school and encourage full participation from the staff team.

Children's play opportunities are maximised through the effective organisation of space, time and resources. The large hall is set up daily with resources and activities for the children's play. The well planned environment is arranged into different areas enabling children to play independently or with others. This is complemented with sufficient space for children to move

freely. The flexible routine ensures children have time to complete activities at their own pace. The resources are well-organised and stored at the children's height, which further encourages children's independence. Attractively set out toys and activities inspire children to play, learn and have fun. Suitably qualified staff with a range of experiences have a positive impact on the quality of care provided. The well established staff team who are highly motivated and committed, work well together as a team and plan activities together. They demonstrate a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and are working continuously to improve and develop the quality of care and education for children. Staff work with the Educational Advisory Teacher and the Area Special Educational Needs Coordinator to promote inclusion and to ensure all children have the same learning opportunities.

All legally required documentation is in place and implemented well. The group has a comprehensive operational plan together with a full set of policies and procedures which promote children's care and education. Records are maintained confidentially and are shared with parents as required. This positively contributes to children's overall well-being.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of day care two recommendations were raised to improve the care of children. These were to review snack time, to encourage children's independent skills and to review the layout of the bathroom to ensure good hygiene practices. The setting has made effective progress in meeting these recommendations and as a result the health and welfare of children is ensured.

At the last inspection of nursery education, two key issues were raised to improve the educational programme. This was to review snack time arrangements to promote children's choice and independence, to increase the opportunities for children to link letters to sounds and promote phonic awareness. These steps have mainly been implemented by the setting, although children would benefit from further opportunities for linking sounds to letters as part of their everyday routines.

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):

- further develop the recruitment procedure with regard to the applicants overall health, to ensure they are suitable, both mentally and physically, to care for children
- minimise risks to children by preventing them from gaining access to the garden shed and tools.

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 planning to ensure that every aspect of each area of learning is regularly planned and included in the curriculum and ensure the adult initiated and the focus activities are well planned to include learning and teaching intentions, open ended questions and vocabulary

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