

Pumpkin Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY219003

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Inspector Tina Kelly

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Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Pumpkins Pre School has been established for five years. It takes place in the hall of the St Lawrence Church in the village of Abbots Langley. When in operation the group has sole use of the main hall, small back room, entrance area, cloakrooms and the kitchen. The group does not have access to an outside play area.

The pre-school is registered for 24 children aged between two years nine months to five years old. There are currently 24 children on roll. Of these, seven children aged three years receive funding for nursery education. The group offers four sessions a week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 09:15 to 12:15. Lunchtime care may be offered until 13:00 if there is a need. The pre-school is open term time only.

The pre-school employs six staff. The registered provider, the manager and the deputy hold Level 3 qualifications. The manager is working towards an Early Years Foundation Degree. The deputy is updating her Nursery Nurse certificate with an early years Level 3 qualification.

Other staff are working towards Level 2 and a Diploma in Pre-school Practice.

The setting receives support from a qualified teacher and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of good health through the daily routines. The younger children learn simple songs and rhymes that reinforce the importance of hand washing to remove germs that may give them an upset tummy. They are familiar with the process and are confident in using the toilets and washing their hands. Appropriate procedures are in place for nappy changes; parents are made aware of their child's individual care routine with a note at the end of the session.

Children are protected as policies and procedures which support the health and medical needs of all children are in place and personal information is updated on a regular basis. All staff hold relevant first aid certificates. This ensures appropriate action is taken in the event of an accident. Staff are aware of the systems that are in place to record accidents and the administration of medication.

Children's nutritional and cultural dietary needs are recorded and met. A 'café style' snack time provides half of the children with access to small tables and chairs in the kitchen. Healthy options are provided for the children who can refer to the menu for their selection of different breads, crackers, dried and fresh fruit. Children have access to named drinks beakers provided from home. They use beakers in the café and pour their own drinks with good support from the staff.

Although the setting does not have an outside play area the children have many varied opportunities throughout the week to take part in physical activities. These extend and promote both their large and smaller motor skills, balance, fitness and awareness of how exercise affects their bodies. During each session children access ride-on toys, they negotiate their way around half the hall that is cordoned off to ensure the safety of other children playing nearby. Children enjoy using the large selection of sporting equipment. They are competent in their ball skills, in setting up skittles and making up their own games with the apparatus made freely available to them. They are becoming aware of the impact that physical exercise has on their bodies as they all join in stretching and shaking actions at the beginning of each session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure, well-maintained, child-friendly environment. Different areas of the church hall building provide children with a range of rooms that are well utilised for the main activities, small group work and story times. Due to the restrictions of the hall being used by other groups the staff get out and put all the equipment away every day. A well-rehearsed routine ensures children use other rooms as the main hall is adapted and resources are moved and put away. Staff are vigilant, they are deployed around the building to ensure the children's safety at all times. There is no outside play provision so the plans and routines include opportunities for physical play in the main hall.

Children are protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection issues. A designated staff member who has attended the Local Safeguarding Children Board course at level two co-ordinates any concern in line with the procedures that have been adopted from the Pre-school Learning Alliance 'culture of safety' policy. Information is on display with regards to local contact numbers and leaflets so parents are made aware of the setting's commitment to protecting the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled within the pre-school setting. They are motivated and quickly become engrossed in a broad range of activities relevant to their ages and stages of development. In the small group 'circle time' children are encouraged to talk about important events from home. They are supported in this with the use of 'Talking Teddy' who is given to each child in turn. Other children know they must be quiet and listen. This enables young children to share their experiences in a well-managed group setting. The well laid out pre-school room provides opportunities for them to develop their play and social skills in a caring environment. Staff work with designated key groups of children, they take responsibility for planning and organising activities and resources in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the early years foundation stage. Appropriate records are in place to identify their starting points, monitor their achievements and to build on their developing skills. Children are familiar with the routines, they know they join together on the mat for the registration session. They all sing the welcome song, each child is acknowledged with clapping and a smile. Children receive appropriate praise and encouragement, they are polite and co-operative.

Nursery Education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are experienced in supporting and extending the children's learning. Staff are good role models, they work with the children at all times to extend their language and comprehension. Children are confident and are eager to try new experiences, they have a positive attitude to learning. Staff use a range of teaching methods throughout the session. Different rooms and areas are used to good effect. Assessments and planning encompass all aspects of the early learning goals which are now adapted in line with the 'Early years foundation stage' framework. The children's 'Learning Journey' records show how their development is evaluated and how children are progressing. Laminated information on the learning intentions are displayed alongside the activities and learning areas which supports staff in their planning.

Children are developing good listening skills, they are drawn into favourite stories and encouraged to share their ideas about the story and relevant events from home. They are confident in choosing and handling books which are readily available. Children have free access to mark-making resources, scissors, calculators and to creative materials in the graphics area. They are learning the importance of writing in everyday experiences as they are able to use paper and pencils in their free play. Children are introduced to simple technology through the home play area and planned projects. They have used a digital camera to take photos which are then used in the group setting. A radio and compact disc (CD) player is available at all times. Children make decisions about the music they want to hear as they select a disc and put it in the machine to play. When they mistakenly put the radio on they exclaim clearly 'we don't want that' and seek help from staff to play the disc. They are clear about what they are doing and what they expect from the CD they have chosen.

An impressive wall mounted art display that is linked to the planned theme shows the children are involved in a range of creative experiences. They use real sticks and twigs, painting, collage

and the printed word to make a three dimensional picture of a garden and how to look after and feed the birds in winter. Children show a great sense of pride when they identify with the work they have been involved in.

Children are introduced to mathematical language and concepts through their play. This is supported with clear posters around the setting that show numerals with the corresponding number of items. Their language is extended as staff ask appropriate questions about the numbers, sizes and shapes of track that are being put together with a small group of children. However, there are missed opportunities within everyday situations to extend and consolidate children's learning in a practical way. For example, they are not given the opportunity to count the children at registration and to discuss who is not there and the relevant numbers involved. There is no discussion at café time as to whether there is enough space or utensils and cups for all the children in the group and those who are coming later.

Children's understanding of the wider world is fully supported through planned activities that introduce them to different cultures and family backgrounds. Photographs show how the nearby village is used extensively as the children are taken to the shops, the library, to post letters and to the nearby playgrounds. The setting welcomes visitors; they are planning a visit from the local community police officer to introduce children to 'people who help me'.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school; they thrive in a well-supported and challenging environment. They are making good progress in all areas of learning and personal development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A strong partnership has developed with parents, this contributes significantly to the children's well-being at the pre-school. Parents are well informed about the day to day running of the pre-school. Information with regards to the setting's policies and procedures, prospectus and registration documents are displayed in the foyer. Children develop strong relationships with their carers. Their individual needs are well met as staff ensure all children are treated with respect and their family backgrounds are valued. The settling-in process is well established. New parents are informed about all aspects of their child's play with a written note at the end of the session. Families are encouraged to visit and to take time for the children to feel confident to be left. When children become distressed parents are called; they spend the session supporting their child in a comfortable and well-supported manner. The parent rota is well supported.

Staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management issues having attended training in this important aspect of child care. The 'ABCC' format of recording and evaluating behavioural issues is used. The antecedents, behaviour, consequences and communication aspects of the situation that may lead to behaviour issues is used effectively. Children are clear about the boundaries that are in place. They know what is expected of them, they listen to staff and respond in a positive way.

Children develop a positive attitude to others and a good understanding of the wider world and their community. Resources, books, snack foods and the imaginative play corner are well utilised to promote children's learning in this area.

The pre-school has strategies in place to identify and support children with learning difficulties. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) liaises with parents and learning support services to ensure children's individual educational plans are relevant and used to progress children's

learning. The setting secures funding to provide children with one to one support which ensures their needs are fully met. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning; they provide interesting articles for the interest table. However, they receive little information about the nursery education and the broad curriculum that is provided for their children. The process for nursery education funding and the registration and inspection process with Ofsted is not made clear.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Knowledgeable and well-qualified staff ensure the children's welfare and learning opportunities are monitored and maintained. They are aware of and adhere to the policies and procedures that are in place to ensure the smooth running of the setting. Staff take responsibility for setting out the equipment and resources in the main hall and to adapt and change the area throughout the session. Children's routines are not disrupted; there is a smooth transition between the activities and use of the large play area.

However, the timing around the mid-morning break for circle time and café style snacks are not well organised. Children are divided into age-related groups to take part in the two group sessions. Not enough time is given in the circle time to ensure all children have opportunities to use the cloakroom, take part in the 'talking teddy' activity and to share in the discussion about the weather and events at home. When children have finished their snack they stand up and are ready to leave the kitchen with puts time restraints on the other group.

The leadership and management of early years education is good. The staff team have a comprehensive understanding of how children learn. They take responsibility for the implementation of plans and preparation of resources which extends the children's learning in all areas. Appropriate records, policies and procedures are in place in line with regulation. The staff team has a strong commitment to training. They continue to develop their own knowledge which enhances their practice. The setting has developed a good working relationship with the local nursery and school. The supervisor visits children who have recently moved on; this provides good support for children as they settle into a more formal learning environment.

The setting benefits from the input of a qualified teacher from the Hertfordshire Young in Herts, Early Years Department. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance; they seek support and advice to enhance their practice and the opportunities for the children in their care. The well-presented resources, staff deployment and a flexible learning environment ensures the provision offers an inclusive setting where every child matters. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery had the following recommendations: to add lost child policy to non collection of child policy; to ensure boiler area in small room is made safe; to improve the staff's knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities; to review and devise a formal induction programme to include checklist and review staff attendance records to clarify hours worked; to review and extend cultural resources and extend inventory.

The setting has amended all documents to ensure they meet the regulation requirements. Safety is maintained as an upgrade of the building ensures the boiler is not accessible to children. Staff have a sound understanding of providing cultural resources and activities that promote equal opportunities. The induction programme is in place, with records of the hours worked by staff to ensure the safety of the children at all times.

At the last nursery education inspection the pre-school was asked to increase the children's awareness of the different purposes of writing and to improve the staff's awareness of equal opportunities. The setting has reviewed the provision for writing and has implemented a mark-making area where children have free use of writing and drawing materials; these may also be used in everyday play. Staff have improved their awareness of equal opportunities and ensure appropriate resources are available for children to extend their understanding of the wider world.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

Since registration Ofsted have received one complaint in relation to National Standard 9: Equal opportunities; National Standard 10: Special needs; National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers and National Standard 13: Child protection. Concerns were also raised that the provider had breached her conditions of registration by allowing her child, then under two years, to attend the setting. The setting is not permitted to care for children under the age of two years under their conditions of registration.

Ofsted conducted a planned visit to the provider on 25 August 2006. As a result the inspector found evidence that National Standard 9 and 12 had not been met and actions were raised as follows: -

National Standard 9: The registered provider should liaise with parents to ensure that all children's records contain information which enables appropriate care to be given.

National Standard 12: Ensure there is a system in place for the regular exchange of information between parents and staff members to enable parents to share information and ensure their views and concerns are respected and acknowledged. Ensure appropriate and prompt action is taken on any concerns raised and a record of all complaints is maintained. In addition the provider admitted she had breached the condition of registration in the past due to a misunderstanding and a formal warning letter has been served.

A satisfactory response has been received to the actions set. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- review the timing of activities to ensure children have time to consolidate their learning, this refers to the circle and snack time.

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):

- promote and extend the children's use of mathematical concepts and language in everyday situations
- ensure parents are fully aware of the funding process for the nursery education provided and the registration and inspection process by Ofsted.

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