

Stonesfield Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134494
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Inspector	Rosamund Jane Tustian
Setting Address	Unit 4, Glovers Yard, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX29 8PT
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Registered person	The Committee of Stonesfield Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 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?

Stonesfield Pre-School was established in 1968 and is a voluntary sector group managed by a committee of parents and carers. The pre-school is located in a village in rural Oxfordshire and the intake of children is mainly from families living locally. The group rents premises from a community trust and they have use of a playroom, kitchen, toilet facilities and enclosed outdoor play area. They also have office space situated adjacent to the main building.

The pre-school opens on weekdays during school terms from 09.05 to 18.00. The pre-school offers full day care, out-of-school provision and a holiday playscheme. There are currently 65 children on roll, of these 38 attend the day care sessions and 27 the out-of-school club. Children between four and 10 years of age currently attend the out-of-school club and holiday playscheme. Nursery education funding is granted to 22 children. The group supports children who have learning difficulties and disability and those for whom English is an additional language.

The committee employs seven members of staff, three of whom hold the Diploma in Pre-school Practice at Level 3. All the staff hold certificates in first aid.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children follow hand-washing procedures when reminded by the staff. They are beginning to take responsibility for their cleanliness by using the soap and paper towels after they have been to the toilet and before eating. Occasionally children's hand washing is missed as they use the facilities independently and supervision of the wash area is not closely monitored. The room and resources are checked and cleaned on a regular basis. The pre-school employs a cleaner to help with a more thorough clean twice a week. The staff follow routine cleaning and checking procedures daily to ensure the children have a clean environment to use. Tables are cleaned with disinfectant before snacks and lunches and the kitchen surfaces are kept clear of clutter ready for snack preparation.

All the staff have current first aid certificates so that they are aware of what action to take in an emergency. Accident and medication records are set up with appropriate agreements and signatures so that the children's health is protected. Staff have an understanding of each child's health needs and are able to take action for specific allergies and conditions should the need arise. Children's emotional health is well supported with staff, allowing time for cuddles, stories and individual attention.

There is a comprehensive health and safety policy in place that includes expectations for food and drink. Children are encouraged to learn about themselves and their health through activities such as 'Ourselves'. They examine photographs of babies and how they, and the staff, have changed over time. They tell each other that they grow 'by eating food'. The children carefully store their lunch boxes in the refrigerator when they arrive to keep them cool and put their water beakers where they can reach them during the session, on the top of the refrigerator. Snacks for the pre-school are nutritious and include options such as fruit, cheese and bread sticks. They are offered milk or water to drink and can pour this for themselves from the jugs. Their current theme is supporting their learning about healthy eating and they are making a 'traffic light' wall chart to show which foods are better for them and which are best as treats. The out of school club is less well supplied with healthy foods. They have freshly cooked toast when they arrive from school with sweet spreads and marmite, and squash or water to drink.

The younger children have many opportunities to use their large and smaller muscles. They make very good use of the small, outside area. The children are able to skilfully move around on the ride-on toys and use the large blocks, climbing frame, balancing line and a wide range of resources. Catching balls, threading, puzzles, painting and drawing are all easily accessible on a regular basis and the children are improving their hand to eye coordination. They have some access to scissors and are able to manipulate the mouse at the computer, but these are less well presented. Some visits are made to the nearby school field and sports equipment to provide more space and challenge for the older and more able children, but this is currently limited.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to move freely and safely around the inside play area and outside. Care is taken to routinely check the premises before the children arrive. Risk assessment charts are used to provide a basis for the checks and the staff are aware that safety is best considered

from the child's view point. The building is colourful and welcoming with display boards and white boards that provide information and good examples of how the children, staff and parents are all involved in the setting. Photographs of the staff and committee photographs are displayed so that new parents and visitors can check who is who.

Registers provide a record of everyone present at each session. This includes the parent helper and any visiting younger children but all not visitors, so the record of all adults on the premises on any particular day is not currently reliable. Staff are careful not to allow any child to leave with someone they do not know, or they have not been told will be collecting the child and passwords must be correctly shared. Outings with the children are thought through carefully and strategies to ensure the children's safety when walking on the narrow lanes has been discussed.

Fire practises are logged and frequent. All children are included in practises at least twice a term. Evacuation notices are displayed in the toilets but there is no reference to procedures displayed in the main play room. Exit doors are clearly labelled and checks made to ensure they are fully operational take place on a regular basis.

Children move around the furniture and each other very well as they find somewhere to play with their friends. The main room is very crowded during the busiest sessions and steps have been taken to address this. A new office has been set up next to the main building and resources not used on a daily basis have been taken out of the play area. Staff make use of outside at every opportunity to reduce noise levels in the main room. Children are supervised inside and outside at all times. The fence around the play area is adequate with good supervision, but the main entrance doors are not secure and access to the building is open to anyone. This may pose a risk to children as the entrance is directly into the main play room.

Toys, equipment and resources are plentiful and easily accessible, particularly for the younger children. All are good quality and very well maintained. Children select toys from the low-level storage shelves. The transparent boxes allow them to identify what they want to enhance and extend their play and the boxes are light enough for children to carry safely to their activity.

Appropriate policies for safety issues are in place and include child protection. Staff are aware of their role in identifying indicators of abuse and reporting any concerns about the children in their care, or adults working with the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are personally greeted by the staff as they arrive. The room is well prepared with familiar activities such as play dough and paint always on offer and a good range of alternatives to choose from. The children have time to choose their own activities and playmates during the morning. They are encouraged to take part in routines such as whole-group time, involving songs, rhymes and stories. The staff are introducing a 'snack bar' system so that the flow of individual play is less disrupted. The smaller group for snack allows most activities to continue for the whole session and each child can enjoy the full attention of an adult while they have their break.

A few children attend the pre-school for a whole day. Comfortable sofas and quiet book corner provide small areas to escape the busier areas of the room and where children are able to sit resting with a member of staff or a friend. Staff have developed a close relationship with the

children. A high level of trust exists between the children and staff and the children are keen to share their thoughts and ideas.

Resources for out-of-school children are limited. They make some use of the school field and sports equipment. The children use the art materials, limited use of the computer and dressing up from the pre-school. There are also some games that are appropriate for their stage. Overall, they are content with what is available but the children say that they feel the resources are 'mainly a bit young for us'.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum is adequate and they are aware of how children learn. Children are suitably supported to make sound progress in their knowledge, skills and attitude to learning. They have free access to wide range of resources at each session and they make good use of this to develop their own interests and learn to manage their time. They arrive at each session enthusiastic and very willing to leave their parents and explore the activities on offer. They focus intently on what they have chosen to do and most of the time children concentrate well and are fully engaged with their exploration and ideas. For example, children spend a long time with construction sets making complex structures and share the sections willingly between each other. They show the end results to the staff with delight. Children's work is valued and any partially completed work carefully put to one side so that it can be kept safe until returned to again, such as following their snack.

Staff have implemented a helpful daily-diary scheme for each child. These include staff observations of the activities that the child has taken part in during the day and are shared with the parents. Parents are invited to contribute to the diaries by adding any comments about their child's achievements at home. This is a new part of the assessment process and is in the early stages. The assessment diaries are not yet linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum and they are not used to inform the daily planning. Therefore although the staff know the children well they are not able to assess where each child has reached in their progress towards the early learning goals. They cannot currently demonstrate how they are successfully making sure each child is being offered activities that support them to build on what they already know.

Initial profiles are discussed with parents during a home visit. Children's formative profiles have very recently been reintroduced so that links to stepping stones can be identified and used to review progress with parents at twice yearly meetings. Planning is based on the activities that the staff intend to provide each week. These show how they will cover all the stepping stones for the six areas of learning over time but are not yet linked to individual children's specific needs. Staff have a very good rapport with the children and respond quickly their requests when they are working with them. They ensure a wide range of resources are set out attractively each session. Children are encouraged to help themselves to extra resources as they develop their ideas; for example, children playing with the toy cars and road mat fetched boxes of construction bricks to add to their layout and extend their play.

Some children find the large groups at circle times difficult and either do not join in or become distracted. Staff contain this effectively but learning is limited at these times for these children. Children are invited to talk about their own experiences, such as a new baby to the family, and share this with the others. The staff make good links between the children's knowledge and the current topic so that the children feel important and special. Children develop confidence

to talk to the whole group as they can be sure of a kind response from the adults working with them.

Children form close friendships and play together very well. Some children decide to exclude newcomers from their groups and staff talk to them about sharing, feelings and why their actions are not acceptable. The staff provide good role models for the children. They work closely as a team to ensure there is a consistent approach to behaviour management that values the positive actions of each child. The children are able to appreciate their similarities and differences; for example, the staff introduce signing for all the children and ensure that all children are able to be included in all activities. Children support each other and talk gently to children who have not started to speak, or who need a little extra help with the equipment outside.

Constant movement between inside and outside play provides many opportunities for the children to learn to put on their coats and change their shoes. They are able to begin to be independent in their personal care needs and the environment is set up appropriately to support this learning.

Children are adept at 'reading' and handling books. They are given some opportunities to identify their names and some letters but they are not well supported to consistently build on what they can already do. A writing table is in place with materials provided for an 'office'. This is currently not used by the children. The more able children are not encouraged to make letter shapes correctly or practise pre-writing movements as they play. A good selection of jigsaws are available and some are on offer during most sessions. Staff introduce ideas and promote extension of spoken language successfully. The children like to explain what they are trying to achieve and there are plenty of imaginative play resources set out each day that inspire their ideas and involvement. Children sometimes play with small-world cars and dinosaurs on their own and chatter to themselves as they extend their ideas and create their own special world.

The children look forward to joining in with number rhymes and songs. They show delight when chosen to be a 'currant bun' and several can count confidently to well over 10. The noisiest rhymes are very well received and almost all the children complete the movements with gusto. The 'Maths Area' includes some attractive matching games and blocks and children are beginning to link number symbols with objects. Flowers are cut out of paper and used to create a height measurement for each child. The children are encouraged to compare the different heights of themselves and their friends. Some children chose to make several flowers for themselves and were excited by the activity, although others did not understand what was expected from them. The children play happily with the sand, and watch carefully as the different sized bottles are filled and emptied in the water tray.

A suitable selection of dressing-up clothes, paint, re-cycled materials, sparkly play dough, small-world toys, musical instruments and stories enable the children to use their imaginations, direct their skills as independent learners and explore their ideas. They shriek with glee when they are invited to 'catch the falling star and put it in their pocket' and giggle together in the book corner with the teddy bears. They watch the bulbs grow in the containers outside and are involved in wider community activities, such as Sports Day at school. Children are relaxed and have fun as they learn.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are fully involved, included and their differences valued. Play resources that reflect disability are limited. However, the staff are very committed to inclusion and quick to identify any concerns so that they can be fully addressed. They work closely with parents and other professionals to implement agreed actions towards specific goals for children who need special support. The presentation of activities are discussed and extra staffing put in place as necessary, so that all the children can join in together and learn from each other. For example, a child with little language has started to introduce signing to the children with the help of her carer. Staff and children are enthusiastic about the new way of communicating and the cards that show them the actions that will make themselves understood. Boys and girls play closely together both inside and outside the premises. They share the bikes, dressing-up clothes and use of building blocks and work together to complete the large, floor puzzles.

Outings and visits are organised to help the children learn about the world around them. They have visits to the reception class before they move into school, and to the Manor House grounds for egg hunts and bonnet displays at Easter time. Visitors share their expertise and work experiences with the children, such as the local community police and library staff. They celebrate birthdays and other festivals, such as Chinese New Year. Books, toys and posters reflect a variety of family groups, customs and religions. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Behaviour of the children is generally good. Staff use sensitive methods to support good behaviour and work closely with parents if extra help is needed. They manage behaviour well, although some activities and grouping of children does not provide the individual challenge that keeps the children all fully engaged. The noise levels and close proximity of the children, on the few occasions when they are all inside together, makes a whole day attendance very tiring for some children. Staff praise and encourage children and intervene if necessary to help them to learn to negotiate and socialise. Behaviour policies are clear and include strategies to follow if bullying occurs within the out of school group.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents comment on the dedication of the staff and their open and honest communication. They feel very welcome and part of the group and very able to discuss any issues about their child with the manager or key worker. There are very good initial links with parents through a home visit by the manager and key worker. This helps the children to start to become familiar with the staff that will become special to them and the family. Parents are provided with information about the setting and their policies. The parents complete an initial assessment of their child to help the staff provide appropriate activities and support when the child starts in the sessions. This is currently being extended with the daily diaries. They are given limited information about the Foundation Stage curriculum or Birth to three matters framework. Parents are invited to stay for at least two sessions with their child and are welcome to attend further sessions at any time. The high quality relationships and trust that has developed between the staff and parents and carers contributes significantly to the enthusiasm the children show when they arrive at the pre-school.

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Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Documentation that is required for the smooth running of the group is mostly in place. It is detailed and ensures health, safety and well-being of the children. The nursery policies are comprehensive and are currently being reviewed to ensure contact numbers are up-to-date and content is still relevant to the new staff and committee. Complaints are logged and a file has been set up to share any complaints with parents if they request to see it. The registers show all the adults and children working in the building with their times of arrival and departure, except for visitors who are not always recorded. Records and information about families and children are kept securely in a locked filing cabinet. The importance of confidentiality is recognised and maintained.

The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. Staff are very experienced, committed and attentive to all the children in their care. All the leading staff are suitably qualified and others are involved with childcare training. Staff numbers are often high, with extra staff recruited if necessary to work individually with children who have learning difficulties or disability. The staff and children make best use of the available space; activities take place on the floor as well as on the storage surfaces, table tops, sofa and designated learning areas. The range and access to resources, for all but the older children, are good.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. The committee and staff team have only been in place a few weeks. They have a clear vision about the quality of care they wish to provide and the steps they intend to put in place to reach their goals. They are committed to working as a team to ensure the children's progress is shared and well supported. Frequent team meetings have been started so that the staff can regularly share their observations of the children and put in place strategies to support individual needs. Training is encouraged and staff and committee members have enrolled on further courses this year to update their knowledge. New systems have been set up to improve the observations and assessment of the children. These are not yet embedded in practice. This has led to some organisational and individual planning issues, these are currently being addressed in order to improve the challenges for individual children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to improve hygiene routines before meal times and increase the opportunities for children to become familiar with the shapes and sounds of letters. The new staff and committee have begun to address these issues.

The children are reminded to wash their hands before meal times and hygiene routines have been highlighted through topic work such as learning about themselves. Hand washing facilities are good. The children have independent use of low-level basins adjacent to the main play area, with soap and paper towels. They show a generally good understanding of hygiene routines.

Staff provide resources that encourage the recognition of letter shapes, such as jigsaws and posters. The 'Office' area is set up for the children but they are not yet exploring early writing and letter sounds as part of their play. The children have a script-rich environment with labels, annotated displays and books and charts at their level both inside and outside. The staff have recently acquired the Primary National Strategy folder for 'Letters and Sounds - Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics'. They are aware that they need to include the newest strategies

in their practice and are at the earliest stages of introducing work on sounds into the routine of their sessions. More able children are encouraged to write their names on their work and sounds are explored through rhymes, games and songs. All children identify their names on their coat pegs and on their table mats. They have made some progress since the last inspection and children have exposure to letters and sounds throughout the pre-school.

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 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):

- make premises secure so that strangers are unable to enter uninvited
- provide a wider range of resources for the out of school children that reflects their interests and ability

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 daily assessments for each child and use this to inform planning and to support all children to build on what they already know
- ensure activities and grouping of children meet the needs of all the children attending
- provide parents with more information about the Foundation Stage curriculum so that they are able to effectively contribute to assessments

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