

Tackley Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133493
Inspection date	24 June 2008
Inspector	Rosemary Davies
Setting Address	c/o Tackley C of E Primary School, 42 St. Johns Road, Tackley, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 3AP
Telephone number	01869 331447
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Registered person	Tackley 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?

Tackley Pre-School first opened in 1972 as a playgroup catering for children from the village of Tackley and the surrounding rural area. It moved to its present site in 1993 and occupies a mobile building in the grounds of Tackley Church of England Primary School, in Tackley, near Oxford. The pre-school is a non-profit making organisation run by a committee of parents. It is open for 39 weeks each year and opens each weekday morning, according to demand, from 08.45 to 11.45. Additionally, the pre-school opens on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons until 14.45. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Those attending for afternoons may choose to come for lunch.

The pre-school is registered to provide full day care for a maximum of 12 children aged from two to under five years. There are currently 28 children on roll. Of these, 16 receive funding for nursery education. The setting offers support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although none currently attend.

There are four staff who work with the children, of whom two have appropriate qualifications in early years education and care, at Level 3. Regular support is received from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about healthy living well when in this pre-school. They eat healthy snacks of wholemeal toast and fresh fruit eagerly, hearing from staff why such things are good for them. Children do not make their own decisions about when to eat snack; consequently, any who are hungry earlier do not have their needs met. The pre-school's policy on packed lunches encourages parents to provide healthy options. Good attention is paid to storing perishable foods properly on hot days to retain their freshness. Older children know they must wash their hands before eating and why, whilst staff check that younger ones have remembered to do so. Staff set good examples by washing their own hands before preparing food. A range of other measures help to prevent the spread of cross infection well. A daily cleaner is employed, so that children use hygienic facilities, including spotless toilet cubicles.

Children enjoy commendable amounts of fresh air daily, whatever the weather. They know they must wear sun-bloc and hats on sunny days. Staff ensure shady areas are always available outside, providing additional shade during afternoons and adjusting this as the sun moves and different areas of the playground are exposed to bright sunlight.

Children develop many physical skills well, using self-challenge to stretch their abilities. Staff interact well, introducing games that improve children's throwing skills, such as aiming beanbags into boxes. Once weekly visits to the adjacent school's gym offer appropriate challenge for more athletic children. Here they use challenging climbing and balancing apparatus. Children's hand and finger skills are promoted very well through use of a myriad of suitable activities, such as weaving ties in and out fencing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a secure and suitable child-friendly environment, both indoors and out. Bright displays of children's work, friezes, photos and information boards create a welcoming playroom for both children and their parents. The pre-school offers many good quality resources, including new child-sized chairs and tables. Effective systems exist to check that equipment remains in good repair and suitable for children's use. At the time of this inspection, there is no comfortable relaxation area or computer, which makes it difficult for tired children to rest or for those funded for nursery education to use a full range of information and communication resources (ICT) to support their learning.

Children use safe premises in which potential hazards are identified and minimised effectively. The outside playground offers an all-weather safety surface; effective daily checks are made prior to children's arrival, to ensure all areas are ready for use. Children are closely supervised at all times. Suitable fire prevention precautions are in place, including regular practices of the emergency evacuation procedure. These occur independently of the adjacent school, so staff know that all children have been involved. However, fire extinguishers have not been checked for well over a year, which places children at risk should these not work efficiently if needed.

Children progress well in learning how to keep themselves safe. They understand why smoke detectors are set off, for example, and receive clear explanations from staff as to why they must not run in the small outdoor area.

Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding children's welfare. They know the procedures to be followed should they have any concerns with regard to child protection, including how to make a referral to the relevant authorities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their experiences in this pre-school. They enter eagerly, clearly confident in the play environment. Flexible admission arrangements help new children settle quickly. Very good relationships with staff mean children know they receive comfort if needed, such as after a tumble. Children enjoy a good balance of adult-led activities and self-chosen play. They make their own decisions about what to do, where to play and for how long. The exception is over when to take their snack, with their play being interrupted mid-session because staff tell them when they must eat. Nevertheless, children sustain play for considerable periods, becoming absorbed in what they do. They learn through exploratory, purposeful play, using all their senses to investigate the world around them through a wide range of interesting activities. Staff support children's play suitably.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children progress well towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. This is because staff plan good, open-ended play experiences that cover all six required areas of learning. Some aspects are not covered as fully as possible, such as using computers to support learning, as none is available. Children use their time well overall, thoroughly enjoying both their indoor and outdoor activities. Some time is wasted as they queue to use the toilet and wash their hands prior to eating their snack. However, this is the only hiccup in an otherwise well structured day.

Staff know the children and their individual capabilities, well. This is because they observe children effectively, following recent training, and assess what children need to learn next. This knowledge feeds into the planning system, so that all children are challenged appropriately and learning is progressive. Children's self-esteem develops particularly well because staff value what they say, do and create. Children enjoy celebrating personal successes, such as completing puzzles in a shorter time than previously and proudly point out their artwork on display. This is highly individual and indicates the wide range of media and materials children use.

Children listen attentively during group times. They listen avidly to well read stories, picking out rhyming words and suggesting what might happen next in response to questions. At other times they contribute their views and answer questions enthusiastically, showing interest in what is being discussed because the content stems from their own interests. Staff use incidental opportunities well to help children widen their vocabularies and learn phonics, such as when discussing a pheasant's feather. Similarly, staff are alert for opportunities to promote early mathematics in relevant practical ways. They encourage children to name the shapes of their slices of toast, count how many pieces of fruit they eat and name numerals painted on the playground outside when jumping. Children enjoy watering plants growing outside, knowing they need sunshine too and naming plants as 'lemon balm' and 'tomatoes'. The pre-school is a busy hive of activity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children receive a warm welcome when attending this pre-school. Staff recognise that some children have additional needs and have suitable systems in place to support such children, although none currently attend. Children receive much individual attention from staff who know them and their needs, very well. Boys and girls have equal access to resources; however, children who do not attend on Mondays do not make use of the more extensive range of physical play equipment available at the school, so some are not challenged appropriately in some areas of their physical development. Children learn about the diversity of the world around them from seeing a variety of images displayed around the playroom's walls. They develop their knowledge that people and families differ, some like to go swimming for example and others eat different foods. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well. This results from staff taking a united, consistent approach in which children are well aware of what is expected of them, and from children's sheer enjoyment of activities and absorption in them. Staff run through 'rules' at the start of sessions and children readily respond, knowing that they must not throw sand as it hurts if 'it gets in your eyes', for example. Parents and staff work together closely to resolve any particular issues individual children have.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Varied, useful and on-going information is provided about what the pre-school offers children. Parents and carers are warmly welcomed into the pre-school both before and after sessions, with staff readily available to chat about children's progress. Children often take in items relating to the topic but there is little other encouragement to involve parents and carers in their children's learning at home. Parents are invited to contribute their views on the pre-school and are given clear information about what to do should they wish to make a complaint.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The staff and committee work together effectively. The committee has updated systems for appointing suitable staff and has a robust procedure in place. Clear lines of responsibility mean that everyone is aware of their individual duties. Staff appraisals take place, although a formal induction process is yet to be drawn up. Staff undertake relevant training, such as updating their first aid skills and learning about the new Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are deployed effectively, covering indoor and outdoor activities well. All available space is used effectively.

The committee and staff act to evaluate the provision effectively. They conduct an audit, identifying areas that require improvement, such as the need for certain resources; suitable plans are drawn up to address these shortages. The committee has introduced new monitoring systems, including a rolling programme of policy review. However, some systems are not fully effective, consequently, the fact that fire extinguishers have not been checked annually, has not been picked up. Overall, however, policies and procedures underpin the smooth running of the pre-school well. All required documentation, including registers, records and parental permissions, are in place. Paperwork is methodically organised, kept securely and confidentially and is ready for inspection.

Leadership and management of nursery education are good. Staff work hard as an effective team to provide a suitable learning environment each day. They take and act on the advice of outside professionals, so improving the nursery education offered to the children. Consequently, they have enhanced the outside provision and developed learning areas within the playroom, whilst giving children much more choice over where they wish to play. Staff are well aware that more resources are needed for ICT. Routines are generally kept to a minimum and most are well organised, although snack time is not. A good relationship exists with the adjacent primary school, with suitable arrangements in place to aid transition when children leave the pre-school.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the quality of care was judged to be inadequate and two actions were set for improvement. These related to children's safety. Both actions have been addressed in full, so that provision for children's safety has improved considerably.

One recommendation was set to improve the quality of nursery education. This related to the assessment of children's learning. This too has been addressed successfully and the quality of nursery education has improved.

Additionally, the pre-school staff and committee have addressed all other issues highlighted in the previous report, which were not raised as either actions or recommendations. An effective plan of action was drawn up and each point has been addressed in full. Consequently, much improved provision has been observed at this inspection reflecting the determination of all involved with the pre-school to improve provision for the children.

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.

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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):

- implement a system to ensure fire extinguishers are checked annually

- reconsider the structure of snack time, so that children's time is not wasted and continue to implement changes suggested by local authority support advisors (also applies to nursery education).

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further encourage parents and carers to be involved with their children's learning at home

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