

Sonning Common Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	403386
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Inspector	Anne Jeanette Faithfull
Setting Address	Grove Road, Sonning Common, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 9RJ
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Registered person	Sonning 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?

Sonning Common Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1966 and moved to the current site in 1981. It operates from a Terrapin building in its own garden. A parent management committee runs the group, which is also responsible for managing Sonning Common Kites wrap around care. It is located in the primary school site in Sonning Common and serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered to provide full day care for a maximum of 45 children, aged from two years to under five years, at any one time. There are currently 67 children on roll, 30 of whom receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during term time only. Sessions run from 09:00 until 11:40 and from 12:40 until 15:10. The group also offers a lunch club in the pre-school building. Wrap around care is provided for 20 children aged four to five years in the early years unit within the main school building. This is staffed with pre-school staff and operates afternoons only during term time.

There are 15 part-time staff working with the children. Three staff have relevant early years childcare qualifications to level two or three and four staff are working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow policies and procedures to meet the children's physical and health needs, for example, children use wet wipes to clean their hands before snack time and antibacterial spray is used by staff to clean tables. Children and staff talk about why they need to wipe their hands before snack; this further promotes children's understanding of hygiene issues. Notices inform parents of any health concerns, such as head lice and slap cheek, and also remind them to bring in sun hats for their children. Children's health is also promoted as there are effective systems in place, for example, obtaining written parental permission for seeking emergency medical treatment and to administer medication. Staff have first aid qualifications, which means they can deal effectively with any minor accidents which may occur.

Snack times and lunch club are very sociable occasions. Children enjoy sitting together either outside or inside in small groups, with a member of staff talking about healthy eating and the food they are eating. Staff encourage the children to be as independent as possible, for example, encouraging them to cut up their own piece of fruit and pour their own drink. Staff offer appropriate support and guidance when required.

Children have many opportunities for physical play that contribute towards their good health. Outside they run around and negotiate space well. They practise climbing and balancing skills. The children thoroughly enjoy riding on the wheeled toys around the garden and practising for sports day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe environment where they can move around easily. Regular risk assessments and daily checks inside and outside minimise hazards and ensure the safety of the children. Children and staff practise the fire drill each day for a week so all children who attend different sessions are aware of the steps they should take in the event of a fire. Safety notices are displayed for parents, staff and children to see, for example, reminding everyone the steps may be slippery if wet and not to cover heaters as this could be a fire risk.

Children have easy access to appropriate toys and equipment, which the staff check and clean regularly. Any toys, equipment or resources which are broken or unsafe are immediately removed and replaced if necessary. Staff are aware children like to climb on the climbing nets outside. They allow the children opportunities to challenge themselves on how high they can get but are very vigilant and stay by the net to ensure children's safety.

Children's welfare is promoted by the staff's commitment and understanding of their role in protecting and safeguarding children. There is a clear safeguarding procedure in place and systems to document any existing injuries. Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the pre-school and when attending the wrap around care sessions held in the adjacent school. The staff ensure they provide a wide range of activities, resources and experiences for the children to encourage their play and development. Staff make effective use of the outdoor area to provide an excellent range of activities and experiences, such as looking for bugs with magnifying glasses. Children have an area where they can grow their own vegetables and herbs. However, children cannot access the outdoor area independently when they require throughout the session. Activities for the wrap around care are linked to the themes and curriculum in the school to ensure consistency.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are aware of how children develop and learn through play and planned activities. They also reinforce children's learning through questioning, listening and responding to children in a positive manner. The planning is flexible to allow for children's interest and ideas, but still ensures all the early learning goals are covered. There is a new observation system in place; however, this still needs further development to ensure all observations made on the children and their achievements are effectively used to ensure staff plan appropriate challenges for them and to help plan their individual next steps of development and learning.

Good opportunities are provided for children to begin to recognise their name and the letters which make up their name. Staff put a variety of floating letters in the water tray, and children then find the letters which make up their name. Staff also use this activity to talk about floating and sinking and encourage the children to find an item which may sink. Staff encourage the children to begin to write their name on their work and to begin to recognise other familiar words.

Children are making good progress in their language development. They are confident to join in group discussions, talking about what they have been doing at home. They enjoy bringing in items from home linked to the letter of the week and talking about the items they have brought in, for example, apples. Staff use every opportunity to encourage the children to talk and ask them questions about the activities they are participating in. Children readily listen to stories individually with a member of staff or in a group sitting outside under the gazebo. Children readily participate in music and singing sessions where they join in a variety of action rhymes, such as Dingle Dangle Scarecrow.

Children experience living things in a variety of ways as they look for bugs in the garden and observe the chrysalis in the container turning into butterflies. The wormery also gives children the opportunity to observe the patterns the worms make when moving in the soil. Children also use the nature table to bring in items they have found out in the garden and have created a wall display of items they have found. Children experience a range of different textures as they take off their shoes and walk in the outside sandpit to feel the sand on their feet. They thoroughly enjoy feeling and playing with the coloured cooked spaghetti as well as trying to pick up the spaghetti with chopsticks.

Children are becoming aware of shape, measure and size as they experiment in the sandpit, filling up buckets of sand and talking about how much sand they need and how heavy the buckets are when they are full. They use a variety of equipment to make different patterns and

shapes in the sand. Children experience numbers in everyday routines, such as counting the cups and plates, and when singing action rhymes. There are many opportunities for the children to be creative and to use their imagination, for example, creating chalk pictures on the patio stones in the garden. They enjoy taking their baby to the baby clinic set up inside and using the dressing up clothes to support them in their imaginative games with others.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the pre-school because staff value each child as an individual. Children are confident and show good self-esteem, responding well to continual praise and encouragement. Children learn about themselves and the wider world through planned activities, for example, children adopt a turtle and then create a display about turtles. However, there are limited resources in place for children to independently access which reflect diversity, show positive images of different cultures and varying needs. Children have the opportunity to visit the school they will be going to next term and begin to build relationships with the school staff and the children who already attend. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are well behaved and are aware of the strategies in place. They share, negotiate and take turns when required and staff provide good role models for the children. Some staff have attended training on behaviour management over the last few months and this has had a positive impact on the children and their behaviour. Children respond positively to staff requests to help tidy away and show a growing regard for the equipment and resources they use. Children who have learning disabilities/difficulties are fully included in all activities and experiences and staff work very closely with other outside agencies and professionals to ensure they meet the specific individual needs of the children.

The partnership with parents is good. The pre-school operates an open door policy and parents are aware they can discuss their child with their key person or other staff at any time. Regular newsletters, the notice board and the parents' shelf in the entrance hall keeps parents informed about the policies, procedures, and any events which may be taking place. Many parents commented during the inspection on all the improvements which have been made over the last few months and how the pre-school provides excellent care, activities and experiences for their children to participate in, which further promotes their individual enjoyment, learning and development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and settled in the setting. Staff are well deployed and supervise the children well both inside and outdoors. Effective systems are in place for recording the attendance of children and staff. All visitors to the pre-school are requested to sign in and out of the visitor's book. Staff ensure children are never left alone with persons who are not vetted.

Sound recruitment policies ensure all staff employed are vetted for their suitability and all staff complete an induction period. Staff have meetings once a month and the staff appraisal system identifies any training and staff development issues. All staff have the opportunity to attend training courses and a system is in place to ensure all training is recorded for future reference. Staff have a good awareness of the pre-school's policies and follow procedures to ensure consistency of care for all children. All required documentation, policies and procedures are

now in place but some of the complaints documentation available for parents to see does not have the latest address of Ofsted.

The leadership and management are good. The new manager and chairperson have made many improvements since the last inspection and systems are now in place to monitor and evaluate the education provided and ensure children are making progress through the early learning goals. There is a system in place to gain information from parents regarding their child's progress at home and stage of development. However, this is an area that continues to need further development to ensure staff are aware of each child's stage of development and what they can already achieve. All staff have a high regard for the well-being of the children and work effectively as a team, for example, in planning the curriculum together. The manager and staff comment on how approachable and supportive the chairperson and committee are and how they now all work together to continually improve the care, learning and play provided for the children. The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection for day care eight actions were set. All the actions have been addressed. Committee members now complete all the required paperwork for Ofsted and have a working knowledge of the National Standards. They have also put in place an action plan showing how the supervisor will achieve an appropriate qualification. Exact times of staff attendance are recorded and staff are deployed effectively to meet the required ratios. Children are provided with a wide range of stimulating activities daily, which challenge them according to their ability, and staff effectively take into account the children's age and stage of development when dealing with any behaviour issue that may arise. A complaints record is now in place and is shared with parents and all documentation has been reviewed and updated. These measures further promote children's safety and welfare.

At the last inspection for nursery education three actions were set. All the actions have been addressed. A system is now in place to record observations of children's progress and these observations are beginning to be used by staff to help plan children's next steps for learning and development. The system to monitor and evaluate teaching and the curriculum has been improved and records and documentation are now shared with the parents. These steps further improve children's learning and development.

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):

- develop and organise provision for children to have opportunities for continuous outdoor play (applies to education as well)
- extend the range of toys and resources which reflect diversity and show positive images of different cultures and varying needs (applies to education as well)
- ensure all complaint documentation in place has correct address of Ofsted

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

- further develop the systems in place to observe and monitor children's achievements and use this information to plan their next steps of learning ensuring sufficient challenges are provided for all children
- further develop the systems in place with parents to enable them to share information about their child's progress

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