

Fulford Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY361013
Inspection date	07 May 2008
Inspector	Jennie Lenton
Setting Address	Village Hall, Fulford Road, Fulford, STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST11 9QT
Telephone number	01782 393105
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Registered person	Fulford Pre- School
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?

Little Learners at Fulford Pre-school originally opened in 1983 and has operated at the current premises since 2007. It is situated in the Village Hall in Fulford, Stoke-on-Trent. There is an enclosed outdoor area available for active play. A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. Currently there are 50 children on roll. Of these, 25 are funded for nursery education. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:30 to 13:00 during term times. Children attend on both a full and part-time basis. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are warmly welcomed.

The pre-school employs nine members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and two members are working towards a recognised qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are suitably protected from infection as staff follow appropriate policies and procedures to promote their health. For example, all surfaces are cleaned before and after use to prevent germs spreading. Sick or infectious children are excluded from the setting. Any child who becomes ill at the setting is able to rest quietly while they await collection. This helps to maintain the health of all. Children's health is further promoted as they follow sensible personal hygiene routines. Children know that they need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating. They understand that they need to wash their hands properly to 'get rid of germs' as staff talk to them about keeping healthy.

Medication records are adequately maintained. Parents provide written consent for medicine to be administered and staff record details of any dosages given. They ensure that this information is then effectively communicated to parents at the end of a session. This helps to ensure that children receive consistency of care. Accident records are also maintained. A high number of staff are qualified to administer first aid and all staff understand the importance of accurately recording any incident. However, signatures are not always obtained from parents to acknowledge that an accident has occurred. Potentially, this compromises children's well-being. Similarly, although the setting consistently obtains parental consent for first aid to be given by staff it does not collate permission for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment from other professionals. This means that a delay occurs if specialist treatment becomes necessary.

Children have a healthy and nutritional diet. They enjoy selecting slices of apple, carrot and banana at snack time. A lunch club is also provided. Children bring their own packed lunches from home and staff ensure that these are stored appropriately. There is constant access to fresh water and children help themselves throughout the session. This enables them to remain hydrated as they meet their individual needs. Children's health is further promoted as they enjoy regular opportunities for active play. There is a small outdoor area where they enjoy whizzing about on scooters and tricycles, negotiating space as they weave in and out of cones. Staff also make good use of space and resources to engage them in physical activity indoors. Children have lots of fun as they balance on wobble boards and jump on the mini trampoline. This helps children to develop their physical skills and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and welcoming environment where risks to them are limited through good safety and security procedures. The main door is securely bolted so that admission is only possible with staff agreement. All other exterior doors are secure. This successfully protects children from inappropriate visitors and from leaving unsupervised. Thorough risk assessments are completed regularly and daily safety checks are also made. Any concerns are promptly dealt with to ensure children's well-being. For example, a hole in the fencing is quickly reported and covered. A high level of supervision also safeguards children. Staff work alongside them at all times and remain vigilant to potential hazards. For instance, children are always accompanied to the toilet to ensure that they do not struggle with the heavy doors. This lessens the likelihood of harm through accidental injury.

Children use a wide range of safe, good quality resources. Staff ensure that these are well maintained and conform to healthy and safety guidelines. All equipment at the setting is regularly checked to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Children are further protected by the use of specialist safety equipment. For example, mats are placed under large play equipment like the trampoline and the rockers to reduce injury. Children also learn about how to keep themselves safe. They regularly take part in the emergency evacuation procedure. This affords them the opportunity to practise responding to an emergency in a calm setting.

The good knowledge of child protection procedures demonstrated by staff helps to ensure children are protected from harm and neglect. All staff understand the correct procedures to follow for recording concerns. They have a clear understanding of signs and symptoms that may alert to child abuse and up-to-date contact details for all relevant authorities are recorded. This helps to ensure any concerns can be promptly and efficiently dealt with to safeguard children from future harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and happy at the setting. They have warm relationships with each other and with the staff. Children are treated with respect and their contributions to the setting are valued. Their work is displayed around the room and they are encouraged to share their home life with the setting. For example, they talk about their activities during the weekend and their planned holidays. There are plenty of opportunities for children to snuggle up with staff as they play alongside them. As a result, children are relaxed and comfortable.

Children enjoy a good range of stimulating experiences that encourage their intellectual and creative development. Their preferences are respected as they move freely around the setting to access resources. For instance, children choose to play with small world characters, read books or design pictures. They enjoy dressing up as princesses and other favourite characters, immersing themselves in role play as they push dolls in prams or make cups of tea in the home corner. Other children enjoy creating shapes with play-dough, playing together on the rocker or painting pictures using a toothbrush and scourers to make different effects. All staff show enthusiasm for children's play, praising and encouraging them. As they invite children to talk about their activities and explore their thinking, children develop good social skills.

Children learn right from wrong as positive actions are rewarded. They are clear about what behaviour is expected of them as they receive consistent messages from the staff. For instance, children learn to be considerate as they are reminded to share toys. Often working in small groups, staff are able to give children lots of individual attention which ensures that any disputes are quickly and calmly dealt with. Children are grouped according to their age and stage of development. As a result, they are engaged in activities which stimulate and interest them. For example, younger children enjoy making footprint paintings while older ones have fun tracing each other's shadows with chalk. Consequently, children enjoy their time at the setting and quickly settle in.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of the Foundation Stage. They have undertaken specific training and have a sound knowledge of how children progress through the stepping stones. They work well as a team delivering planned activities and providing spontaneous learning through quality interactions with the children.

In particular, mathematical development and communication, language and literacy are well promoted through a wide range of practical and innovative activities. Not all aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world are covered, however. Consequently, staff fail to fully engage children in this area.

Children generally make good progress. They are observed by staff as they play and learn and the observations are then recorded in the children's individual files. This ensures that staff have a clear picture of children's individual levels of attainment. This impacts positively as staff are generally clear about the level of challenge that individual children require. Staff use effective methods to maintain children's interest, asking open questions so that children can explore their own thinking and reasoning. All children are given the opportunity to learn and progress at their own rate as the setting splits children into small groups for focussed activities. This method of teaching is particularly successful, ensuring that more able children do not overshadow those who are at a different level of attainment.

Children's attitude to learning is good. They concentrate well as they take turns in a game of snakes and ladders or spend time designing their own pictures. Their self-help skills are developing rapidly as they put on their own shoes after dressing up time and pour their own drinks. They speak clearly and confidently as they proudly show their pictures and constructions to staff. They interact well, taking turns in conversation as they enjoy using language creatively during role play. Children also have opportunities to link sounds to letters as they are encouraged to think about words that sound the same and pick out the letters that they start with. Most children recognise their name in print as they self-register in the mornings. They see their names and other words in print as the setting uses clear labelling in most areas. Opportunities for children to use pencils and crayons are also good and children mark-make with increasing control and meaning. They enjoy using the writing area as it is attractively and thoughtfully set out with items of interest to draw and write about.

Children enjoy investigating objects and finding out about their surroundings. They take part in themed work about the natural world, finding out about bugs and using magnifying glasses. Staff organise visits from people in the community so that children can learn about the fire brigade and the police service. Additionally, they learn about different festivals such as the Chinese New Year, Christmas and Diwali. This helps children learn about their own beliefs and those of other people. However, there are limited opportunities for children to explore everyday technology and programmable toys. There are few resources to promote their understanding of communication technology and planned activities do not regularly promote this area of learning. As a result, children are not progressing as well in this area.

Children understand and use numbers in everyday routines. Most count up to ten confidently and many are able to count far beyond this. They confidently use concepts such as 'bigger' or 'smaller' as they compare different heights and measure each other. They recognise numerals and enjoy sequencing them correctly. Children also use mathematics in everyday situations. They successfully problem solve as they are encouraged to work out how many cups they will need at snack time. As a result, their mathematical skills are progressing rapidly. Children develop their fine manipulative skills well. They use one handed tools competently and show increasing control as they design pictures and sculpt with play-dough. Their creativity is valued in craft work as they are free to use their imagination with colours and different textures. Children also express themselves freely as they dance to music, pretending to fly like bats or stomp around as elephants.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern as the setting works well with parents to ensure children's needs are met. Individual records are sufficiently detailed to maintain the welfare of all children. For example, detailing any allergies or special dietary requirements. The resources at the setting also positively reflect individuality. There is a fair range of resources which reflect different cultures, disabilities and ethnicities. The setting provides some opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the wider world, such as celebrating the Chinese New Year and completing a display showing how to say hello in different languages. Children then learn some of these phrases and use them at registration time. This encourages children to develop an inquisitive and positive attitude towards diversity.

The setting actively welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are robust procedures in place to ensure that a high level of support is offered and the building is easily accessible, being all on one level. There is a designated member of staff who has undertaken specific training and all staff are committed to assisting every child to progress. Staff seek to work with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all children are encouraged to reach their full potential. Consequently, those with additional needs make good progress.

Children have good opportunities to develop their social skills as they are encouraged to play together harmoniously. They generally behave well and show respect to each other and their surroundings. Staff are successful in managing behaviour in a way that promotes children's self-esteem. As a result, children are respectful and show consideration for other's feelings. For instance, they know to say sorry for causing accidental harm during more boisterous play. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children generally receive consistency of care as the setting has in place good systems for communicating regularly with parents. Parents are able to look through the policies and practices that relate to the setting. They also have the opportunity to communicate on a daily basis at arrival and collection times. Parents stay for song time in the morning, sitting with their children and singing favourite songs with the whole setting. This creates a family atmosphere at the setting where parents feel welcomed and relaxed. Children benefit from the strong partnership with parents as information is regularly shared to safeguard them from harm. This ensures that children's welfare is protected as any issues can be promptly and fully discussed.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Parents receive detailed information on the educational programme provided and are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. Parents are asked to contribute to staff's understanding of their child's abilities and are invited to come and view their child's progress records. They also receive detailed newsletters which inform them of topic areas. These provide ideas for parents to extend their children's understanding at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children receive high levels of care from qualified individuals. Staff deployment is good, ensuring that children are effectively supervised and supported. Play and learning is enhanced as staff work alongside children showing enthusiasm and genuine warmth to them. Most documentation is of a high standard and is available for inspection. It is stored appropriately with due regard for confidentiality. There are robust recruitment and vetting procedures to employ appropriate

staff. New staff receive a clear induction which ensures that they are quickly familiar with the important policies and procedures. This effectively promotes the welfare of children. However, the appraisal system is brief and does not explore changes in circumstances or any specific training needs. This does not fully protect children as staff ongoing suitability is not effectively assessed.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Children are progressing and achieving steadily because of the positive teaching methods and generally sound planning. Planned activities are sometimes evaluated to show the impact they have had on children's learning. This is not consistently done and children's individual next steps are not routinely identified or clearly included in future planning. Potentially, this leads to missed opportunities to extend learning. However, there is a commitment to further improvement. Staff are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They are clear about their roles and monitor children's progress through regular observations and assessments. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- obtain written permission for emergency medical advice or treatment to be sought
- ensure that accident records are consistently signed by parents
- improve the appraisal process to identify training needs and assess the ongoing suitability of staff.

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):

- improve the evaluation of activities, clearly showing what children have learned and how their next steps are fed into future planning
- increase opportunities for children to use everyday technology and programmable toys.

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