

Spinney Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY364602
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Inspector	Barbara Ann Greenley
Setting Address	Spinney School, Cooks Spinney, Harlow, Essex, CM20 3DY
Telephone number	01279 435 798
E-mail	guilia.bird@ntlworld.co.uk
Registered person	Guilia Christine Pollard
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Spinney Pre-School was registered in 2007 and operates from a demountable building within the grounds of a school. It is situated in the Mark Hall Moors area of the town of Harlow, Essex. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are no pets on site.

The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.05 until 11.35 term time only. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 42 children on roll of whom, 13 are receiving funding for early education. Children come from the local and wider catchment area.

The setting employs six members of staff plus four bank staff. Of these, four members of staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are four members of staff working towards furthering their qualifications. The group is supported by an early years teacher from the adjoining school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

All the relevant information regarding children's health and medical backgrounds is on file. Children who become unwell during the session can rest quietly until their parents arrive. Accident and medication books are kept accurately and parents have given written permission for the staff to seek medical advice or treatment in the event of an emergency. These procedures assist staff to ensure that children are cared for appropriately. All of the members of staff have completed first aid training. The premises are kept clean and tables and equipment are washed regularly. Children follow the group's hygiene procedures, for example, there is a simple hand washing routine with picture prompts in the toilets.

Children eat and drink regularly during the morning and are offered a choice of fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers at snack time. Food is nutritious and meets the children's dietary needs. Children have some opportunities to prepare food and have made cakes and iced biscuits. Some of the children have also had the opportunity to plant tomatoes and cress and watch the growing process. Parents are aware of what the children are eating each day. Children's food preferences are on file and staff take care that any allergies are highlighted to avoid a child eating the wrong food. These procedures ensure that parents and staff understand the children's nutritional requirements and an adequate diet is provided. However, staff are missing opportunities to extend children's understanding of the importance of making wise nutritional choices.

Children have access to larger pieces of equipment that are set up outside each day and also use the school's adventure playground. Children clearly enjoy exercise and any time they can spend jumping and running. Staff use the facilities they have to organise a free-flow between the play room and the garden. However, they are not promoting children's awareness of why their bodies need exercise and the effect it has on their well-being.

Children in receipt of funding for early education participate in group activities, such as construction work and using the larger pieces of equipment. There is an outside play area which is used daily. Small muscle skills are being developed through the use of tools and mark-making equipment. Children can cut and roll play dough and use scissors, pens and pencils confidently. They climb, run, jump and crawl with ease. They negotiate taking turns to avoid bumping into one another. They have some opportunities to listen and dance to music. Physical development features in the planning of daily activities and children are encouraged to use the resources during the morning.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a bright room that is organised to meet their needs and is well maintained. They have access to an enclosed garden and the school playground. The room is very well decorated with posters and children's artwork. Children are closely supervised at all times; staff are aware of children's movements and monitor their safety when they use the bathroom independently. The standard of maintenance and cleanliness is good. The room benefits from large windows that let in natural light. Children enter the room happily, knowing where they can sit, the location of resources and that they are able to start playing with toys straightaway.

Children access a wide range of age-appropriate toys. They are in good condition and maintained to a high standard. They can easily make choices as toys are within reach, arranged at child height and some are labelled or have picture instructions. Toys are varied and rotated to provide fun and challenge during the sessions. Equipment is child-sized and appropriate for their use. Children therefore have access to resources that interest and stimulate their imaginations.

Staff are aware of the comprehensive health and safety policies. Written risk assessments are completed to ensure that the premises are safe and this also applies to the outside areas. There is a clear fire evacuation procedure and this is practised with the children at regular intervals. Staffing ratios are maintained and at times exceeded, ensuring that children are well supervised. There is a secure collection policy to ensure children only leave with the correct designated person. The door is locked and staff are alert to anyone trying to enter or exit. Children are learning about staying safe and are given clear, consistent instructions from the staff. There are very few accidents as children are discouraged from running around inside and they take care when carrying objects.

There is a comprehensive child protection policy in place. Staff have completed training and feel confident about the referral process, signs and symptoms of abuse. Parents are aware of the staff's responsibility for safeguarding the children as the policy is made accessible to them. Updated information, knowledge and understanding assists the staff members in protecting the welfare of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children experience a range of activities that are planned and spontaneous, for example, the arrival of a large birthday cake brought in by a parent and the subsequent excitement and anticipation of cutting and eating it. Children concentrate on play, spending a good amount of time with activities such as play dough, cutting, shaping and displaying their models. Children sit together for registration and are welcomed individually by staff which they clearly enjoy. They discuss the weather, the type of clothing that is required and if sun cream needs to be applied. They talk about the toys and activities on offer before making a decision about what to play with. Children are lively, interested and talkative.

Children are valued and praised for their achievements. One corner, set up as a doctor's surgery, generated a lot of interest and excitement; the children wear white coats and use the stethoscopes on the dolls and each other. Free-flow play between the room and outside worked very well. Children use the sand and water trays outside and spend time painting the walls with brushes and water creating some nice patterns on the chalk board. This gives children the opportunity to paint without using conventional materials. Children are exuberant as they play musical instruments and attempt to sing their own made up songs. Staff have established a rapport with the children who approach them with confidence for assistance and reassurance.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Members of the team have completed training on the Foundation Stage and the Early Years Foundation Stage and cascade their knowledge to the rest of the staff. Children are grouped appropriately and learn in small and large clusters with opportunities for one-to-one sessions. Plans are in place for activities and topics but they are not linked to the six areas of learning therefore it is unclear what the children are intended to achieve. Observations are made as the children play however, staff are not

maximising these assessments to help the children move on to the next stage of learning. Account is taken of the children's individual capabilities and staff are sensitive to each child's requirements. Staff use positive strategies to manage behaviour; children are gaining control and self-discipline. Staff work directly with the children for the majority of the session. They make the environment inviting and encourage independence.

Children are seen to enjoy physical play. They are learning control as they move their bodies. Children travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment. Children handle and manipulate materials with confidence. They have regular opportunities to exercise in the fresh air. Children can dress-up and use their imaginations in role play. They use different materials to make pictures such as a horse made with wool strands to represent the hair. They sing simple songs and join in with ring games. Some of the more able children are able to say and use numbers in order. They recognise numbers from one to nine and beyond. They use numbers in songs and rhymes and see figures on posters around the room. Children can create simple patterns and move objects around to make them fit in.

Children talk and negotiate with others and take turns in conversations. They understand that print carries meaning and is read from left to right. They see their names on their coat pegs and on 'apples' at registration time. The 'apples' are then put onto a painted tree on the wall. More able children are attempting to write letters and form their names. Children are beginning to investigate objects and materials and comment on what they have found. They are able to construct with a range of model making materials. They use everyday technology and handle telephones and computer keyboards with confidence. The setting welcomes visitors such as a dentist and children are beginning to identify with their own community. Children are willing learners. Staff are working together to provide a secure and happy environment in which the children can play. The majority of children display confidence when leaving their parents in the morning and enter the setting with enthusiasm. Staff provide opportunities for the children to explore their emotions through discussion such as feeling happy, worried or nervous. In this way children are articulating their thoughts and are able to participate fully in the activities. They respond to praise and encouragement and their independence is developing.

Overall, children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing sound relationships with adults and other children. They are aware of respecting each other's choices and can work together when completing tasks. Children access a sufficient range of equipment that reflects diversity in the community. Children are beginning to learn about the wider world through topic work on festivals. Boys and girls are able to have equal access to resources. However, there are missed opportunities to expand children's awareness of diversity as there are very few representations of the real world. Staff tend to use pre-printed sheets and adult-initiated art in displays. In addition there are very few examples of costumes, homes, languages, maps or account taken of how boys and girls learn differently. The setting has a sound equal opportunities policy and a designated member of staff in place responsible for disseminating information to the team.

There is an awareness of the needs of children who require additional support and the designated member of staff has completed training. The group has a copy of the Disability Discrimination Act on site to increase their awareness of issues that may cause concern. Children and adults

can access the building and staff are able to adapt resources to meet their requirements. At present there are no children attending who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children understand the boundaries set by the staff and consistently behave well. Staff members are calm in their approach and their firm manner commands respect from the children. Parents are aware of the group's behaviour management policy and the methods that are employed by the staff. Children respond positively to the staff and their good behaviour is acknowledged and praised.

Children and parents are welcomed by the staff members at the start and end of each session. Time is made to talk with parents should they wish to have additional information about their child's day. Parents are aware of the group's policies and receive information about the daily routine through newsletters and notice boards. Staff listen to parents' views and this liaison assists them to provide consistent care for the children.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Written information about the curriculum and the six areas of learning is provided for them, however, parents remain unsure about the aims of the Foundation Stage and the role they play in the education of their children. Information regarding children's prior learning is sought from parents to enable staff to plan activities to capture the children's interest. Opportunities are created for parents to meet and discuss their children's progress with their key persons. Parents expressed their satisfaction with the provision and would recommend, 'the loving, helpful, friendly staff'.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are able to talk about their home life, for example, the birth of a baby sister. They are beginning to behave well and control their emotions especially when they need to share or wait their turn.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The manager has a Level 3 qualification and has completed the Early Years Foundation Stage training. She is motivated and enthusiastic about her work and also works as a childminder. She took over the setting a year ago. She wants the best for the children and the staff. She has a current first aid certificate and continues to train when the opportunities arise. The manager understands her responsibilities and the need to operate in line with the guidance given in the National Standards. Children benefit from the commitment of the manager to improving the standards at the pre-school.

Staff members work very well as a team. They have a good ratio of qualified staff who are committed to further training. They share their knowledge and understanding of childcare with each other. The group has a robust recruitment policy ensuring that children are safeguarded and there is a formal induction programme for new staff. The management team is strong and has a vision of where development opportunities lie. Children are allocated key persons who understand their individual needs. Staffing ratios are maintained to ensure children are well supervised and receive individual attention. Students are welcomed and are deployed appropriately.

Children and parents benefit from a range of policies and procedures implemented by the staff. Parents can access information about the group through posters, notice boards and talking

with their key persons. Records are in order and kept confidential; the daily register reflects the times of arrival and departure of the children accurately and consent forms are in place.

Leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. Emphasis has been placed on getting the group onto a strong footing and ensuring that the staff are suitably qualified and enthusiastic about their work. There is a positive attitude to training and getting the team to work well together. The manager has identified some of the weaknesses in their practice which the team endeavour to correct and improve. These revolve around the planning, the delivery of the areas of learning and partnership with parents. Children have a very short time at the setting as they enter the adjoining school well before their fourth birthday. The manager said that she sets realistic targets for these very young children, meeting their individual requirements and getting them ready to enter school.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration a concern was raised with Ofsted that the premises were not secure; that a child had been able to leave them unsupervised and that children were not supervised at all times. We carried out an unannounced visit to investigate and National Standards 2 (Organisation), 6 (Safety) and 14 (Documentation) were covered.

There was no evidence to suggest a breach of any standard and no further action has been taken. However, two recommendations for improvement have been made. Additionally, an allegation that the provider had failed to comply with conditions of registration was investigated.

There was evidence to suggest that conditions of registration had not been complied with on one occasion but that the provider had a reasonable excuse and took prompt and appropriate action when she became aware of the breach. No further action has been taken. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The 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 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):

- promote children's understanding of healthy eating and the benefits of exercise
- consider ways to extend awareness of diversity, expand resources and how boys and girls play and learn.

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):

- ensure that plans are linked to the six areas of learning and that it is clear what children are intended to learn
- develop strategies to use staff's observations of the children to help them move on to the next stages of learning
- increase parents' awareness of the Foundation Stage/early learning goals and their role as primary educators of their children.

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