

Hilltop Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY355968
Inspection date	08 July 2008
Inspector	Deborah Jane Starr
Setting Address	St. Barnabas C of E Primary School, West Hill, Portishead, Bristol, Avon, BS20 6LN
Telephone number	01275390947
E-mail	stbarnabas.pri@n-somerset.gov.uk
Registered person	Portishead Playgroup
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?

Hilltop Pre-School first opened in the 1960s and moved to the current premises in 2007. It operates from within a designated room in St Barnabas C of E School, Portishead, North Somerset. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding area.

The pre-school opens from 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.30 to 15.00 five days a week during school term time. There are currently 82 children from two to under five years on roll; of these, 56 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or difficulties and for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff who work directly with the children; of these, five staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards an appropriate qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority. Hilltop Pre-School is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is effectively promoted. Established good hygiene routines and clear expectations of staff increase children's awareness of the importance of maintaining good health. Children follow independence routines and develop an awareness of their own self care. Children spontaneously use the toilet and wash their hands after using this area, before and after snacks and after messy play. Children benefit because staff follow effective procedures and practices that protect them from the spread of illness and risk of infection. For example, children are excluded when unwell, parents are informed of and advised through information leaflets as to appropriate treatment for example, chicken pox, children use individual paper towels and/or wet wipes according to age, know when to wipe their nose and dispose of tissues appropriately. Staff follow thorough nappy changing procedures and undertake regular cleaning routines. Most staff hold a valid first aid certificate and provide appropriate care if a child has an accident. Procedures for the recording of accidents and management of medication are appropriate and consistently followed.

All children enjoy a varied range of physical activities on a daily basis that contribute to their good health and help them develop control and coordination of their bodies. Children negotiate the space around themselves and others safely. They climb in and out of 'coupe' cars and move forwards and backwards. A tunnel and equipment to create obstacle courses for instance when participating in their own Olympics promotes children's skills to crawl under, through and over objects. Children enjoy regular opportunities to move to music and develop coordination skills when singing action songs such as 'The Wheels on the Bus' and 'Heads Shoulders Knees and Toes'. Resources such as, music and movement tapes provide opportunities for development and coordination of movements and an awareness of the effects of exercise on their bodies. Children take note of bodily changes putting on coats when playing outside. Regular planned physical play offers sufficient challenge and develops children's skills further. All children enjoy plenty of opportunities for fresh air. Children effectively use small tools such as, a variety of scissors to cut card and paper, shape cutters with dough and paint brushes to create their own pictures.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. Balanced and nutritious snacks of fresh fruit and savoury foods such as breadsticks and cheese as supplied jointly with parents promotes children's understanding of a healthy diet. Planned cookery activities and tasting sessions promote children's awareness further. Children's dietary needs are clearly displayed for staff to view and taken account of fully. Older children easily access drinking water throughout the day from a covered jug placed on a low level table. Children under three years, are regularly offered drinks by staff. Children rest according to their needs on floor cushions and in the carpeted area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Daily monitoring of hazards in all areas used by children in conjunction with annually reviewed written risk assessments effectively promotes children's safety. Security precautions in place when entering the premises, such as, the monitoring of the entrance gate, use of a visitors book and procedures for the collection of children further safeguards children's welfare. High ratios of adults to children ensure children are supervised at all times. Children develop an understanding of their own personal safety through clear guidance given by staff. For example,

they keep their own space safe when helping to tidy up, regularly practise fire drills and are guided to sit safely in chairs. Older children know how to use scissors safely and develop an awareness of people who help them through themed activities and access to props such as traffic lights and a zebra crossing that they use in their imaginative play. Children play happily with a varied range of safe, good quality toys and equipment that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Staff protect children from harm. They have a good working knowledge and understanding of the issues related to child protection and are clear as to their responsibilities and reporting procedures within the setting. Parents are appropriately informed of these responsibilities through an easily accessible written policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff's sensitive approach effectively helps children separate from their parents and settle into the pre-school. Children develop relaxed, positive relationships with staff, consequently this increases their sense of well-being. Staff support all children well to try new experiences and give children time to finish their own work in an unhurried way. For example, two year olds are able to complete their own painting uninterrupted, eating their snack in their own time. Young children take an interest in their environment for instance, noticing that their T-shirt is the same as others stored in a storage box. Children make marks using crayons, self select puzzles, matching and sequencing the pieces with the support of staff. They are intrigued by the feel of sand trickling through their fingers and are encouraged to use familiar objects such as scoops, spoons and small containers to fill a funnel and watch the effects. Staff have a sound understanding of child development and how resources promote different aspects of learning, this is reflected in the adaptation of some activities planned for older children such as, vegetable printing. Staff make observations of the range of activities that children play with and link these to the Birth to three matters framework. However, these observations are not regularly evaluated and used to inform on a regular basis the planning of activities that promote the next steps in children's development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Well-qualified and experienced staff are clear as to the learning intention of activities and ask frequent clear open-ended questions such as 'what', 'how' and 'why' that help children develop their own thoughts and ideas. Clear displays of questions around the room remind staff of how they can develop children's ideas and extend their thinking. Regular observations of what children know and do are recorded and linked to the areas of learning in children's individual learning profiles. These are regularly evaluated against the stepping stones at termly meetings and used to identify children's next steps. Discussion at the start of each session based upon up to date observations ensures that all staff are made aware of how they extend activities to offer appropriate challenges.

Children have a positive attitude towards learning. Activities using familiar props help children to effectively make connections between their experiences. For example, children identify the initial sound and letter 'W' aided by cereal packets, drinking bottles, small world play objects and footwear. They talk about their experiences at home when taking turns to manipulate a hand whisk, using circular movements and discuss how healthy foods at breakfast time help

them grow. Children identify shapes such as rectangle and square when looking at photographs of windows whilst, some children recognise an arch. They use scissors effectively and safely to cut around shapes and create a frame for their own picture. Children identify that some scissors create a different pattern. Children attach strips of paper recognising that some are long and others short and are encouraged to compare and work out the length of tape needed to attach the frame, using a dispenser.

Children spontaneously look at books and handle them correctly. They eagerly listen to stories such as 'Fred the Frazzled Fireman' and anticipate what will happen next. They understand that print has meaning, identify familiar letters in their own names at self registration and when sorting magnetic letters and shapes and use this developing skill in their imaginative play. Children spontaneously attempt mark making using crayons and pencils when writing on paper and cards and fold and manipulate them into envelopes. They write with a purpose to label photographs of an outing and invite friends to parties and to send letters to their family. They attach and create their own stamps and post them into a post box, talking about what they are doing. For instance, informing the visiting inspector how many letters they have posted whilst also opening the box to re-count and confirm the number. Staff thoughtfully place a variety of boxes and wrapping paper to extend this activity.

Children are interested in the world around them, they look carefully at snails brought in from the outside area, observe patterns on their shells and recreate through drawings and paintings what they have seen on walks around the local area. Children observe change through observing the weather and the lifecycle of living things such as, tadpoles. Visits by parents with specialist skills such as a policeman, vet and musicians and involvement with events such as, the annual carnival promote an awareness of the local community. Children use equipment such as a computer key board and telephones in their imaginary play. Access to programmable toys and information and communication technology (ICT) equipment is limited. Children develop a clear sense of routine and time, they recognise when they must tidy up and when to join together in the larger group. They talk about past experiences such as visits to a summer fayre and talk about the future referring to which school they will attend.

Staff use everyday routines and experiences effectively to promote children's learning and understanding further. Children correctly count the number of cups from one to seven at snack time. They recognise there are too many and count how many children are sitting at the table and add on one more to include the adult and identify correctly they have two, too many. Children discuss the importance of milk for growth and make healthy choices between milk and water pouring their own drinks. Children self select fruit, recognise correctly how many pieces they have on each plate and refer to the shape of objects on the table such as a circular plate.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Displays of children's own work, photographs of themselves, self registration and the singing of the 'Hello' song at the start of each day promote children's sense of value and belonging. All children are welcomed individually and warmly by staff. Children take pride in their achievements, setting to one side models they have made to show their parent at the end of the session. Staff work effectively with parents and a range of professionals to clearly identify the individual needs of children and ensure appropriate steps are taken to support children and their families. Appropriate systems provide a suitable framework to identify achievable targets for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Use of resources such as, a pictorial

sequence chart help children understand the routines of the day. Staff work closely with children and parents for whom English is not their first language. A varied range of resources distributed throughout the setting reflect positive images and help promote a positive attitude towards difference. Children participate in some activities throughout the year that promote an awareness of the diversity of the wider world such as Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Parents are very appreciative and supportive of the care given to their children by the staff; children benefit from this excellent relationship. Parents are well-informed of their child's daily experiences and care through daily discussions with staff, clearly displayed information about small group activities on entering the premises, easy accessibility to policies and procedures, regular newsletters, a website, a wide range of information on the parent notice board and active involvement through an effective parent rota. Staff's frequent use of praise and encouragement effectively promotes children's sense of well-being and promotes their self-esteem; this is further enhanced through the acknowledgment of children's positive behaviour by the use of the 'Happy Tree'. Staff effectively support children to understand the routines of the day, share, take turns and play cooperatively together through the setting of consistent boundaries, use of age appropriate and varied strategies and resources. For example, the recent introduction of folding arms during large group time acts as an effective signal to children that they must listen to each other and adults, whilst the use of a tambourine signifies changes in the session, such as tidy up time. The staff's calm and consistent approach provides clear role models for children and leaves them in no doubt about what is expected of them. Children's behaviour is good. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Discussion with parents when children join the pre-school room and written information within a prospectus provides parents with clear initial information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Displays of planning linked to the areas of learning and resource sheets identify how resources promote learning. Parents are helped to understand their own child's progress through easy access at any time and more formally when their child's learning profile is sent home three times each year. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's progress with staff and to include written comments about their own child's achievements at home. Children benefit from their parents' involvement in activities such as the provision of resources for themes and the sharing of skills. Books such as 'Chatter matters' and information sheets on how activities promote learning through everyday activities and experiences at home enables parents to be actively involved with their own child's ongoing learning .

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are supported by appropriately qualified staff. Systems in place for the recruitment, checking, induction and ongoing support of staff ensures they are suitable to work with children. Staff's understanding and knowledge of policies and procedures is reflected in practice and therefore, contributes to children's well-being. Staff develop their knowledge, skills and practice through regular training opportunities. The committee and staff are committed to the improvement of the provision; for example, having identified a clear action plan to develop the outside play area. Staff create a welcoming and inviting environment for all children. The frequent use of the outside play area and lay out of the play room gives children space to participate in a varied range of self-selected and adult-led activities. All children easily access resources from well-organised, clearly labelled storage containers and low level drawers and surfaces. Child-sized tables, chairs, large floor cushions and carpeted areas enables children to investigate resources and sit comfortably. Bright visual displays of children's own work alongside

posters and resources of difference, number and letter stimulate children's interest and effectively contributes to their learning. Staff reflect on their practice and take on board comments made by parents such as, accessibility to certain resources at the start of each session.

Children's well-being is promoted through documentation that is relevant, well-organised, accurate and maintained confidentially and securely. The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. All staff work closely as a team. Frequent discussions and regular formal meetings provide good opportunities for staff to recognise children's achievements, identify their next steps and reflect this in the future planning and lay out of activities. The staff's good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and system of monitoring by the leader and deputy ensures that all six areas of learning are given sufficient emphasis. Consequently, children are offered an interesting, varied and balanced range of activities that promote development, offer appropriate challenges and move children forward.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last nursery education inspection the following recommendations were raised. To make clear the link between the assessment of children's learning and planning for the future. To develop opportunities for children to freely access and explore modelling materials and tools and to consider how they use activities and opportunities to extend children's learning.

Staff are committed to improvement and weaknesses at the last education inspection have been addressed. Clear linking of observations to the stepping stones ensures that children's achievements are evaluated and their next steps identified, this is reflected in future planning. A move by the pre-school to premises that are for their sole use has enabled staff to plan an environment that gives children free access at all times to modelling materials and tools through self selection. Discussion between staff, role modelling of good practice by the leader and clear written prompts in all areas of the pre-school act as effective reminders of how staff can extend children's learning.

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):

- develop further the use of observations of what children under three years know and do to plan activities that promote their next steps in development
- offer regular meaningful activities that help children gain an awareness of and develop a positive attitude towards the diversity of the wider world [includes 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):

- develop further opportunities for children to access ICT equipment 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