

Thatcham Children's Centre Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 507888
Inspection date 19/11/2008
Inspector Jenny Scarlett

Setting address Lower Way, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG19 3RR

Telephone number 01635 872008
Email admin@tccpreschool.co.uk
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Thatcham Children's Centre Pre-School opened in 1992. It operates from Thatcham Children's Centre, a community building in the heart of Thatcham in West Berkshire and serves the local area. The building has good access and facilities for wheelchair users. The pre-school uses a large hall with ready access to a large outdoor play area of grass and tarmac. The pre-school also has access to an adjacent purpose-built adventure play area.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school terms. Sessions run from 09.15 to 11.45 and from 12.15 to 14.45. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register.

The pre-school is registered to provide care for 26 children aged from two to five years at any one session. There are currently 59 children on role. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven staff of whom four have appropriate early years qualifications. An early years teacher from the local authority and the area Special Educational Needs Coordinator provide regular support.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The pre-school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a safe and secure environment. The supervisor and committee are new, therefore roles are still being established; as a result, the pre-school is adjusting to significant changes. The staff work with parents and other professionals to ensure that the individual needs of children are being met. The supervisor has begun to review practice and together with the staff team implements some positive strategies to ensure that children with specific needs are appropriately supported. A commitment to training is evident and staff are developing knowledge of the EYFS to enable them to plan appropriately for children's learning.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review the information gained for identifying children's starting points so that staff consider their needs, their interests, and their stages of development and explore ways to involve all parents in their child's learning and development to support extended learning in the home
- explore ways of managing the session routine to enable all children to settle and pursue their own interests on arrival
- show particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children learning English as an additional language, using key words of their home

language when appropriate

- ensure that children's learning and development occur as an outcome of their individual interests and abilities and that planning for learning and development takes account of these.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- develop robust systems for staff recruitment and induction programmes for new staff (Suitable people) 01/12/2008
- update the written risk assessments to identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis and set timescales for their review. (Documentation) 01/12/2008

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are kept safe through secure practices in the setting. Staff demonstrate sound knowledge of the setting's policies and procedures and implement them effectively to promote children's health and protect their welfare. These were observed to be tried and tested effectively with children feeling unwell and the good security procedures in place when parents and carers collect their children.

Staff understand the required procedures for safeguarding children. Risk assessments are conducted to identify and reduce potential hazards in the setting. However, these are not reviewed and are considerably out of date. This means staff do not constantly reassess both the environments and activities to which children are being exposed which does not promote their well-being at all times. Recruitment, vetting procedures and subsequent induction programmes for new staff are implemented in practice although are not robust. References and a full employment history are not consistently followed up and the induction programme is adhoc.

In the short time the supervisor has been in position she has undertaken some informal self-evaluation of the provision. She is aware of some of the setting's strengths and weaknesses and has identified some areas for further improvement. However, the current system does not yet reflect rigorous monitoring of what the pre-school does well and areas for improvement. Nevertheless the supervisor is open to suggestions and seeks as well as acts on ongoing advice and support from the Early Years partnership team. In addition, the staff seek advice from the area's special educational needs coordinator, for example, when determining how best to help children with learning difficulties.

Parents and carers are provided with a range of information via display boards and formal and informal discussions with staff. The suggestions box is utilised well providing parents with opportunities to share concerns and achievements. The pre-school has worked hard to get parents involved in the setting by planning a 'dad's day' with positive results. They recognise parents are busy with work and family

life and offer ongoing informal opportunities for them to discuss their child's progress although parents do not contribute to their child's profiles.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children play in a spacious and airy environment, where after initial registration on arrival they are able to make choices and initiate their own play. Most children arrive confident and happy with good one to one support particularly for those who are new and feeling apprehensive. However, the current routine of the session inhibits those that are feeling less secure to arrive and enter an established group time.

Children enjoy using resources and have fun as they take part in activities. They explore ways to move around the obstacle course and attempt to throw bean bags in numbered squares. They balance on beams and help each other by holding hands if unsure. Numerous child initiated activities take place and children show confidence in exploring their environment. Most staff help children to enjoy their learning and make some progress towards the early learning goals although, this is not always in relation to their starting points and capabilities. They observe children during play and begin to track their development and progress. Staff are developing their knowledge of the EYFS, although have yet to adopt planning that is flexible enough to adapt to circumstances and focus on children's learning needs, interests and achievements.

Children are provided with a satisfactory range of stimulating activities such as biscuit decorating. They are at times active learners, for example finding an insect in the sand and using magnifying glass to explore the insect. However, some staff interaction is not consistent which means opportunities to encourage children's creative and critical thinking are missed. Children are able to work independently and at times with each other, for example during role play or when completing puzzles. There is a wealth of play resources and opportunities, such as construction, play dough, water play, mark making and crafts. However, the abundance of resources available means at times children have too much choice and subsequently they become distracted in their play.

Children access the outdoor area throughout the sessions promoting good opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They have access to the covered veranda which enables them to fully take part in outdoor activities. Some children enjoy the challenge of the basketball net and attempt with some success to throw the ball into the net. Others enjoy playing football games. The sand and water is a popular activity enjoyed by the children throughout the session. Children show good concentration skills as they explore how the cars and lorries go up and down the drain pipes in the sand.

A range of cultural festivals are celebrated with the children at various times during the year. In addition, the children take part in charity and community events which enhance their knowledge of the world around them. Some staff have attended suitable training in relation to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there are appropriate systems in place to support children in the

setting. There are also strategies in place to enable staff to support children who speak English as an additional language. Children learn about each others' similarities and differences through the use of posters, resources and books which all portray positive images of diversity. Picture and photo cards are used effectively to identify routine changes in the session and aid all children to feel included. Although little is done for staff to learn key words to welcome children learning English as an additional language into the setting.

Children develop an understanding of a healthy lifestyle with opportunities for daily, physical activities. They eat a variety of healthy and nutritious snacks such as malt loaf and carrot sticks. Children are aware of simple hygiene routines as staff encourage them to wash their hands before eating to avoid cross-infection. Staff teach children to behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. As a result, children are developing an understanding of danger and how to stay safe, for example, when moving beams and walking inside. Staff understand the need to keep children safe and minimise risk through regular checks so that children play in a safe and secure environment. Required documentation relating to safety issues is in place. However, the risk assessments are not reviewed often enough.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration or the last inspection.

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.