

Silsoe Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	219295
Inspection date	06/02/2009
Inspector	David Wynford Jones

Setting address	Silsoe Lower School, High Street, SILSOE, Bedfordshire, MK45 4ES
Telephone number	07932 049656
Email	jacquishpherd@btconnect.com
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 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).

Description of the setting

Silsoe Pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee. It opened approximately 35 years ago and operates from a classroom within Silsoe Lower School. The pre-school is open each weekday during term-time and sessions are from 08:50 to 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:15. A lunch club is offered to link the two sessions.

Children come from the local and surrounding community. There are currently 31 children on roll aged from two years to under five years. Of these, 27 children receive funding for nursery education. However, not all attend every session. This is because a maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language. There is suitable access for children and adults with physical difficulties.

The setting employs nine staff. Four work on a full time basis. Three of these, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The remaining five cover absences. None of these hold early years qualifications.

The setting is registered under the Early Years Register. It is not registered under the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

This is a good setting with good capacity for further improvement. Good leadership, effective team work and links with parents ensure that all children are happy, settled, included and well cared for. As a result, they want to attend and enjoy learning. Children make particularly good progress in their social development and in developing independent learning skills.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide a covered area which can be used in all weathers as an extension of the classroom learning environment
- ensure displays include elements which support the children's development in reading and writing
- further develop links with the Lower School to ensure there is a common understanding of standards and how they will be assessed.

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

- identify a named deputy who is able to take charge in the absence of the manager.

10/04/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Silsoe Pre-school is well-led and managed. Staff work together effectively to ensure that the children feel safe, enjoy their learning and make good progress. The manager has good understanding the setting's strengths and areas for development. She judges the overall provision to be good. The issues identified at the last inspection have been tackled effectively. The recently completed self-evaluation form accurately reflects the provision and identifies the appropriate areas for development. As a result, the setting has good capacity to improve further.

All relevant policies are in place and have been updated recently. Procedures for safeguarding children meet requirements. There is a named member of staff who manages the support of children with learning difficulties and or disabilities and ensures that everyone is included in all that the setting has to offer. Routine risk assessments are thorough and undertaken on a regular basis. The safety and welfare of the children has a high priority. Staff are consistently vigilant but especially at the start and end of the sessions. They check each child into the playgroup and make certain that, at the end of the session the children are handed over safely to the named person.

The good adult:child ratio means that the staff know all the children well and strong relationships are fostered. Each child is allocated a key worker, who provides good direct support and guides the child's learning experiences. As a result, the children behave well, feel settled and quickly grow in self-confidence. Links with parents are good. Systems for communication, including informal dialogue and by newsletter are effective and firmly embedded. Parents are very happy with the provision. Many become involved and attend a range of social and fund raising functions. This contributes effectively to promoting community links. The management committee monitors the work of the setting well. However, the committee has not appointed a deputy manager to take charge in the absence of the manager.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Effective induction arrangements and good relationships ensure that the children settle quickly and develop a positive attitude to learning. Parent and staff initial assessments are used well to identify each child's starting point and to plan future work. Staff assess that most children start with skills and knowledge broadly similar to those expected for their respective ages. From this broadly average starting point, the vast majority make good progress, particularly in developing their social skills and in taking responsibility for themselves. By the age of four, the vast majority of the children are working securely at the expected levels. This is as a result of the importance the staff place on promoting the children's personal

development and providing a good balance between activities that are initiated by the children and those that are led by adults. In addition, children are provided with a wide range of opportunities which successfully promote their development across the six areas of learning. Classroom displays reflect the emphasis placed on promoting the children's understanding of number, healthy eating and celebrating their art work. However, displays to consolidate and further promote their early reading skills and making marks are less obvious.

Strong links are fostered as the children quickly develop their relationships with their key worker. These adults ask questions that encourage children to think and understand language. The key workers maintain a detailed assessment folder on each child. Ongoing observations are methodically recorded and regularly shared with parents. However, the setting has yet to analyse the assessments to more rigorously demonstrate attainment and the rate of the children's progress. Staff in the pre-school and in the Reception class of Silsoe Lower school are increasingly working together to provide continuity in practice. Currently, they are seeking to ensure they hold a common understanding of standards and how these will be assessed. However, this initiative is still in the early stages of development.

Planning is good and clearly identifies the learning opportunities for each activity. The activities are planned around a theme to meet the interests of the children whilst still being able to respond to special events. For example, during the inspection there was a heavy fall of snow. A song and movement tape was selected carefully so that children could practise putting on and wearing hats and scarves. It also encouraged them to listen carefully, follow instructions and understand the importance of keeping warm. Staff ensure that children with learning difficulties or disabilities are fully included in all activities.

Inclement weather meant that the outdoor area was not used during the inspection other than for a brief time when the children went out to play in the snow. Nevertheless, staff used this opportunity to teach the children how to dress themselves properly and to further their understanding of the importance of playing together sensibly and staying safe. There is good photographic evidence to demonstrate that the outdoor area is used well to support learning. However, learning opportunities are restricted because there is not a suitable covered area.

Snack and lunch times are well planned to encourage children to develop good eating habits and to engage in conversation. Children know about the importance of washing their hands and can express their views on their preferences for eating different fruit. The positive start in the pre-school equips the children well for the next stage of their education.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
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?	2

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

