

Southmead Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 106374
Inspection date 22/06/2009
Inspector Mark Anderson

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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

Southmead Pre-School has been registered since 1994 and is on the Early Years Register. The setting is run by a committee. It is situated in a mobile classroom in the grounds of Southmead Primary School, in the village of Braunton, Devon, and serves the local community. The premises comprise one main room and adjoining cloakrooms and a separate outdoor play area. There is appropriate access for the disabled. Children have access to the school playing fields and hard surface playground for outdoor play.

The pre-school is registered to care for up to 21 children, aged from two to five years. Only four two-year-olds may attend at any one time. There are currently 35 children on roll, including 31 funded three- and four-year-olds. Sessions are held on weekday mornings in term time, from 9:00 to 11:30. An afternoon session is available on Tuesdays from 12.30 until 15.00. A lunch club is available on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 11.30 to 12.30.

There are four members of staff, and at least three staff are present during each session. Two members of staff have a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3, one has a NVQ at level 4 and one is currently studying for a B.A. degree in Early Years. The pre-school welcomes and supports children with English as an additional language, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The group receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Early Years Alliance.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. The setting provides every child with a wonderful start to their education. The staff are well qualified and ensure the welfare and safety of the children at all times. All aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and Every Child Matters agenda are extremely well catered for. Each child is treated as a unique individual and the staff are always prepared to go the extra mile to ensure that every child is valued and their needs are met. The staff have formed excellent relationships with the parents and they are kept fully involved and informed. The pre-school sets itself very high standards in all aspects of its practice and displays an extremely strong determination to improve even further.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continue to develop links with other childcare settings and encourage staff to take on further ongoing professional development

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of the pre-school are outstanding. The systems that are in place for the assessment and recording of each individual's progress are detailed and are used most effectively to inform the planning which takes into account the interests, learning styles and needs of each individual. These systems ensure that the staff have a very clear picture of the children's progress and abilities. Self-evaluation is highly self-critical and effective and ensures that there is no complacency but rather a desire to go one step further all the time.

All statutory requirements are in place. The required documentation is regularly reviewed and kept up to date. All logs are carefully completed and also kept fully up to date. Safeguarding procedures are well understood by all staff and rigorously implemented, ensuring that nothing is left to chance regarding the children's welfare and security.

Links with parents are excellent and the setting is held in extremely high regard. There are regular newsletters, formal parents' meetings as well as social events. Parents receive regular reports on their child's progress and many parents actively support the setting in a variety of ways, including tending the garden areas. They place a high value on the open door policy practised by the setting. The quality of the children's Learning Journeys is of the highest order and these records reflect the attention to detail that is embedded in every nook and cranny.

The setting's relationship with the primary school is very positive and the pre-school has access to a wide range of facilities including the school playing fields and playground. The majority of children transfer onto the Reception form and this move to the 'big school' is made as smooth as possible through the regular liaison and contacts that exist.

The children love coming to the setting and are very comfortable and familiar with the routines. Relationships with the adults are exceptionally good. The staff form a very effective team and their skills and personalities complement each other, forming a complete jigsaw of skills and expertise. They are well aware of their respective roles and responsibilities. Their commitment to the children's care and development is exemplary. The implementation of the key worker system has been very well received by the parent body and has been extremely successful.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The children are happy and confident. They clearly feel safe, secure and looked after. The pre-school is regarded by many as a home from home which is possibly the highest praise.

The pre-school room is extremely well organised and is divided into different areas, including a sensory area, role play zone and wet play facility. Every surface and wall space is filled with something of interest. From the well-fed goldfish in their tank to the display of seagull's eggs there is so much going on in a relatively small

space. Activities and displays are changed frequently to ensure that the children are always presented with new experiences and learning activities, such as growing their own vegetables.

The atmosphere is calm and relaxed. The children's behaviour is excellent and they take full advantage of the 'free flow' routine that has become so well embedded. They are very helpful to staff and towards each other and are strongly encouraged to be aware of the needs of others. Their creative work contributes to a number of colourful and lively displays which include a lot of current photographs reflecting the busy life of the pre-school.

The children are very imaginative. A group was observed recreating 'Star Wars' characters whilst at the same time a member of staff was being very competently bandaged up in the pre-school hospital. There is a gated outdoor play area to which the children also have free flow access. There are many opportunities for the children to be physically active.

Staff are excellent role models as well as being genuinely enthusiastic play partners. This was particularly apparent during an impromptu 'Sports Day' on the school field when staff took part in a sprint race with the children. Parents and children are given ample opportunity to comment upon the quality and standards through regular parental questionnaires. It is quite telling that the only two negative comments noted were a parental observation that occasionally the children brought home models that were still somewhat sticky and a child's comment that the only bad thing about the pre-school was having to go home !

The children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well prepared to move onto the next stage of their education. They are taught the importance of a healthy diet and exercise and were very willing helpers when it was time to prepare the morning snack which consisted of a variety of fruit, yoghurt, crackers and milk. Some children really enjoyed devising their own individual milkshakes.

The children are encouraged to be independent learners and many individuals display a maturity beyond their years. They are extremely well prepared to move onto the next phase 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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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