

Postman Pat Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	109589
Inspection date	23/09/2009
Inspector	Janet Armstrong
Setting address	Scout Hall, Canford Heath, Sherborn Crescent, Poole, Dorset, BH17 8AP
Telephone number	01202 698649 or 07981 322243
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

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).

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Postman Pat Pre-School has been open since 1982 and operates from the scout hall in Canford Heath, Poole, Dorset. The pre-school is committee run and provides care for up to 26 children from age two to under eight years. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, term time only from 9.00am to 3.00pm with a lunch club from 11.30am to 12.30pm.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 62 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The pre-school is in receipt of the government funding for early education. The pre-school has links with other early years settings and schools in the area.

The premises can be accessed via a ramp and the accommodation is set out on the same level. It offers use of a large main hall and side room with toilets, a kitchen and store rooms. There are two enclosed outdoor play areas, one of which has been decked and is used to support 'free-flow' play.

The pre-school employs a qualified play leader who holds NVQ Level 3 in childcare and education. She is supported by seven members of staff, of whom six hold a recognised childcare qualification and one who is working towards one. Three of the staff team are currently working towards a foundation degree in early years.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are very happy, confident and settled in the child-orientated, friendly and welcoming environment set up for them by staff. The children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting and enthusiastically engage in the wide range of activities on offer. They receive lots of positive support from staff who meet their individual needs well and help them to feel valued. This means that children have high levels of self-esteem. The setting demonstrates very good capacity to maintain continuous improvement. This is due to effective management systems for monitoring the quality of the provision that has enabled them to make many changes since their last inspection, improving outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop staff effectiveness through their interaction with the children and use of the good range of activities on offer to ensure that they fully challenge and extend the children in their learning
- build on the good systems already in place to; support boys in all aspects of their learning, particularly their literacy skills, based on their interests, and

further support the children in making connections between their positive experiences to secure their understanding of people's differences.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is promoted well within the setting. There are robust recruitment systems to determine staff's suitability. Staff have a secure awareness and understanding of child protection issues and their responsibility to safeguard children. They supervise the children well in their play and daily routines to ensure that they are safe. Effective risk assessments are completed each day by staff to monitor the areas used by the children and take appropriate action to address any potential issues. The children help staff to complete a basic assessment of the premises, which helps to raise their awareness of potential hazards and safety features within their environment.

Very good use has been made of the large hall, with an excellent range of activities and play opportunities for children to independently access, that covers all six areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There is lots of space and different areas for the children to fully engage in their play. An inviting and calm environment is provided for children each day by staff. This mean that children enter the setting with enthusiasm and interest, keen to get involved in an activity of their choice. Children are encouraged to make use of the decked outdoor play area available to them in all weathers, with use of a gazebo to protect them from the full sun and access to wet-weather gear if needed.

Equality and diversity is positively promoted within the setting to help children learn about people's differences and to respect and show care for others. There is a good range of resources in the setting to raise children's awareness of difference. The children are well behaved and learn the 'golden rules' to help them form friendships. Staff support the children well to help them understand to share, take turns and be kind. The children benefit from links with a local school for children with severe special educational needs and/or disabilities. Regular visits between the two settings enables the children to interact, share experiences and learn Makaton, which helps them to develop other ways of communicating. Opportunities for children to make connections and build on these positive experiences are not extended to secure their understanding of people's differences.

Staff are well deployed and move around the play room, engaging with the children in their play choices. Although, they are not always skilled at fully challenging the children to extend their learning in their chosen activities through questioning, use of language and new concepts, such as simple calculation in the role play shop area, and providing opportunities for children to problem solve. Staff are attentive to the children's care needs and support them sensitively so they are able to settle quickly. Staff are encouraged to attend regular training opportunities and cascade their new learning with the rest of the staff team for consistency and to support improvements to practice. They work well together as a team sharing tasks and responsibilities.

Management is highly motivated and effective in driving ambition amongst the staff team. They have worked hard since their last inspection to make improvements to practice. They evaluate practice well and prioritise areas for improvement. Staff are encouraged to share their views and contribute to planning and better practice. Staff attend regular training opportunities to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date. Self-evaluation systems work well to identify key strengths and weaknesses. Management regularly seek the views of parents about the service offered and take action to address any issues. For example, the front area of the premises doubled up as a car park to parents at the start of each session and was then used by the children as a playground. This gave the children mixed messages about its use and some parents found it difficult to support children's safety. This area is now dedicated to the children's use only and supports parents in keeping their children safe as they enter the setting.

There are strong links with parents and other early years settings that the children attend. Parents are informed about staff practices and procedures through daily access to written policies and procedures. They receive regular newsletters keeping them up-to-date of the themes and issues and information relating to their children's care and learning. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children and staff keep them informed each day of routines, activities enjoyed and any achievements. The setting communicates well with local schools and other early years providers that the children attend, meeting regularly and use of a three-way communication book to share and record relevant information and the children's next steps. This helps to promote consistency and continuity in the care and education children receive.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children's welfare is promoted well to encourage them to lead healthy lifestyles, keep safe and help others. Children follow positive personal hygiene routines. They have access to 'cleaning up stations' with mirrors, tissues and wipes so that they can 'clean' themselves up after meal times. They enjoy lots of outdoor play opportunities, where they learn new skills with hoops and ride-on-toys. They help staff to cut up fruit and vegetables for snack time, showing developing control and coordination of their fine motor skills and hand/eye coordination. Children develop a sense of pride and self-confidence through recognition of being well behaved, where they are chosen as special helpers to take on specific tasks each day, such as washing up the snack plates and cups. Children learn the 'golden rules', such as 'don't hit anyone and don't climb on the fence!' This helps them to identify potential hazards and be aware of any risks as they play.

Children have a positive disposition to their learning. They are eager to arrive and get involved in an activity of their choice. They use their language well to communicate and share their needs, thoughts and ideas with others. For example, they 'show and tell' items brought in from home, sharing with the other children what they are and why they have brought them in. They are learning to use numbers and counting, for example, when discussing the number of the week, a

three-year-old tells the others that they are three and uses three fingers to show this.

Children get lots of support from staff who interact and get involved in the children's play. Although, not all activities and staff interaction fully challenge and extend the children's learning, such as a sticking activity using three pre-cut out sheep.

Children enjoy using the creative/messy area of the hall, where they have access to a range of different creative activities, such as play dough with access to tools and utensils to help them roll, cut and mould the dough, a painting easel and perspex painting board where the children can take prints of their creations. They have independent access to a range of resources that allows them to self-initiate their own ideas using their imaginations. For example, a two-year-old becomes fully engrossed and focused, using the tissue paper, scissors, glue, glitter and sugar paper to make a picture. Staff are on hand to reassure and offer praise.

Children enjoy the use of two large role play areas, one of which has been set up well as a shop with resources to enable the children to act out different roles of customer and shop keeper. Under the encouragement of staff, they select food items, scan them and pack them. Although, there is limited extension by staff to introduce the children to using number language and simple addition and subtraction when paying for their items and identifying how much things cost.

Consideration has been given to supporting boys in their learning. Staff ensure that they have free access to the outdoor play area to support their ideas and interests, enabling them to let off steam and be more physically active. The boys enjoy the ride-on-toys, negotiating space and taking turns. Some are starting to use the pedals to propel themselves. Steps have not yet been taken to help extend the boys' learning so that they can develop and practise literacy skills in their play.

Comprehensive planning systems are in place that identify themes and activities that are linked to the six areas of learning and steps within. Children's next steps in their learning have been identified from their records of assessment and form part of the planning so that staff are aware of what support children need. Each child has their own record of assessment that shows the progress they are making in line with the EYFS areas of learning and different stages. They are supported by information from parents, photographs of the children in their play, along with observations of the various activities they are engaged in and their identified next steps.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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

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