



Thorpe Acre Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY283409
Inspection date	10 October 2005
Inspector	Kate Bryan
Setting Address	c/o Thorpe Acre Infants School, Alan Moss Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 4SQ
Telephone number	07803 054757
E-mail	
Registered person	Thorpe Acre Pre-School Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Thorpe Acre Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1968. It operates from a mobile unit situated in the grounds of Thorpe Acre Infant School in Loughborough. There is a separate enclosed garden and playground available for outside play. The group serves the local community and surrounding villages.

There are currently 41 children on roll. This includes 25 funded children. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The setting supports a child with special

needs and can offer support to those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week, during term-times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:30

and 13:00 until 15:30 Monday to Friday. A lunch club operates between sessions.

There are five staff who work with the children, all hold early years qualifications. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local education authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well maintained as clear policies and procedures are in place to ensure they are suitably looked after if they should become ill. They are kept comfortable and warm until they can be collected by parents. Children are well aware of daily routines, such as hand washing, which effectively promotes their health and development. They can use the toilet independently and wash their hands with confidence.

Children are learning to be responsible for their own healthy practices as staff discuss with them the reasons for hand washing and healthy eating. The group does not supply meals but children's needs for a snack and drinks are well met as they have access to a free flow snack bar. This allows them to recognise and respond to their own needs. Children's emotional well-being is effectively promoted as staff work with parents to ensure children's routines are promoted. Children are effectively encouraged to think about healthy eating by topic work on issues covering bodily health and awareness.

Children have access to a good range of equipment for developing physical skills and enjoy being outside daily. They thoroughly enjoy riding scooters and using a climbing cube which ensures that their physical development is well promoted.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is well promoted by vigilant staff who make sure they are not placed in danger. For example, access to the group is by a gate that is manned by staff with a walkie-talkie to ensure that all unauthorised adults are off site. Children's safety is consistently maintained because effective risk assessments are in place to ensure this. These are understood by all staff members so that children are kept safe in line with health and safety requirements.

Children are cared for in a bright, stimulating room with areas set aside for specific activities such as the book corner and home corner. The outdoor area is enclosed

and solely for the children's use which also ensures they are well protected from any stranger danger.

Children have free and easy access to a wide range of good quality resources which promote independence and choice. They use child sized furniture which further contributes to their safety as they can sit at an appropriate height. Children are well protected from the risks of fire by regular drills which are practised with them. They are also effectively encouraged to think about their own safety by discussion, for example, about the safe use of sand outside.

Children are well protected by staff who have a good awareness of child protection procedures and know how to put these into place to promote children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well at the group and enjoy their time there. They receive good levels of adult support which allows them to initiate their own activities and learn at their own pace which increases their confidence and ability to make choices. Children enjoy a good range of activities which are presented by enthusiastic staff members who use their knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to ensure that children make good progress in learning. However, the 'Birth to three' framework is not yet being used to plan activities for younger children although the outcomes from this are well promoted.

Children have many opportunities to develop their creativity and imagination, for example, they enjoy role play in a baker's shop and bake for staff and visitors, imagining the different fruits they use. Children are good communicators because staff spend time talking to them and children can talk to them about what they are doing and expect to be listened to. For example, children were happy to talk to staff about their families and dogs.

Very warm relationships are in place between the staff and the children and staff have a good knowledge of the children as individuals which means they receive support which helps them to develop. They receive lots of praise and encouragement which makes them feel valued and acknowledged. Children are cared for in developmentally appropriate groups with their own sessions and high quality resources are available to support play and learning. For example, children have easy access to a computer and are skilled in using this. They can use programmes to make connections between their actions and expected outcomes and develop confidence in predicting results.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Activities are provided by enthusiastic staff who use effective questioning to promote children's learning. For example, children were able to complete subtraction because staff used a scenario about shopping that the children could relate to. Children are interested in the good range of activities provided which engage and promote their interest and high quality

resources ensure learning is well supported.

Children are confident speakers who use language to describe imaginary situations, such as working in a baker's shop. They are also able to sit and listen and enjoy stories and singing from a good repertoire of songs. Children have favourite books and can complete story lines and supply endings which they do with delight. Children show confidence in mark making and are making good progress recognising their names and forming letters. They can work together to make displays and know that rules must be followed to ensure activities run smoothly. For example, they must take turns on the computer and help to tidy up.

Children's physical skills are not always effectively developed as outdoor activities are not sufficiently structured to direct children's learning. Other areas of learning are well promoted and planning ensures that children make good progress overall. However, planning is not always as effective in highlighting areas for children's individual development. Assessment profiles are completed which show what the children have learned and what they need to learn next.

High levels of adult support ensure that children receive a good balance of child initiated and adult led activities which allows them to enjoy their time at the group.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's needs are well met because staff work closely with parents to ensure that they are always aware of children's changing needs. Parents receive regular updates about their child's progress and can share in children's achievements when they proudly take work home. All children are warmly welcomed into the group and staff have high expectations of them and value them as individuals. This ensures that all children develop self-esteem and a sense of belonging. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered as they learn about other cultures, race and disability. Children's awareness of the wider world is also well promoted as they celebrate a range of festivals and learn about the local community by trips out.

Children's behaviour is managed well by the use of consistent techniques such as withdrawing children from an activity and 'time out' so they learn to reflect upon their behaviour. Children are also well aware of the need for rules to ensure that activities are successful. For example, they help with tidying away which also helps them to feel included in the routines of the group. Children's confidence and self-esteem are well fostered by the good use of praise, for example, when they take turns.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good.

A good partnership is in place with parents who receive a good range of information about the group and their child's progress. Information is taken about individual children but parents do not contribute to a baseline assessment of their child. Parents are aware of the Foundation Stage and receive helpful suggestion sheets which allows them to continue their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children receive high levels of adult support in premises which are organised to effectively promote play and learning. Pre-school children attend the group for morning sessions and younger children attend in the afternoons which allows both groups to progress at their own pace and enhances safety measures in place. For example, younger children can play outside without older children running around them.

Indoor and outdoor space is designed to maximise play and learning opportunities for all children. For example, a veranda area is used effectively to allow the children to have some activities in the open air whilst always being under the close supervision of staff. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed to ensure that children's needs are well met.

Staff are qualified and skilled which means that children receive care and education from a committed staff group who know the children as individuals. Clear policies and procedures are known by all staff and training is well supported so that children benefit from staff with current knowledge.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager is a supportive lead who is committed to working with staff to deliver a good quality service to all children. To ensure this all staff are qualified and undertake regular training so that children receive an up to date service. The manager has completed an action plan to ensure that her vision for the group is fulfilled. For example, transition arrangements for children entering school are to be re-worked so that children are able to settle more quickly.

Children make good progress along the stepping stones in all areas, except physical development, and the manager monitors the Foundation Stage to ensure this. The good quality of the provision means that it meets the needs of the children who attend well.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to record children's hours of attendance and obtain resources which reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.

The provider has responded to these recommendations which means children's safety is further promoted by a signing in system and children have access to resources which increase their knowledge and understanding of the world.

The provider also agreed to evaluate and continue to develop practice already in place to ensure more challenge is provided for more able children and to make sure children achieve most benefit from activities; also to continue to develop systems for

monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the provision in relation to the staff.

The provider has amended planning to ensure that teaching is delivered more effectively to children and staff appraisals are being devised in order to monitor staff performance.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- devise and implement planning for the 'Birth to three' framework to help children's development.

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):

- ensure that planning is adapted so that the needs of individual children are met
- ensure that sessions for physical development have a clear purpose and are effective in progressing children's learning
- ensure that parents contribute to a baseline assessment of their child's abilities as they enter the Foundation Stage.

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