



Hardwick Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220268
Inspection date	19 October 2005
Inspector	Mark Evans
Setting Address	Olympic Way, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 3QA
Telephone number	01933 401193
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Registered person	Hardwick Schools Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hardwick Pre-school was established in 1988 and is situated within the grounds of Hardwick Infant School in Wellingborough. The pre-school is a community group, which is managed by a committee of parent-users. The group operate from a self-contained area of the school and use a large playroom, kitchen and toilet. They have a small outdoor area for children's physical play and activities.

The pre-school is registered for 16 children between the ages of 2 and 5 years.

There are currently 38 children on roll of whom 27 are funded for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There is one child currently attending with special educational needs and no children for whom English is an additional language. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.15, during school term time. Children attend from the local surrounding areas.

There are four staff employed at the setting, of whom three have a childcare qualification. The pre-school receives support from the Northamptonshire Local Authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of hygiene through daily routines, for example, washing their hands after toileting, which helps them to be increasingly independent in their personal care. Their welfare is safeguarded because practitioners have up-to-date first aid knowledge in the event of any incidents, have good systems for recording and administering medicines and appropriate procedures are in place if children are unwell.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy varied, well presented and nutritious snacks, which include fruit and savoury items that encourage good eating habits. Children have foods that meet with their dietary requirements to ensure that they remain healthy. All children can access drinking water during their sessions and they also have milk available to them at snack time. This ensures that children are well hydrated and comfortable.

Practitioners use the Foundation Stage guidance to provide a range of physical activities and experiences for the children. Children benefit from the fresh air and exercise gained from outdoor play and they are gaining awareness of the importance of being healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children experience a well presented, light and airy environment that is in good condition. This gives them warm and comfortable accommodation for their care and play. Children are kept safe because the practitioners use practice to reduce most risks, for example, undertaking fire drill practises, having a secure system for vetting access to the premises and keeping risk assessments. However, the kitchen entrance area is not always secure in order to prevent children's unsupervised access and the outdoor area has a small section of perimeter fencing that is damaged and not fully secure. Children's welfare is safeguarded through most practitioners having awareness and training for child protection issues and procedures.

Children use a wide range of safe and developmentally appropriate resources. Activities are organised to encourage independent access and choice. Children have understanding of safe practices, for example, staff encourage them to tidy toys and equipment. This helps children to take personal responsibility for keeping the environment orderly and in safe condition.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school. Those that are new to the pre-school are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive to their needs. Children feel secure and are reassured by staff who show care and give supportive contact. This helps them to become increasingly confident, to explore the environment and independently select activities.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals and there is a suitable range of resources to support children's learning across all areas. However, the curriculum is not fully effective because planning does not always take account of children's levels of development and their next steps to progress. Learning intentions are not clearly identified and some practitioners do not have secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage.

Children generally show satisfactory levels of concentration and involvement in activities. They interact co-operatively within groups and are developing the ability to share and take turns under adult supervision. Children behave well and have consideration for others, for example, an older child gave support to a younger child. They are developing independence, for example, with toileting and with personal care, however, there are some missed opportunities at snack times for children to assist with preparation and serving. Children select and use books appropriately and enjoy stories. They are able to use language to express and negotiate imaginative ideas within role play. Children can recognise their name and are starting to associate meaning to print. They have opportunities for mark making, to attempt purposeful writing and form recognisable letters. Practitioners use some activities to initiate children's awareness of linking sounds to letters to develop phonic knowledge. Children are using simple mathematical language, for example, big and small and have knowledge of space and shapes. They sing songs that include numbers and simple subtraction. Practitioners do not regularly use opportunities within play and routine activities for children to consolidate their mathematical development. Children use information technology, including programmable toys to support their play. They are able to use construction toys to design and build. Children have a sense of place within their local community and are developing some awareness of other people, for example, through visits by agencies such as the police. Children undertake activities such as growing plants to study living things and patterns of change. There are a variety of resources, which help children to develop physically. Children have access to different tools which enable them to make changes to materials and to scribe, form and construct. However, natural materials and use of various mediums are not always available and this restricts the opportunities that children have to practice the

use of tools on a daily basis. Children engage in healthy practices, including appropriate hygiene routines, healthy eating and physical exercise. They are able to move confidently around each other, showing balance and spatial awareness. Children enjoy singing and they can recall familiar songs and associated actions. They use a variety of role play settings to use their imagination and enact their experiences. Natural resources and other mediums are not always available each day and this limits children's opportunities to be creative, investigate and explore and use their imagination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are made welcome and are respected as individuals; they select from the resources and play materials and make independent choices in their play. Children have access to resources that promote positive images of diversity and engage in some activities that develop their awareness of people from the wider community, for example, celebrating Diwali. Children are well behaved and respond to practitioners requests. They are developing ability to take turns, which is assisted by adult led activities, and they show concern for others. This positive approach helps children's attitudes to others and fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children with special needs integrate well because effective procedures are in place with individual development plans and appropriate activities provided to ensure that children participate at their level with appropriate challenge.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the positive relationships that practitioners have with the parents. They settle well because practitioners work closely with parents and are attentive to the children's needs. Daily communication strengthens links between home and the pre-school and gives children good levels of continuity of care. Children benefit from practitioners and parents having periodic meetings to share information on their progress. This helps parents to identify what their child could usefully do next to support their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the organisation of space and resources and these enable children to make some choices and develop their ideas as they play. The room is laid out to maximise play opportunities for the children. Practitioners are effectively deployed and children have some individual attention which supports their learning. Most policies and procedures are in place to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. However, systems for induction training and for vetting and checking suitability of those employed or working at the setting are not in place.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager and staff are a supportive team and have a close working relationship with the parent committee. The organisation for the range and quality of activities for children is supported by the manager and relevant agencies. However, there are some limitations to the

educational programme as planning does not have clear learning intentions that take account of children's levels of development and their next steps to progress. Some practitioners do not have sufficient knowledge of the Foundation Stage, which results in missed opportunities for children's learning. The setting undertakes self reflection to assess areas for future development and has identified the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide play and development for children under 3 years. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the pre-school was required to ensure there are procedures in place in the event of a child being lost or a parent failing to collect a child; make sure that there is a system in place showing hours of attendance of children, staff and other adults and to provide the address and telephone number of the regulator for any complaints. The setting has drafted a new policy for lost or uncollected children to help ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded; records for the hours of attendance for children and staff are now in place to make sure that there is clear indication of who is on the premises and the telephone number and address of Ofsted is displayed in the entrance foyer so that parents have access to this in relation to the complaints procedures.

At the last nursery education inspection the pre-school was asked to provide opportunities for children to link sounds to letters; develop the range of activities involving calculation and problem solving in practical everyday activities; improve the use of observation, assessment and evaluation to effectively plan the next steps in learning for individual children and to develop daily routines to minimise periods of time when children are not sufficiently occupied. The setting was observed to undertake activities that initiate children's awareness of linking sounds to letters to help with their language and literacy development; has looked to provide activities that encourage children to problem solve and use some calculation, for example, simple subtraction through songs and rhymes; has initiated some changes to assessment and planning to help children progress, although this still requires further development, and have altered the daily routine of the sessions to decrease times of inactivity for the children.

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):

- ensure that children are unable to access the kitchen area unsupervised and make sure that the outdoor area is secure
- ensure that there is a record for any complaints made to the setting related to the National Standards
- ensure that new staff receive induction training within their first week of employment and that this includes child protection and health and safety
- provide a robust system for vetting staff and persons in regular contact with children to ensure their suitability.

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):

- make sure that children's assessments are up-to-date and that they indicate their next steps for development linked to the stepping stones. Use this information within planning to provide clear learning intentions that differentiate for varying abilities and provide appropriate challenge
- develop staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum
- increase opportunities for children to be creative, investigate and explore through various mediums, including regular use of natural materials, and ensure that they are able to consolidate their mathematical development in routine activities.

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