



Pied Piper Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 511121

Inspection date 16 September 2005

Inspector Jenny Scarlett

Setting Address Methodist Church Hall, Chapel Street, Thatcham, Berkshire,
RG18 4QL

Telephone number 01635 873814

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Registered person Pied Piper Pre School

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 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?

Pied Piper Pre-School opened in 1986. It operates from the Methodist Church close to Thatcham town centre. The group has use of the main hall attached to the church. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens four days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:20 until 11:50 and 12:20 until 14:50 on Mondays and Tuesdays. On Thursdays and Fridays it is open from 09:20 until 11:50. All children share access to a secure enclosed

outdoor play area.

There are currently 35 children aged from 2 years 8 months to under 5 on roll. Of these 27 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attending the pre-school come from the local community and surrounding areas. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special needs.

The pre-school employs four staff. All staff hold a recognised early years childcare qualification. Three staff members are currently further developing their early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted effectively by staff who demonstrate a sound knowledge of the pre-schools' health and hygiene procedures. They have a clear awareness of their own needs and are developing independence in their personal care. Children actively contribute to the development of the health and care routines such as tidying up and preparing themselves and the room for snack times.

Children benefit from taking fresh air and exercise, making good use of the outdoor area. They learn about changes to their bodies as they put on their jackets to fly their kites and streamers in the cold wind. They are adept in their physical skills, moving confidently between areas both in and out of doors. They develop their dexterity skills well as they make candles with polydron sticks and push straws in to their cartons of milk. Children take part in a wide range of activities in all areas of learning, which develop both their fine and gross motor skills. They are able to control pencils, scissors and paintbrushes with a good range of activities to develop their physical skills.

Children are well nourished. They begin to learn about healthy eating and know their personal likes and dislikes when tasting foods such as raisins, cheese and fruit. They enjoy foods suited to their individual needs because staff work closely with parents. Children are encouraged to help in the preparation of snack time and take pride in being the monitor for handing out the plates.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a spacious and safe environment both indoors and out because staff plan the room, garden and equipment layout carefully. The environment is warm and welcoming to parents and their children, who are greeted individually on arrival. The individual welcome supports the children's enthusiasm to enter the group confidently and helps them to settle quickly at the start of the session.

Children learn to keep themselves safe and avoid accidental injury in the pre-school. They know when the green traffic light sign is showing on the door they can go outside. Through gentle encouragement, they learn how to handle and use scissors and what happens if someone throws sand. As a result, children have good access to a wide choice of toys and equipment in an environment where potential hazards have been identified and minimised effectively.

Children feel confident and secure in their environment. They can decide to rest and look at books or engage in a wide variety of activities both in and out doors. However, the lack of appropriate seating in the book corner prevents children sitting comfortably. Floor play mats offer many construction opportunities with 'small-world' toys and other activities mainly on tables. Children move around the room and garden freely, selecting and making choices from a good range of quality toys and resources that are well maintained.

Staff are well deployed in all areas of the pre-school ensuring the children are protected and safe at all times. Children benefit from the clear understanding and knowledge the staff have concerning child protection. All the required procedures and documents are in place to ensure the child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident in their environment. They arrive happily and are eager to take part in activities, showing a positive attitude to play and learning. Children play an active part in the pre-school. They show enthusiasm in activities such as printing with bottles and explore the texture of paint as they paint their hands yellow. They play well on their own and with others securing early friendships confidently. The children have good relationships with staff. They respond well to the routine changes in the session. They receive clear guidelines, know the routine well and are encouraged to take care of their environment. Children's needs are being met effectively through the staff's sensitive and appropriate interactions that promote their self-esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress supported by staff who understand the requirements of the Foundation Stage for children's learning. Staff use their knowledge and skills well. They plan interesting activities that focus on particular aspects of learning such as maths, physical development and communication language and literacy. As a result, children learn in a stimulating, child centred environment where they have choice in activities and have fun. All children including those with special needs benefit from the frequent interaction with staff. Staff question the children effectively to extend their thinking. Children experience a good balance of adult-led and self-chosen activities indoors and out. Staff monitor the children's progress well, making regular observations of what they can do and what they have yet to learn. This results in children making good progress in their learning.

Staff capitalise particularly well on spontaneous opportunities for learning. At circle

time for example, children explore a parcel delivered to the pre-school. They watch and join in with awe and wonder as the staff encourage them to guess what is inside the box. Children suggest the parcel could be an elephant, a snake or a train. They describe the bubble wrap when "it pops like Rice Crispies". Children become excited as they see the new toys and pre-school equipment. They use early mathematical language accurately in their play as they sort count and compare the number of candles they have put on the cake. They count the number of children confidently and explore varied mathematical concepts through every day practical activities.

Children benefit from the good interaction with staff who promote themselves as good role models. Their play is supported well with staff following the children's lead. Staff join in children's play encouraging them to develop their ideas and extend their thinking. Children develop an early love of books. They visit the book corner asking staff to read them their favourite stories, or simply browse through books by themselves. They learn to listen, being attentive at story time and follow simple instructions such as putting their belongings in the home box. Children develop good conversation skills, they chat freely to each other and with staff, who extend their vocabulary well. Circle time promotes children's communication and language skills effectively. Children talk confidently about their holidays to the seaside. They learn new words such as "crustaceans" when exploring different shells brought in for show and tell time. Children make marks readily; they paint purposefully and draw imaginatively using paper and white boards. Some children attempt to write their names and have very good opportunities to recognise familiar words and print through practical activities such as finding their names and using picture cards to choose songs.

Children use their newly acquired skills confidently. The older children change their shoes for PE sessions and put their own coats on for outside play demonstrating good independence skills. They learn about the world around them through outings in the community, exploring the textures of the wasp and birds nests, and welcoming visitors to the setting. They show enjoyment as they make streamers and kites to blow in the wind and watch excitedly as the wind blows the bag over the rooftops. Children spontaneously use their imagination to initiate role-play scenarios and enjoy developing their own ideas in activities such as painting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enter the pre-school happily and confidently, looking for particular friends and settling quickly into activities. Children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents. Children settle well because staff work closely with parents to ensure a relatively smooth transition into the pre-school environment. The children are warmly welcomed as they self register and confidently say goodbye to their parents and carers.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents and carers receive good information about the setting and it's education provision. They share relevant information, play activities and discuss the children's individual needs. A clear and informative notice

board with relevant up to date information is accessible to all parents. Children benefit from the open door policy and two way sharing of information, with good opportunities for parents to speak to staff on a daily basis. Parents receive opportunities to contribute to the assessments made on their child and to be involved in their child's learning. As a result, parents and carers have a good understanding of their child's progress.

Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the individual needs of the children in their care. They work together with parents, carers and other professional bodies to organise and plan appropriate activities to ensure the children take part at a level appropriate to their needs. As a result, all children are supported well in all areas and are able to achieve to their full potential. Children develop a positive attitude to others. They visit and take part in activities within the community and develop a secure knowledge of the wider world through well-planned topics and activities. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children benefit from staff who adopt a consistent and positive approach to the management of their behaviour. As a result, children quickly become absorbed in their self-chosen activities and clearly understand how they are expected to behave. They share toys and resources readily and tell staff when this does not happen, trusting the adults to comfort them if needed. This reflects the warm caring relationships that exist through the pre-school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by the setting's effective organisation. Staff working with the children are knowledgeable and this consistently promotes the children's well being in line with the clear policies and procedures. However, written policies are not always updated following changes in procedures. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the Standards for Sessional Care and the Foundation Stage to help the children achieve well. As a result, overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management is good. Staff observe children's development and learning and keep detailed systematic records that help them to meet their individual needs. Children's records are openly shared with parents and their contributions valued to help them develop to their full potential.

Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the pre-school. The supervisor leads a well-qualified team who are committed to updating their skills and knowledge through training. This is used to develop their skills in organising provision that meets the children's needs, keep them healthy and safeguarding their welfare. The staff work well as a team. All the staff work hard to monitor and improve the provision while working within the constraints of shared accommodation.

The supervisor and management committee monitor and evaluate the provision through regular meetings, training and promoting the personal development of

herself and the staff. This results in a happy committed team who work effectively to meet the personal development and achievements of the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection required the setting to develop and implement an action plan that ensures training and qualification requirements are met. Recommendations were also made to ensure children have appropriate equipment such as plates at snack time and to ensure the registers show the hours of attendance for children.

The nursery education inspection identified the following areas to be improved. Opportunities for children to increase their independence, to practise writing their name and provide opportunities for children to consolidate what they have learnt.

All staff are now qualified to NVQ level 2 or 3. Three staff have committed to further developing their child care skills and knowledge. As a result the children benefit from their skills knowledge and expertise. Children enjoy snack time, they develop their independence skills as they help pass round the plates and eat in a family setting. Registers provide clear evidence of the hours of the children's attendance, ensuring their safety and welfare are maintained at all times.

Children's independence is well supported. They actively take part in tidy up time, they enjoy being plate monitor and have good opportunities to make choices in their play and learning. There are good opportunities for them to develop skills in writing and making marks on paper and some children show confidence in writing their name. The introduction of photo boards and discussion with children throughout the session provides good opportunities for them to consolidate their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 01 April 2004 one complaint has been received regarding a child attempting to escape from the pre-school. This complaint relates to Standard 4.

The complaint was investigated internally and a subsequent visit from a Child Care Inspector took place. The provider had conducted an internal investigation and implemented changes. The provider has taken appropriate action following the incident and no further actions or conditions were required. We are satisfied that the registered person has taken appropriate steps to address the concerns. As a result of the investigations that took place the provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- provide children with suitable seating in the book corner (care and education)
- update policies following changes in procedures.

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):

- recommendation as stated above.

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