

Toybox Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	109797
Inspection date	21/01/2010
Inspector	Jacqueline Munden

Setting address	Ellen Newbury Hall, Chapel Road, Sarisbury Green, Southampton, Hampshire, SO31 7FB
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises
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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.

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Description of the setting

Toybox Pre-School has been open for more than twenty years. It operates from a large room in a church hall in Sarisbury Green, Hampshire. The group is privately run and serves the local community. There is an enclosed area for outside play.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered for a maximum of 24 children aged from two years to under eight years at any one time. There are currently 18 children in the early years age group on roll. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 12pm during school term times. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are three members of staff working with the children of whom two hold a recognised early years qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally settled. They enjoy their time at the pre-school and are making satisfactory progress in most areas of their learning. The environment is welcoming and accessible enabling them to make choices but there are weaknesses in the overall organisation and maintenance of the setting and its resources. Children are safe and their individual needs are generally met well although records are not always maintained to fully support this. A wide range of policies are in place and shared with parents although new staff are not made fully aware of them. Management is keen to develop the setting but does not always accurately prioritise aspects that will have the greatest impact on 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:

- further develop written systems of observation, assessment and planning for the next steps to enable children's learning and development to be tracked and monitored against the areas of learning to support their progress towards the early learning goals
- improve systems used to record information about children to help fully support their individual needs including their behaviour and welfare
- provide an induction to new staff as they start to ensure they are fully aware of the settings policies and procedures enabling them to understand their roles and promote children's safety and welfare
- ensure all areas of the premises and resources are well maintained and suitable for use and cover all areas of learning to meet the development

- needs of all children
- improve systems used to evaluate all aspects of the provision to ensure priorities for improvement are always accurately targeted

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are adequately safeguarded as practitioners are vigilant and ensure the environment is safe for them to use. Good use is made of risk assessments with any possible hazard being identified and dealt with promptly. For example, when a recent flood occurred from the drainage system in the outdoor play area, the manager took steps to establish that it would not be harmful to children's health before allowing them to use the cordoned off area. An effective system is used for vetting and appointing new staff; although the induction procedure does not ensure they are immediately made fully aware of the settings wide range of policies and procedures, including that for child protection.

In general, the setting runs smoothly on a day to day basis but recent changes to management and staff are having an impact on the organisation of the setting. Some areas of the premises and equipment are not clean which means children's health is not fully protected. The learning environment is laid out in areas with resources generally accessible in low level storage enabling children to be independent and to make choices. However, some areas are muddled and cluttered and resources do not always meet the needs of all children or challenge them. For example, the paint easel is too high for some two year olds to reach comfortably and a limited range of puzzles are available. The setting possesses a computer but it is not always made available for use. A new system to record and monitor children's development against the Early Learning Goals has recently been introduced but not all practitioners are involved in using it. New staff are keen to improve skills and knowledge. They have identified training to attend about the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which will remove the burden from the manager. Management welcomes support and feedback from the local authority to help identify areas for improvement. Staff are enthusiastic and have made some significant improvements to the outdoor play area, which children benefit greatly from. However, other areas of the setting have not been as well maintained showing that systems used to evaluate the setting are not always effective.

Satisfactory links are developed with parents who report they are happy with the care their children receive. They are given suitable information about the setting in the parents pack and through on-going newsletters. They are welcome to share information with practitioners at the start and end of the sessions. This enables practitioners to generally meet most children's individual needs. Practitioners are aware of those with any additional need that may affect their behaviour or learning and development and supports them appropriately. However, records of this information and how the setting supports and monitors them are not maintained. Links with other providers of the EYFS that children attend have been established to support their learning and care.

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

Most children are happy and gaining in confidence. They quickly settle to the routines of the day and independently make choices from the resources available. They happily initiate their own learning, as they select materials to create collages or role play with food and blankets going on a picnic. There is a good balance of adult led and child initiated activities and children enjoy the support from staff who join in their play. A new assessment and planning system is being implemented with the next steps for some children's development being planned for. However, the record system does not enable their progress to be tracked against the early learning goals as observations are not linked to areas of learning. Some areas of learning are not always fully promoted for example, opportunities are not always provided to learn skills in ICT.

Children are beginning to learn to share and take turns and some cooperate in helping to tidy toys away at the end of the session. Most behave well and respond to reminders from staff to wash their hands or not to run in the hall. Many are beginning to be independent; some change into their indoor shoes as they arrive and help themselves to the choice of fruit and bread sticks provided at snack time. Some children develop self care skills further as they wash up the cups, taking care to mop the floor so no-one slips. Children enjoy stories in groups and join in with familiar parts. They are beginning to count and solve problems as they calculate how many children are present and how many paper towels are needed when laying the table for snack time. Some children attempt writing for a purpose, writing their names on art work. Children thoroughly enjoy their outside play as they rest in the den, made with a piece of fabric and poles or dig in the sand tray. In wet and cold weather children wear all weather suits and wellies to allow them to play freely without getting wet and dirty. They develop their physical skills as they balance along a beam and use tree stumps as stepping stones. Indoors they enthusiastically take part in music and movement sessions, learning to control their bodies. Programmable, electronic toys are available although more time should be taken to ensure children learn how to use them.

Children learn to keep healthy, safe and make a positive contribution to their care and learning. They follow suitable hygiene routines when visiting the toilets and talk about healthy eating at snack time. All children and staff take part in regular fire drills to ensure safe evacuation of the building. Children learn about others in society as they use some toys and books that promote positive images of all people in society.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
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	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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