



Hopscotch Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY298569
Inspection date 11 October 2005
Inspector Rachel Edwards

Setting Address Chiseldon Primary School, Castle View Road, Chiseldon,
Swindon, Wilts, SN4 0NS
Telephone number 01793 740349
E-mail
Registered person Hopscotch Pre-School
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 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?

Hopscotch pre-school has been registered at the current premises since 2005. It was previously registered at the Methodist Church. The pre-school operates from a building within the grounds of Chiseldon Primary School, near Swindon. There is a playroom, cloakroom, toilets and kitchen area. The children may use areas of the school grounds for outdoor play. The pre-school serves children from the surrounding area.

The pre-school is open for 5 days a week during term time. It is registered to care for up to 20 children from 2-8 years. It runs a breakfast club from 07:45-08:45 for children from pre-school and primary school. The pre-school sessions are from 08:45-11:30 and children may stay for lunch club until 12:30. There is a separate session for 2-year-olds on Monday and Thursday afternoons from 12:45-14:45. There are currently 45 children on roll, which includes 16 funded 3 and 4-year-olds.

Four staff work with the children, three of whom are part time. Two of the staff have early years qualifications and two are on training programmes. The group receives support from an advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and welcoming environment. Staff consistently follow thorough procedures to help protect children from illness and cross infection. Children are very independent in self care skills. They know why they need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet and staff help them to do this on their own. Tissues are kept within children's reach and they are encouraged to wipe their own noses.

Children are given healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. Those who come to breakfast club have a choice of cereals and toast and staff make sure that they have had enough to eat and drink before the start of their school day. Parents are invited to contribute food for younger children's snacks and they are encouraged to consider bringing healthy options such as fresh or dried fruit. However staff miss opportunities to include children in helping prepare the snack or talking to children about the importance of healthy eating. This does not encourage children to become interested in food, try new tastes and make healthy choices. Milk and water are offered at breakfast and snack time but children do not have free access to water at other times. This can be detrimental to children's health and ability to learn.

Children benefit from playing outside each day. They develop good physical control as they enjoy running and chasing games; use a variety of small equipment, such as balls and tricycles and climb on the big wooden ship. Staff encourage them to try new skills and then give them time to repeat and practise these, for example, a 3-year-old is delighted when he manages to go down the fireman's pole "look, I can do it all by myself", he proudly shouts to the others. Staff do not routinely talk to children about the effects of exercise on their bodies, such as feeling hot or needing a rest. The outdoor play area is not enclosed, which limits the use that can be made of the outdoor area for learning across all areas of the curriculum. For example, children cannot move freely between the indoors and outdoors because of hazards from the nearby road or the risk of children wandering off.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally well protected from hazards and accidents in a mostly safe and generally well supervised environment. The premises are very secure and there are good arrangements for the safe arrival and collection of children. Children attending the breakfast club are supervised as they cross over to school, with the reception and class 1 children being taken into their classrooms. Regular risk assessments are made of the premises and positive steps have been taken to remove most hazards. However, these failed to identify the hazard of storing heavy objects at the top of an unsecured storage unit, which fell, injuring an adult. The heavy items have been moved but the unit is still not fixed to the wall and remains unstable. There is also an unsecured fire extinguisher in the cloakroom area, which could fall on child.

Children have access to an adequate range of safe and suitable toys and equipment. Most play materials are stored within children's reach but they are not well organised nor clearly labelled, which makes it more difficult for children to independently choose and put away resources. Staff are careful to make sure that during 2-year-old sessions, only toys appropriate to these younger children's stage of development are available.

Children are well supervised in the unfenced outdoor area. Staff explain to them the dangers of the nearby road and car park, which helps children learn how to keep themselves safe. There is no safety rail on the steps out of the building and although staff explain to children how to use the steps safely, they do not supervise them closely enough to prevent falls.

Children are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection issues. They would know what to do if they concerns about the welfare of a child and could act in the child's best interests.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at this friendly, caring pre-school. From the start, as two-year-olds, they are warmly welcomed into the group. Parents and carers are encouraged to stay as long as necessary, until their children feel happy and secure enough to be left. This helps children settle quickly and builds trusting and effective relationships between the staff, children and parents. It also means that once they are three years, children move seamlessly into the pre-school sessions, confident and eager to learn. Staff are using the Birth to Three matters framework to provide a stimulating range of experiences that help the two-year-olds make good progress in all areas of their development. The group have recently introduced a system for recording children's progress but this is not yet fully implemented.

The high staff:child ratio in all sessions means that children receive good support and a lot of individual attention. This helps children persist well with activities and begin to concentrate for extended periods. Staff encourage children to try new activities and offer much praise and encouragement, which builds their confidence and self esteem

well. Staff act as excellent role models, they are courteous towards the children and clearly explain the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. As a result, children are polite, considerate towards others and very well behaved.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with children making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas. Staff know the children well and form warm and caring relationships with them. However, staff are not always best deployed to support children's learning. They spend much of their time at tables supporting individual or small groups of children in adult led activities. This means that meaningful and practical learning opportunities are frequently missed in other areas as staff do not routinely interact with children, for example, in sand, construction or imaginative play. Children are enthusiastic and eager to take part in a variety of generally appropriate activities. They play co-operatively and are able to share and wait their turn well, for example, playing circle games outside. They show genuine care and concern for one another, for example, when a child is hurt or upset.

Children regularly practise counting, such as the number of boys and girls at register time and they begin to understand the concept of adding and taking away as they sing number rhymes. However, staff do not always explain this concept clearly enough to the children, for example, by using actual objects to combine or take away or pointing clearly to each child as they count. Children are not sufficiently encouraged to recognise numerals and link these with quantity. Children enjoy playing in the sand and pouring drinks at snack time, which allows them to explore ideas of volume and weight.

Staff encourage children to 'write' their names on their work and to trace over name cards and some are attempting this well and beginning to form some letters correctly. However, more able are not sufficiently encouraged to recognise familiar words and make links between sounds and letters. There is a comfortable and well resourced book corner although staff are not always well deployed to encourage children to enjoy reading and sharing books.

Children design and build competently with a variety of materials. They notice changes, for example in the weather and wonder whether the grass will be dry as it is a sunny day. They learn about their local environment on regular walks around the village, for example, looking closely at different houses or listening to sounds. They gradually become aware of the wider world and different cultures through themed activities and interesting visitors. They enjoy exploring colour, sounds and texture using many different materials and when given the freedom, create imaginative, individual pieces of work. However, craft activities are too often overly adult directed, which restricts children's creativity.

Staff record children's progress towards the early learning goals but they do not base these on regular observations of what children can do. Plans for activities cover all areas of the curriculum but do not take account of the varying abilities or different ways of learning of individual children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and fully involved in the setting. They demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the group as they confidently arrive, hang up their coats and cheerfully greet the staff and their friends before quickly settling to activities. They enthusiastically help with routine tasks, such as tidying up and are helpful towards others, for example, fetching a tissue for another. Their kindness and achievements are quickly recognised and warmly praised by the staff and this nurtures the children's self esteem. A member of staff is trained as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Currently no children attend with special needs but the group would be pro-active in ensuring that the individual needs of any such child were met.

Children behave very well. Young children are well supported as they learn to share and take turns. Older children respond well to the clear and consistent guidance of staff and learn to amicably resolve their own conflicts. They have many opportunities to learn about their own community, including good relationships with the local school. They learn about the wider world and become sensitive to the needs of others through a range of activities, outings and visitors. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children benefit from the open and warm welcome that families receive and parents speak highly of the group. They spend time talking with their child's key worker so that individual care needs are well met. Staff know children and their families well and this helps children to feel valued and secure. In relation to nursery education, the partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive limited written information about the foundation stage, although there was a parent's evening where this was explained to those who could attend. Parents do not have ready access to children's developmental records. A new recording system is currently being introduced and there are future plans for staff to discuss these with parents, each term. Parents are not invited to contribute towards ongoing assessments of children's achievements. Parents are kept informed through regular newsletters and a notice board and they are invited to bring in items from home for the interest table and to share any special interests with the children, which benefits children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the continuing improvement and development of the pre-school. The team of staff are well qualified and are eager to develop their knowledge further. They receive valuable support from the Local Authority advisory teacher. The high staff to child ratio ensures that children receive plenty of time and support from the staff. Staff are generally clear about their roles and responsibilities but are not always effectively deployed to fully benefit children's learning. Children's time at the setting is enhanced and their progression into reception is eased by the good partnership between the school and pre-school, for example, by sharing resources and allowing access to outdoor play areas.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff meet regularly to discuss the children's progress. However, there is not an effective system to observe children's achievements and use this information to plan activities that will appropriately challenge individual children of differing ability.

Most of the required documentation is in place which is necessary to promote the safety, health and well being of the children. However, following recently introduced legislation, there are weaknesses in the procedures for recording and investigating complaints and for recruiting and clearing staff.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 you comply fully with the Children's Act regulations, enacted on 03/10/2005, specifically regarding the complaints procedure and log and the procedures for recruiting and clearing staff
- ensure that the storage cupboards and fire extinguisher in the cloakroom are not a danger to children

- ensure that drinking water is freely available to children during the session

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 the new assessment system is fully implemented and based on regular observations of children's achievements. Use this information to show how activities can be adapted to provide appropriate challenge for different abilities so that children's individual learning needs are met.
- ensure that staff interact with children to support their learning during free play as well as adult directed activities

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