



North Common Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286695
Inspection date	11 November 2005
Inspector	Kay Roberts
Setting Address	Independent methodist Church, Mill Lane, Warmley, South Gloucestershire, BS30 8BJ
Telephone number	0117 9322256
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Registered person	North Common 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

North Common Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1972. It originally operated from a church hall in Tower Road South, Warmley, but has recently moved to the Independent Methodist Church Hall in Mill Lane, Warmley, South Gloucestershire. The playgroup serves the local community and surrounding area. There is a parent management committee.

Children have access to the hall and associated toilet facilities. A small designated

area of the car park is available for outdoor play.

North Common Pre-School Playgroup opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 hours to 12:00 hours. Children attend a variety of sessions. Care is offered to children from 3 to 5-years. Registration is for a maximum of 20 children under 5-years and there are currently 21 children on roll, all of whom are funded 3-year-olds. There are no children for whom English is an additional language. The group supports children with special educational needs.

There are 4 full-time members of staff who work directly with the children, 3 of whom have early years qualifications. In addition, parents provide assistance on a rota basis. A teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) provides advice on educational provision.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is actively promoted. They play in a clean environment where the risk of them becoming ill is minimised through highly effective procedures. Children learn the importance of hygiene through theme based activities such as dental hygiene, when they play with a huge set of dentures and large toothbrushes. As children become familiar with the daily routine they know that they should wash and dry their hands before snack and after using the toilet. Staff offer a gentle reminder so that children learn to respect privacy. Children's welfare is promoted as staff follow successful procedures for administering first aid and medication. They have an awareness of feelings such as sad and happy as they helped to create a scrap book of pictures for Mental Health Week which was displayed in the local library.

Snack times are a social occasion when children sit in small groups with a member of staff. Children independently help themselves to and eat a range of fruit and vegetables. The harvest festival week helped children to understand what foods are good to eat and those which are not so healthy. Staff introduced a range of fruit and vegetables which they discussed and children used for printing. Children also had fun making their own sandwiches for the teddy bears picnic.

Children take daily exercise in the fresh air when they are involved in a range of planned activities to develop their large muscle skills and co-ordination. Four-year-old children ride two wheel bikes with stabilizers with confidence and are able to manoeuvre in very tight corners. On other days children participate in group activities and follow the leader as she moves around taking large strides, jogging and hopping. If the weather is inclement, equipment such as the climbing frame and trampoline are taken indoors. Children move to music and participate in action rhymes such as 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome in the child focussed environment. There are bright educational posters and children are proud of their work which is well displayed. The extensive range of resources are set up prior to arrival and there is sufficient child-sized tables and chairs so that all children can sit together for some activities. Children move around freely and are able to play undisturbed as there is space between each clearly defined activity area. When children play on the floor they are comfortable as they sit on thick carpets and in the book corner relax on child-sized easy chairs.

Children play in a safe, secure environment and are only released to authorised parents and carers. The risk assessment is regularly reviewed and staff use a tick sheet to check all areas used by children on a daily basis to ensure there are no hazards. The risk of accidental injury is minimised by the proactive approach of staff. For example, children walk in a line between in and outdoors and know not to go on the stage except for specific activities. However at the end of the session when children sit on the stage to listen to a story, they are forced to move to the front of the stage as tables are stacked at the back, and may fall. Children are protected in the event of a fire as fire safety requirements are met in full and children know how to evacuate the premises. Children are also encouraged to develop confidence so that they are able to say 'stop' if someone is doing something they do not like. On outings they learn road safety. Further protection is provided to children as all staff have a good knowledge of local child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

New children are helped to feel secure and settle quickly as they take their favourite toy into the playgroup for registration. Staff plan specific activities which they know will interest the child and the gradual introduction is based on individual needs. Children enjoy their time at North Common Pre-School. Once settled, children enter the premises with confidence and aware of the routine, sit on the mat in preparation for registration. Children say "good morning" when their names are called and talk about the weather. Other children talk about life at home. Less confident children are encouraged to talk in a large group as each child is asked to give their name and age as they hold the bear.

Children participate in singing their favourite songs which they are practicing for Christmas, for example, 'When Santa got stuck up the chimney'. Most children enjoy listening to stories, although one or two are easily distracted. Children frequently visit the book corner and treat books with respect as they pretend to read stories to other children and at other times listen to a story of their choice. They recognise that print has meaning and most are able to recognise their own name in print. When the computer staff help children to match an initial sound to a picture elsewhere on screen. Children are skilled at using the mouse and understand that if another disc is inserted into the computer, they will be able to select from a different range of educational games. Computer programmes also teach children about things such as the life cycle of a frog and help them to name insects and water plants. At other

times, children are given a more hands on experience and develop an understanding of nature as they go on a hunt for mini-beasts and in Spring watch tadpoles change into frogs. Children are developing an understanding of mathematics as they count the number of children in a group. Subtraction is learnt as they sing 'Five Fat Sausages' and try to use their fingers to represent the number of sausages remaining. Children complete simple jigsaw puzzles and name two-dimensional shapes. They copy a pattern of clapping and 4-year-old children can copy a quite complex bead pattern. Staff help children to create models of aeroplanes by using stickle bricks and following a pattern. Other children are more creative and design glasses and towers. Children show increasing independence as they manage their own personal care and hang up their coats. Physical co-ordination is shown as they sweep up the sand with a dustpan and brush.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are aware of children's capabilities on entering the setting as they ask parents to complete a brief questionnaire. They have a good understanding of the curriculum and use this knowledge to extend children's learning. For example, when making butterfly prints the member of staff sitting with the children introduced the new words 'symmetrical' and 'asymmetrical' and provided children with examples so they could understand. Staff make regular observations which are used as evidence to monitor children's progress against the South Gloucestershire Stepping Stones book which links directly to the early learning goals. Three times a year the key worker meets with parents to discuss children's progress and devise an individual play plan. Key workers, however, do not follow up on the play plans and the information they contain is not used as a base line for planning. Planning does not include special considerations or extensions for more able children. However children do make progress and are interested in the activities available which cover all areas of learning on a daily basis. The high adult to child ratio ensures that staff are always available to participate in activities and show children how things are done, for example string painting, and then remain close by so that they can offer advice if necessary. They offer lots of encouragement so that children are keen to learn and proud of their achievements. Time is well managed and children are actively occupied throughout the session; whilst waiting for the last few children to finish their snack the remainder sing songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fostered. All children are valued and included, including those with special educational needs, as staff have effective systems in place. Children feel special as they each have their own name badge, their work is displayed and their achievements are acknowledged. Staff have a proactive approach to behaviour management so that children are clear about the boundaries. They are polite, well behaved, able to take turns and help to tidy up. One four-year-old child has learnt negotiation skills; he was able to swap his scooter for a larger one by asking.

Children are aware of their local community as they receive visits from the local police officer and a librarian visits fortnightly to read stories using story sacks. Two children and their carers from Warmley Park School for children with special needs attend some sessions. Occasionally children visit the secret garden at Warmley and in the summer share a sports morning with one of the local schools. They have also visited Windmill Hill City farm. Children's learning is extended as they play with readily accessible resources reflecting positive images of diversity and acknowledge festivals such as Sukkot and Diwali.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents comment positively about the provision. They are well informed about practices within the setting via regular newsletters and a notice board. They feel involved in their child's learning as they assist within the pre-school on a rota basis. Once a year the group opens on a Saturday so parents who work during the week are able to see what their children do at pre-school. Parents meet with key workers three times a year to discuss children's progress and together draw up an individual play plan so that parents are clear as to how they can assist their child's learning. Children are encouraged to bring topic related items in from home to share with the group. Parents who have a particular skill or profession, such as nursing talk to children about their work. One parent visited the group to show children how she bathed and dressed her baby.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides care. Staff provide a happy relaxed environment for children. Staff and parents on duty are clear about their role and responsibilities. High priority is given to training and staff regularly update their skills and knowledge. Staff provide a calm, well organised environment where children receive encouragement to develop self-esteem and independence. Children have space to play in a safe environment where they receive a high level of support from staff, as the adult to child ratio is always above minimum requirements. The key worker system is not effective; although staff are allocated to a specific group of parents, this does not extend to the children so on occasions children's individual needs may be overlooked. Paperwork is well organised, confidentially maintained and where appropriate shared with parents. Documentation complies with the requirements of the National Standards, but has not yet been updated with the changes in legislation with regard to the complaints procedure.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Both the leader and management committee are new and are still learning the extent of their roles. The leader is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the setting. She views the dedication and skills of staff as a great asset and recognises that the planning is weak. She has been pro-active in seeking guidance from the local authority.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

A concern was raised on 17 May 2005 in relation to National Standard 12, Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers, that a parent had not been informed about logs kept regarding their child and that all comments in the log were negative. We wrote to the provider and asked them to provide details regarding the allegation and report back in 7 working days. The provider responded with a detailed report. From the information provided there was no evidence that the National Standards were not being met. No further action was taken and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- undertake a further risk assessment of how to keep children safe on the stage
- develop a system for managing complaints in line with new legislation
- further develop the key worker system so that the needs of individual children are met effectively

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):

- develop an effective planning cycle based on children's current stage of development
- consider and implement ways of sustaining all children's interest during story time

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