



Sparrows Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	122501
Inspection date	14 November 2005
Inspector	Gillian Cubitt
Setting Address	Sparrow Farm Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 2LW
Telephone number	07905 222801
E-mail	
Registered person	Sparrows 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?

Sparrows Pre-School opened in 1991. It offers sessional care for 26 children aged two and a half to five years.

The group is open Monday to Friday between 09:15 and 11:45 and 12:30 to 14:45 during term time only. Currently 68 children attend the pre-school. They come from the local area of Stoneleigh and Worcester Park. Children attend on a part-time basis only. Older children attend the morning and younger children the afternoon sessions.

A small number of the children speak English as an additional language and have special educational needs. There are 51 children who receive funding for nursery education.

The pre-school is based in a large outside classroom in the grounds of Stoneleigh First School in Stoneleigh. All children use the main classroom and creative area as well as small group work for older children in an additional small room. All children share access to a small, secure outdoor play area.

There are 13 staff who work on a part-time basis at the pre-school. A minimum of four staff are on duty during each session. All staff hold a relevant qualification in early years childcare. They receive support from a Pre-school Learning Alliance fieldworker and the Early Years Childcare Service.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Standards of hygiene in the pre-school are high. Staff regularly clean all areas and are particularly stringent with their food preparation. They clean and disinfect tables before snacks are served. Children are made aware of good hygiene practice when going to the toilet and after stroking the rabbit; they show their understanding by washing their hands, using soap and water appropriately, without prompting, showing staff their clean hands. Staff help younger children by gentle reminding and assisting them to turn on the taps. Children have very healthy snacks. Children bring in a variety of healthy foods, such as fruit that staff prepare, so children can help themselves; they enjoy their snacks of apples, dried fruit and carrots. Individual diets are carefully noted and discussed with parents.

Children's health is promoted well with daily sessions of physical exercise both outside and inside. Children know that they have to keep warm by putting their hats and coats on before they go outside to run, play with balls and use other outside equipment. Inside, children frequently enjoy dancing to music and enjoy the opportunity to rest and look at books in the cosy quiet room. Children's health and wellbeing is secure as all staff attend first aid courses and have good procedures for recording accidents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The procedures for the safety of the children are good. Staff and the children have sole occupancy of the building. Visitors have to knock on the main door for admission and there are plans for an intercom system to be installed, which will improve security. All visitors' are asked to sign in and their identifications are thoroughly checked. Children have the use of two rooms and these are well planned and made safe, for example, staff protect children from the heat of the radiators by installing purpose-made covers. They also have regular fire drills in line with the school's fire

practices, although these are not recorded. Children have easy access to resources on low level shelves. All toys and resources are of good quality and well-maintained and staff constantly check toys to ensure that they are safe. Children feel safe within their purpose-made environment, as staff do a daily risk assessment and, when on outings, children's safety is paramount as staff ensure that parents assist, so that children are well supervised. All staff are aware of policies to ensure children are protected. They follow clear procedures and keep appropriate records in line with the requirements for protecting children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff ensure children develop and achieve through their system of planning and assessments. They observe children's abilities and note their development so they can plan appropriate activities to meet the individual needs of all children. Staff work well with children under three, providing them with a separate session each afternoon and adapt play materials appropriately to meet their needs, such as changing clay to play dough, reorganising puzzles and small world toys. Staff are aware of the framework of Birth to Three Matters and are currently awaiting places on courses so that they can use this in their planning. All children communicate effectively and are very sociable in all aspects of their play. They enjoy being at their pre-school, as staff and children work hard to make their rooms bright and attractive with plenty of examples of the children's work displayed.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good and children are making positive progress towards the early learning goals. All staff are involved in planning and they ensure a variety of resources are made available that promotes learning through play in all areas. Staff make clear observations on children's abilities in pre-planned activities and note children's strengths and weaknesses so children who have difficulty can have further practice. Staff however pass their written observations on to the supervisor for action and do not individually follow through each child's progress. All staff engage children well in activities, asking them questions to make them think, especially in role play areas. However, not all staff make the best use of extending children's knowledge when they are engaged in observations under one specific outcome in learning.

Children's introduction to literacy and communication is promoted through practical exercises with paints, crayons and manipulative play. Children begin to love books as staff share stories with them in a visual way through the use of story sacks. Children enjoy retreating to the cosy room area to look at books with their friends. Children's independence is growing as they begin to make choices on their activities and learn to tend to their personal needs of going to the toilet and dressing themselves. They help out at tidying-up time and learn to feed and care for the pet rabbit. Children make progress in understanding numbers mainly through song. They count as they sing and begin to recognise numbers they see on activities and posters. Children have opportunities to be creative, they enjoy creating their own pictures with paint

using brushes and their hands. Children also like to help staff stick, colour and paint pictures for their Christmas mural. Children make the most of their outside play area to observe nature. They dig and bury their hands in the soft earth to seek out worms and marvel when they wiggle in their hands. Children also develop their physical skills with an organised obstacle course although fixed equipment does not extend the physical skills of the more able children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are invited to become fully involved in the committee and running of the pre-school. There is an 'open door' policy and parents are made to feel welcome at anytime. They are invited to informal parent morning meetings, as well as individual sessions twice a year to discuss their child's progress. Staff however do not seek formal information about children's individual capabilities whilst at home to help them in their assessments and planning. Parents have access to all kinds of information relating to the pre-school and childcare. This is displayed on the notice board along with the regular newsletter and policy on complaints. The formal record of complaints investigation however is not fully operational. Parents welcome the warm approach of staff, especially at the end of each session, when staff give a brief verbal feedback on what their child enjoyed most during the session.

Staff promote equality of opportunity for all children by acknowledging children's individual cultures and differences. Children with English as a second language attend the pre-school and staff show awareness and sensitivity to their needs. Most cultural festivals are celebrated where children from the respective culture attend. Children with special needs are well catered for. The special needs co-ordinator works closely with other professionals and parents to ensure the best possible care is provided. An individual education plan informs staff of the current goals, so they adapt their planned activities appropriately to include all children.

Children's behaviour is very good. Staff are calm, kind and gentle with the children. They are positive role models and their enthusiasm, sense of fun, especially when dancing to music encourages children to join in. Children beam with delight as they express themselves in movement and song. Children show care and tenderness for their friends, they hold hands and give each other cuddles. Children show curiosity when digging for worms and care when feeding Tinkerbell, the pet rabbit. Children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is well supported.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management are good. The supervisor works closely with the management committee of parents with the organisation. She keeps policies and procedures up-to-date and ensures staff and parents receive copies. All required

records for the safety and wellbeing of the children are well maintained. The supervisor also has an on-going action plan for areas for improvement, as a result she is organising some staff to attend Birth to Three Matters training. The system of appraisal supports staff in their own developmental needs. Staff who attend training also cascade their knowledge through in-house training for other members of staff, which creates an atmosphere of co-operation and flexibility amongst all staff. Rooms are planned well, with careful thought. Imagination is shown in the role play area, where children bring the outside, inside, as they learn about the changes in autumn. The operational plan covers all aspects of care and nursery education. Staff however do not always follow through their written observations with planning the next steps for children's progress, which restricts staff's overall understanding and consolidation of the education programme. The supervisor and deputy however ensure this is carried out to ensure children have continuity in their progress. Consequently, the provision is meeting the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last Children Act inspection recommended that the pre-school take safety measures that cover the use of the new room, using the oven and the heating system. Through a detailed risk assessment, staff ensure that all areas of safety that were highlighted, have had attention so all areas are safe for children. The pre-school have also extended the information parents receive about their children's progress, by introducing twice yearly meetings for this purpose.

The key issues in the last education inspection have also been addressed, as children have frequent occasions to relate to numbers through songs and rhymes. They also learn simple counting exercises in their everyday play. Children also now make regular use of the quiet room for relaxing and looking at books.

Complaints 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.

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 a record is kept of all complaints relating to the national standards and that these be made available for parents on request
- ensure that fire drill log book is kept in line with the recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer

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 staff's understanding of extending activities across all areas of learning, to make these more challenging for more able children
- develop partnership with parents by obtaining more information about what children do at home to help staff with their assessments and planning to meet children's individual needs

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