



Phoenix Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507939
Inspection date	16 November 2005
Inspector	Gill Moore
Setting Address	Riders Infant School, Kingsclere Avenue, Leigh Park, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 4RY
Telephone number	023 92498500
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Registered person	Phoenix Pre-School Committee
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?

Phoenix pre-school opened in 1981. It operates from two classrooms within the grounds of Riders Infant School, situated in the Leigh park area of Portsmouth, and children have use of an enclosed outside play area and the school hall. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee, made up of parents and carers.

There are currently 61 children from 2 years 9 months to 5 years on roll. Of these, 38

children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs and welcomes those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens ten sessions a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15-11:45 and 12:30-15:00.

The committee employ a qualified manager who is responsible for the day to day running of the group. In addition, eight qualified staff work directly with the children across the sessions. The pre-school is situated in a Sure Start area and develops very strong links with a wide range of agencies, the school in which it is based and other early years settings. The group receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children recognise the benefits of vigorous exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and have very good opportunities to engage in a wide range of indoor and outdoor physical activities on a daily basis. They confidently ride bicycles and scooters and laugh and giggle with their peers as they jump into the trolley and push one another along. Children show good coordination. They develop their climbing and balancing skills using frames, balancing beams and tunnels. They also use smaller equipment, including bats, balls and beanbags. They throw, catch and dribble balls in and out of cones, thus increasing their spatial awareness.

Children learn about how to take care of their bodies through discussion and themed activities. A dentist visits to help them understand the importance of looking after their teeth. They know the importance of good personal hygiene. They wash their hands using soap before eating and after using the toilet. They also recognise when their bodies are hot after exercising as they help themselves to fresh drinking water. Children benefit from a range of healthy snacks, including fruits, crackers and toast and talk confidently about foods that are good for their bodies. They are able to recognise the importance of having a healthy balanced diet. They can compare a range of fruits, discussing how these are grown and recognise the differences, for example that some have pips and some skin can be eaten.

Children's health is well maintained because practitioners have relevant first aid training and implement effective procedures when dealing with accidents and administering medication. Detailed health and hygiene policies are implemented to ensure good standards of hygiene are maintained throughout the pre-school and the risk of infection is minimised.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely and safely between the inside and outside learning environment and recognise how to keep themselves safe. They know how to safely handle a range of tools and discuss and regularly practise the procedures should an emergency situation ever arise, for example if there were a fire. Children's safety is ensured because practitioners are vigilant and implement both formal and informal daily risk assessments to ensure any potential hazards and risks to children are removed. Effective systems are in place to ensure parents are fully involved in ensuring children's safety. Children are signed in and out on a daily basis as parents come in to settle and collect their children, written arrangements are in place to confirm who can and cannot collect their child from the group and systems such as the use of passwords are sometimes implemented as an additional precaution ensuring children's safety remains a high priority.

Children use an extensive range of suitable and safe play equipment and resources, which are regularly checked and cleaned by practitioners. The learning environment is bright, attractive and extremely welcoming to parents and children. Individually named coat pegs are positioned at low level, which promotes children's independence and a sense of belonging. Locked internal doors leading from the pre-school area into the school ensure children are safe in this area.

Children are safe guarded from harm because practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of their role with regards to protecting children. They know how to implement local and pre-school child protection procedures. They keep appropriate records, where concerns are raised and liaise effectively with parents and relevant outside agencies to ensure children are protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive confidently and happily to the group. They run in excitedly, hang their coats up, take their name cards to attach them to their self registration board and quickly settle into the routine as they decide what they want to do today. Children are actively involved in their learning. They show great excitement and develop high levels of independence by selecting their own resources. They interact extremely well with practitioners who talk to them about their families. They also develop good communication skills as they snuggle up to share stories, talking about what they can see and what might happen next.

Younger children and those new to the group are very well supported by practitioners who ensure they are settled and happily engaged in their play before their parent leaves. Children enjoy playing games with practitioners who are based in different areas around the learning environment. They feel confident to seek comfort from them. Others confidently initiate their own activities with their peers and then invite practitioners to join in with their play. Children's early development is assessed and monitored by practitioners to ensure they are fully included in all activities. As a result all children benefit from experiences that are tailored to their individual needs and abilities and this impacts on the early progress they make.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have a positive attitude to new experiences. They enjoy initiating their learning, making their own choices and decisions. They show high levels of independence as they pack away activities and resources when the bell is rung. They fetch the dustpan and brush to sweep the floor and dress themselves when engaging in role play situations. Children concentrate and persevere with the tasks they have chosen. When trying to dress dolls and put nappies on them they also respond to the offer of help from their peers which helps build secure and trusting relationships.

Children show excellent communication skills. They use a wide range of vocabulary to contribute to group discussions and this is developed as practitioners introduce new words to them, for example when children explore a range of different textures in the creative area. Their early reading skills are developing well. Children confidently recognise and link sounds and letters when looking at their name cards. Children show great interest in rhyming books. They speak confidently about words that sound the same. They also enjoy exploring a very good range of fiction and non fiction books, gaining an understanding about the author, title and illustrator. They confidently handle a range of tools, such as scissors, cutters and glue sticks and enjoy using crayons and pencils to draw around stencils. However opportunities to encourage children to write are limited.

The children choose their own play, and the practitioners are highly effective in the way they use routines and incidental opportunities to extend their learning, particularly with regards to children's mathematical development. This is done in order to enhance the children's progress. Children confidently count and compare numbers and are encouraged to solve their own problems around size, for example as they build models from a range of construction equipment. Children compare the number of carriages they attach to their train and work out how many more they will need to reach a specific number. They confidently use a good range of mathematical vocabulary to compare length and weight and notice and compare shapes in their environment. Children's understanding of weight and measure is increased as they engage in cooking activities, grow and measure plants and explore different objects in water, predicting which will float and sink.

Children delight in opportunities to express their own and imagined ideas and enjoy cooking dinner and feeding their babies in the home corner. They put on costumes and take on roles of the policeman and fireman showing wonderful imagination as they involve practitioners and their peers in developing their ideas. Children's creativity and use of their imagination is well promoted through independent access to an excellent range of different media and materials, including sand, water, gloop and jelly. Children use a range of textures and different materials to create masks and engage in daily art and craft activities. They participate enthusiastically in singing sessions and squeal with delight as they join in with 'The dingle dangle scarecrow'. They recognise the different tones, sound patterns and rhythm as they sing songs loudly and softly and explore a range of instruments.

Children benefit from a wide range of exciting and stimulating purposeful activities that cover all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The practitioners are able to recognise how children learn most effectively. The children have wonderful opportunities to be active and creative. They enjoy learning about their local

environment as they take bus rides and go on nature walks to search for mini beasts with their magnifying glasses. They also take bark rubbings from trees and collect leaves and cones for their nature table at pre-school. Children talk about their local community and where they live. They can recognise distances in relation to places they are familiar with such as pre-school, Asda and the local country park and farm trail.

Children thrive when they receive opportunities to initiate their own learning. They also benefit from working together in small and large groups for music and story sessions and snack and key work time. They make good individual progress in their learning because assessment is thorough and practitioners use this information and the knowledge they have about children's individual interests and abilities, to plan for the next steps in their learning. As a result, key work time is planned around the individual children and ensures activities are pitched at an appropriate level to enable each child to achieve different learning objectives. Practitioners use effective questioning techniques and adapt their approach to ensure children are fully involved and included in all activities. They make very effective use of time and resources. Teaching captures children's interest and motivates them, which impacts on the individual progress they make as young learners.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children flourish in the setting because they are exceptionally well supported by practitioners who encourage them to become autonomous and competent learners. They develop exceptional levels of self assurance and a sense of belonging to the group. They take responsibility, for example as they visit the snack shop to purchase snacks for their key work group and ring the bell at the end of free play indicating it is time to tidy away activities. The wonderful self registration system and the use of this again at snack time helps children to recognise and value those in their group. They notice when their peers are not at pre-school, are sensitive to one another's needs and develop secure trusting relationships with each other. Children's behaviour is exceptional. They know what is expected of them and they are kind to one another as they help put on dressing up clothes and negotiate taking turns to sit in the trolley and be pushed by one another. Children with special needs are exceptionally well supported. The practitioners work in close partnership with parents and a range of outside agencies to ensure they are fully included and actively involved in all aspects of the pre-school. They are able to achieve their individual potential through extensive support and continual monitoring and assessment of their individual progress and targets for development.

Children enjoy many opportunities to learn about themselves and their peers, gaining an understanding of how families differ. They gain a well developed respect for others and their beliefs and cultures. They visit the church and enjoy visits from the vicar where they learn about special events and festivals, such as Harvest, Chinese New Year and Diwali. Children try different foods and learn about various countries and cultures. They do this through discussion, looking at books and engaging in practical activities, such as turning the role-play area into a Chinese Restaurant and

making clay lamps to celebrate the festival of light. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from superb relationships between practitioners and parents ensuring their individual needs are fully met. Practitioners have an excellent knowledge and understanding of each child's needs, interests and family and home circumstances. This is through the implementation of a highly effective registration and induction to the group, which includes home visits. Parents speak exceptionally highly of all practitioners and welcome the opportunities they have to spend time in the group, share their skills and expertise and be informed about their child's day and the activities and experiences they have been involved in.

Partnerships with parents are outstanding and children thrive because parents contribute to their learning in a variety of ways. They are encouraged to support and develop children's early reading skills by borrowing books and stories to share with their child at home and through the introduction of the 'leap into Books' project. The implementation of a 'pet pal' scheme encourages parents to talk to their child about the experiences of their key work 'pet pal' and share these with the rest of the children at pre-school. Parents are fully informed about the curriculum. They discuss their child's ongoing progress continually, through informal daily discussion and formal meetings with their child's key worker. This helps to acknowledge and value children's achievements. Children's learning is significantly enhanced through the very strong links between home and pre-school, which enables parents to play a full part in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and learning is enhanced by the implementation of the operational plan and highly effective key worker system. Children thrive and enjoy their time at pre-school because staff deployment is effective and practitioners have clear identified roles and responsibilities within the group. Detailed policies and procedures are known and implemented effectively to successfully promote children's care and well-being. Procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff ensure practitioners have appropriate qualifications and experience and are secure in their knowledge of child development. However procedures to ensure the ongoing suitability of staff are not fully developed.

Leadership and management are good, which impacts on the progress children make towards the early learning goals. Secure and effective systems are in place to monitor teaching and identify strengths and areas for development in individual performance, for example through observation, discussion and the implementation of an appraisal system. Management place high priority on monitoring the curriculum and the impact on children's individual achievements. They work closely with children's key workers to ensure assessment records show clear progress, all aspects of the curriculum are covered and all children have regular opportunities to participate in the full range of activities and experiences offered. As a result, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Management recognise strengths within the group and act on recommendations to improve their practice. They play an active role in influencing teaching on a daily basis as they work directly with practitioners and children and continually evaluate the provision and identify areas in which they could develop, for example by introducing peer assessment. The pre-school committee and management liaise extremely closely and meet regularly to ensure the pre-school runs smoothly and the aims of the group are fulfilled. Management support practitioners both formally and informally as they evaluate sessions on a daily basis and meet regularly to identify next terms planning and special events. They place high importance on training and encourage all practitioners to contribute fully to the group successfully promoting positive outcomes for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the pre-school were asked to ensure health arrangements include written parental consent to seek emergency medical advice and treatment. This is now included as part of the admission procedure, ensuring children receive immediate treatment, in the absence of the parent, should an urgent medical situation arise.

The last education inspection asked the group to monitor staff's practice and improve their confidence in introducing number problems, the sound and letters of the alphabet and letter formation to the more able children in every day situations. In addition to the formal appraisal system, weekly discussions with practitioners are now recorded. Management continually monitor staff performance on a daily basis to ensure they make maximum use of daily routines to enhance children's learning. Practitioners make excellent use of incidental opportunities to extend children's understanding of number and recognising different sounds and letters. They question children about number and encourage them to solve their own problems. For example they work out how many children there are at the table for snack and talk to children about sounds and letters as they recognise and compare letters in their names. Consequently, children's understanding of number, sounds and letters is developing well. Children have some opportunities to practise emergent writing during their free play, although children are not actively encouraged to practise writing letters, for example by labelling their own work.

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.

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 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):

- further develop the procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff to ensure their ongoing suitability.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to practise emergent writing during their self chosen play.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk