



Ropley Playgroup and Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109853
Inspection date	07 March 2006
Inspector	Carole Gronow
Setting Address	Ropley Parish Hall, Church Street, Ropley, Alresford, Hampshire, SO24 0DT
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Registered person	Ropley Playgroup and 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

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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?

Ropley Playgroup and Pre-School opened in 1960 and is committee run. It operates from the large hall in the Parish Hall which is situated in the centre of the village. It serves the local area and surrounding villages.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the preschool at any one time. It is open each weekday from 09:00 – 11:45 term time only. On some days according to demand it

remains open until 12:45 so that children can stay for a lunch club.

There are currently 20 children aged from 2 years to under 5 years on roll; however, it is the pre-school's policy not to accept children until the term in which they become 2 years and 9 months. Of the children who attend, 13 receive funding for nursery education.

The preschool supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language and welcomes children with special needs.

The preschool employs 4 staff, 3 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and one who is working towards one.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged to learn about personal hygiene through the daily routine. Many independently take themselves to the toilet and remember to wash their hands. Children also go and wash their hands before snack time and after messy play such as hand painting when they do so without being prompted. They are beginning to be aware of their bodies, saying that they had to put their coats on to play in the snow and they have vests on because it is cold. Children are protected by staff who ensure that they have procedures in place, they record accidents that need their attention and documentation in case they are required to administer medication. However, some bumps that children have are not recorded and therefore parents are not always informed. All staff hold an appropriate first aid certificate and ensure that this is kept in date. Information regarding children's health including allergies and dietary needs is asked about on the registration form. Signed consents have not been obtained for a small number of children which means that they may not receive prompt emergency medical advice and treatment in the event of an emergency.

Children learn about the importance of healthy foods and are encouraged to eat a healthy diet. They take pride putting their names on the rota and in bringing in a snack each half term that their parents provides to share with the other children. They experience a variety of different snacks such as carrots and dips, cheese and crackers, yoghurt and pancakes. Children take pieces of fresh fruit and place them directly on the cleaned table surface. Children are safeguarded from the risk of eating nuts due the nut free policy. Children are polite, they are encouraged to say thank you when they receive their snack and many do so without being prompted. Children make choices about whether to drink milk or water. Water is readily available throughout the session which all children can freely access.

The children have some form of physical exercise daily however this is sometimes limited to games and songs in the hall. There is no permanently accessible outside play area and so children only have the opportunity to play out of doors once a week. Sometimes, they go to the nearby recreation ground where they have opportunities to develop their coordination and balance when playing on the slide, swings and

walking on the balance beam. Inside, they practise throwing bean bags into hoops and sometimes ride tricycles and scooters in the hall or use the climbing frame. At other times they join together in action songs and dance and move around singing the 'Farmers in his den' or touch their head, shoulders, knees and toes as they sing about them.

Children use a wide range of small equipment to increase their manipulative skills. They confidently use pencils, brushes, cutters. Some children have very good control when using scissors to cut out difficult shapes, for example the templates they have drawn around of different numerals such as three, five and seven.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment, where staff arrive early to set up the preschool prior to receiving the children. Children use a wide range of clean, well maintained resources which are age appropriate which are regularly checked to ensure they are both safe and suitable. Children are able to access and make free choices about what to play with from the wide selection available for them each session all of which is clean and in good condition. Children move freely and safely between all the activities that are provided. Different areas of play are subdivided by portable barriers so that children can play in one area at a time.

The safety and security of children is very well considered and is given a high priority by the preschool. Risk assessments are in place and are carried out termly and a lengthy checklist is completed daily prior to children arriving. Internal doors such as in the toilets have foam wedges on them to prevent trapped fingers and also children being locked in. All radiators have guards fitted and staff check that the kitchen is safe for children to go in alone when they need to wash their hands. Children are taught how to respond in an emergency as the emergency evacuation procedure, which is on display, is routinely carried out and an evaluation done. The procedure is repeated until staff are satisfied that all children respond appropriately.

Children are cared for in a building that is kept secure during session times. The outside door is kept locked and there is a door bell for visitors to use. Staff are at the entrance of the hall to welcome children in and watch the door. Children are signed in by their parent who also states who dropped them off and who will be collecting them. Children are protected from unvetted persons. The preschool booking form advises parents children can only be released to persons staff have prior notice about and there is a password system in place. Parents sign in the register to say who dropped their child off and who will be collecting. Preschool policies state that volunteers or students are not left alone with children. Staff have an understanding about child protection procedures and are able to act in children's best interest in areas of concern and they have clear procedures to work with.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily at the preschool, they greet each other and the staff whilst settling straight into the routine and their play. Most of them take their coats off and place their shoes against their name on the 'shoe tree' independently. They are at ease in the preschool environment due to the good relationships that exist between parents and staff and the detail that is given to settling new children in. Staff are appropriately deployed in order to show children the planned adult led activities so that they know what they are about and can attempt them with any necessary support. Children are provided with a wide range of resources and activities and they make independent choices about what to play with, confidently asking staff for help when needed. Children make their choices from the child accessible storage units provided. All children are learning to share, they work together well and they help each other, for example they put their names on a list to use the computer and they co-operate to carry boxes of blocks that they have helped tidy away to the storage cupboard door. The preschool is using the Birth to three matters framework in order to plan activities for younger children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff have a good understanding of the foundation stage curriculum. They provide a wide range of activities and experiences, ask well considered questions to extend children's learning and they offer praise and encouragement. Plans cover all the areas of learning and different aspects are rotated to ensure that they are all covered over a period of time. Systems are in place in order to ensure that children with English as an additional language or who have special needs are appropriately supported. Staff provide an environment where children have a wide choice of practical activities and are learning through their play. Staffs very good knowledge of each individual child enables them to plan effectively what the desired learning outcome is for each child on a weekly basis. As all children are individually planned for this means that they are set appropriate challenges to enable them to develop at their own pace.

Children concentrate and sit quietly, when appropriate. They sit and listen at group time to other children who are confident to speak to the group when they have something to share. This might be something such as finding an object that that begins with the sound of the week or where they have been. They are interested and motivated to learn and try out new skills as they ask staff about new activities on offer such as learning trying to draw lines with a ruler to make a 'helicopter'. Children form good relationships with adults and children and are sensitive to others for example they ask a child who hurt his nose if he is alright and they show concern when a child is upset. Children are very good at working as part of a group and know about taking turns and sharing. They understand what is right and wrong and why because staff encourage them to consider the consequences of their words and actions. Children play well together and are learning to share, turn take and negotiate for example they put their names on a list to use the computer and wait their turn. They work together well as they help tidy away for example to carry a heavy box between them to the cupboard door. Children are developing very good personal independence and many require little adult help. They take themselves off to the toilet and to wash their hands. They take their coats off and hang them up and some can put them back on

and they all take off and some put on their own shoes.

Children have many opportunities to use language for thinking. They are presented with situations where they can organise and explore real and imagined experiences, for example when the role play area is airport office and they talk about where they are going. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to attempt writing for a variety of purposes for example, shopping lists, on a calendar, in a diary, on different paper to make cards with greetings. Some children are beginning to write their name and others are making attempts to do so. Staff encourage them with their writing reminding them how to form the shapes, such as the letter 'y' having a tail. Children can recognise their own names, they understand that print carries meaning and is read from left to right and top to bottom, however they do not choose to access the book area freely.

Children say and use number names in familiar contexts on a regular basis such as counting the number of children at group time and they regularly count with staff. Most children can count up to 10 and some beyond and some can recognise different numbers at random. Children practise calculation, for instance as staff ask them how many cartons of milk they have to take away so that they have the correct number for the children present. Children are beginning to understand about addition and subtraction through some practical activities for example they are asked to make sure the mega blocks are in stacks of seven to tidy away, they count to check this adding to or taking off from the stack to get the correct number.

Children investigate objects and materials, using all their senses. They use different textures of play dough which is perfumed, use clay and have spaghetti in the water play. They explore how magnets work, feel the different textures provided in the sand tray and use binoculars. They look at how things change for example how ice melts when on the radiator, in the fridge or on a shelf. Children find out about living things, they look at and study daffodils and catkins, they study the lifecycle of the frog and have snail races. They look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change as they talk about the play dough being hard when it comes out of the cold cupboard and as they help make pancakes.

Children use information and communication technology to support their learning. There is daily access to a computer which children take turns and use with confidence. Children are aware of a sense of time and of place. They talk about past and present events in their own lives and those of their families. They talk about having been to Disney World and seeing Mickey Mouse and of going to Disney Land, Paris and travelling by Euro star. They talk about going on the beach when they visited their Granny and about one girl's hair being longer last week before she had it cut.

Children are involved in some form of physical activity daily and they all move with control and co-ordination negotiating a safe pathway. However, strenuous activities that involve children in a lot of physical movement are not planned into sessions on a frequent basis and on some occasions children are only offered this once a week. Children sometimes visit the local recreation ground where they have the opportunity to play on large pieces of static equipment such as the slide and swings and can practise their balance and coordination as they walk along the balance beams.

Children gain experience in using a good range of small equipment. They use pencils and crayons, scissors, pegs, small construction bricks, hole punches, stamps, sticky tape, rulers and clothes pegs. They play with hoops, balls, cones and use big boxes to make models. Children play with a range of different materials such as, clay, damp spaghetti, shaving foam, rice, sand, earth, ice and water.

Children explore colour, texture, shape, form and space in two or three dimensions. They make and cut out paper numbers and they make three dimensional models such as a daffodil and a space rocket. Children enjoy painting. They experiment with colour by pouring different colours of paint together and using it on paper, either with brushes or their hands. Children enjoy music and responding to it. They explore how sounds can be changed as they tap bottles filled with different levels of water. Children join in songs and action rhymes; they play musical instruments listening and playing to the beat and they dance and use streamers, waving them to the music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children arrive happy and settle well and all are individually greeted by the staff and by the other children. Children who find it hard to settle are supported by staff who know them well and encourage them to get involved in the activities available. All children are valued, their individual needs met and they are treated with equal concern.

Staff are able to give appropriate support to children with special needs because they have an understanding of special needs and there is a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Children learn about themselves and the wider world through planned activities and celebrations such as Chinese New Year and the Chinese Moon Festival. However, on a day to day basis there is a limited range of resources available to children that reflect diversity. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Staff are consistent in their expectations of how children should behave and as a result most children's behaviour is good. Staff skilfully negotiate with children who are unsettled during an activity and explain to them what the consequence of their actions is likely to be. Children are aware of the rules of the preschool and abide by them which helps to ensure that children play together harmoniously. They know and understand about taking turns and immediately respond to requests to help tidy things away. Children are learning to negotiate between themselves and sometimes resolve differences without adult intervention for example over using the computer. Staff re-enforce children's understanding of turn taking as they have introduced the concept of waiting and the use of lists of names that children can add theirs to. Children who find the concept of waiting difficult are supported by staff who explain why they must take their turn and who quietly and skilfully persuade them to do so. Children are frequently praised and thanked by staff and their efforts and good behaviour are acknowledged.

Children benefit from effective relationships between their parents and staff and the direct involvement that so many of them have by being on the committee. Children

and their parents who arrive early are able to wait in a small room where they can look at books together. When they enter the preschool they are greeted and made welcome and talk in a relaxed way with the staff. An extensive amount of relevant information that informs parents about how children are cared for is well displayed in the entrance and all parents are provided with a prospectus which gives them a lot of information about the preschool and how it runs.

The partnership with parents of children who receive funding for nursery education is good. Parents receive good information about the early learning goals. The different aspects of the area of learning that are being covered is displayed weekly along with the current topic and information about the letter, colour and number of the week. How well children are making progress in the Foundation Stage is written up termly on an individual learning plan that the preschool give parents. Staff also write what they see as each child's next targets. These plans are discussed at the termly meeting that the preschool arrange when they offer parents appointments to discuss their child on an individual basis.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by a team of well established and long serving staff who regularly update knowledge and training. As a result of the high staffing ratios staff know the individual children very well. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and ensure that plans cover all areas of learning. They have introduced the Birth to three framework into their planning which supports the opportunities offered to the younger children. The transition from preschool to school is eased for the children who attend the local school as strong links have been developed and the reception class teacher is a regular visitor to the provision. The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. The committee and all the staff are committed to providing good quality care and education. They ensure that parents are kept very well informed about the provision and about how their child is progressing. Staff receive annual appraisals and are supported and encouraged to attend on going training in order to update their knowledge and any training attended is cascaded to the rest of the staff team. The supervisor presents regular reports to the committee. All the necessary policies and procedures are in place to ensure children are appropriately cared for. The committee and staff monitor their provision plan for the future and actively fund raise to support the group. A questionnaire is sent to parents annually in order for them to ensure that they are happy with the preschool. Current plans are to see how opportunities for children to access for regular outside play can be achieved.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure records containing information about the children were kept in a secure place, that activities provide sufficient challenge for the older children and that all children are encouraged to

experience the activities provided. They were also asked to ensure that the minimum ratios are maintained at all times.

Records about children are kept accessible to staff during the session and are locked away at other times and so information about children is kept confidential. The activities available are planned for all children to access, staff are aware of individual children's abilities and ensure that all children are appropriately challenged. Minimum ratios are now maintained at all times as the group have moved into the main hall and all equipment is now available all session so staff do not need to leave the room to change the provision over. This ensure that children are appropriately supervised.

At the last inspection for nursery education the setting was asked to evaluate the use of time and staff deployment so that all elements of the session are used to fully promote children's learning, for instance circle time and story time. To provide further opportunities in planned and everyday activities, for children to develop their understanding of number through practical problem solving. They were also asked to review the systems for managing children's behaviour to ensure that the agreed methods are used consistently by all staff and that they are deployed effectively enabling them to observe and manage all children appropriately. Staff deployment has improved due a change of room used and more children being to independently access the toilets which lead directly from the room. At the time of the last inspection staff were required to supervise younger children going to the toilet who had to go through the main hall to get to them. Children are now provided with regular opportunities to problem solve during the session through planned activities and through daily routines. Staff manage behaviour with consistency. The plan of the room means that staff are aware of potential problems and deploy themselves effectively which results in children behaving appropriately.

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):

- ensure that there are signed consents to seek emergency medical advice and or treatment for all children and that a record is kept of all incidents when a child is hurt.
- provide children with more positive images reflecting diversity on a day to day basis within the preschool

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):

- make the book area more appealing so that children will chose to access independently
- provide children with more regular opportunities for strenuous physical play

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