



Greyfriars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511532
Inspection date	28 February 2006
Inspector	Wendy, Elizabeth Lightfoot
Setting Address	Greyfriars Community Centre, 44 Christchurch Road, Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 1DW
Telephone number	07969 045987
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Registered person	Greyfriars 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?

Greyfriars Pre-school is run by a voluntary committee of parents and was opened in 1961. It operates from Greyfriars Community Centre in the centre of Ringwood and serves the local community and outlying rural areas. The group has access to the Ebenezer Hall, the foyer, toilet and kitchen facilities and a secure outdoor area is available for outside play. This group is community based and run by a committee.

The group is registered for 26 children aged from 2 years to 5 years and at the time

of the inspection there were 70 children on roll of whom 55 were 3 and 4 year-olds in receipt of nursery education funding. It is the normal practice for the group to take children into the group when they reach 2 years and 9 months. The group supports children with special needs and is supported by the Early Education and Childcare Unit.

The group offers sessional care in term time only and is open at the following times:

09:15 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:00, Monday to Friday; and Monday and Friday toddler sessions 13:15 to 14:45. Children attend a variety of sessions each week.

There is a team of nine staff to support the children's learning; all staff are experienced in working with pre-school children, four staff hold level three qualifications in childcare and education and two more are working towards this level. The remaining staff are working toward relevant qualifications suitable for their role. The group works closely with the local schools and is a member of the Pre -School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable and clean environment. All indoor and outdoor toys are cleaned half-termly. Toilet and kitchen areas are clean and table tops are washed after activities, and before snacks and food tasting activities. Children learn good personal hygiene routines, such as hand washing before eating. At snack time, food is served on disposable plates and drinking mugs are quickly washed and dried after use.

Children's health is effectively supported by the setting's procedures. They receive prompt care in the event of an accident as most staff have current first aid qualifications and others are training or updating. Accident and medication records are up to date and contain all detail, including parents' and witnesses' countersignatures. Children with allergies are well-supported as staff record clear information about children's dietary needs. A comprehensive first aid kit is stored out of children's reach in the main hall. Procedures to protect children at risk from anaphylactic shock are good as all staff are trained to recognise this and to administer an Epipen, which is securely stored on site in a separate, clearly labelled, kit.

Children are offered healthy options, such as fruit, at snack time. They have mid-session drinks of milk, or water.

Children's emotional health is well-supported by staff. Children are greeted warmly as they arrive and latecomers are escorted to join the group so they settle quickly and comfortably. Younger children readily get involved in the fun of the activities provided. They take part in regular physical play, outdoors, in most weathers. They are warmly

dressed and excited when snow starts to fall. Staff allow them to enjoy a few minutes of this, before bringing them indoors and quickly rearranging furniture to make space for more physical activity.

Children enjoy fresh air and a wide range of good quality physical play equipment in the garden. They run, climb steps to the play-house slide and explore an extensive climbing frame. They balance on a long chain walk. Children ride tricycles and cars, steering effectively between other "motorists". They dig with spades in the wood chippings and carry a full load to fill a wheelbarrow. Indoors, children enjoy action songs, learning to move in response to the words and the rhythm. They all join together with the staff to swoop a parachute up into the air, and move quickly in a circle to make it rotate. Children have many opportunities to develop hand-eye control through threading beads and cotton reels. They learn pencil control and to manipulate scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are secure and well-supervised by vigilant staff who are aware of potential risks to children and use measures to keep them safe. They are cared for in child-friendly premises, which allow scope for indoor and outdoor play, in large and smaller groups. The layout is planned to allow easy movement between activities, and is adapted to suit changing circumstances. There is space to spread out to construct an extensive train track, to sit on child-sized furniture for table top activities, to sit on a mat for group activities, such as singing, or to rest and enjoy books on comfortable floor cushions. Visitors are monitored and children are never alone with persons who are not vetted.

Outdoors a child-height bench has been built around the trunk of a tree, to give shade for quiet activities in warmer weather. Bark chippings are used to reduce risks of injury if children fall from climbing and balancing equipment. A separate quiet area is fenced off for the large covered sand pit, to reduce risk of children riding into it. This area includes a new fitted work-bench for potting plants or making constructions, when weather allows play to free-flow more, between indoors and outdoors. Comfortable seating is provided here for staff and children to rest, have a picnic, or read a story. A tarmac area allows children to ride bicycles and learn about road safety through role play, using props like road signs and a zebra crossing.

Children learn about personal safety through activities, such as holding hands when out walking and not touching dogs they do not know. They learn rules for their safety in the setting, such as not running indoors, and being careful when using the steps outside the building.

Children play with safe resources and staff monitor the condition of outdoor play equipment. The pre-school committee support the staff in replacing worn items, such as the slide in the garden. A risk assessment is carried out before outings and parents are given clear information before giving their permission for the children to go on a walk, in the vicinity of the pre-school. Higher staff ratios are provided for outings, to enhance children's safety.

Staff receive training in child protection issues and steps to take if they are concerned about a child and parents are informed of the pre-school's responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They confidently sign themselves in and are quickly involved in activities. They join in enthusiastically with music sessions, parachute games, and pancake races. Children's confidence grows as staff give regular praise for efforts as well as for successes.

Staff plan a range of activities and provide resources appropriate to the needs and interests of the children attending. Some activities are adult led, such as learning about the letter of the day, and others are independently accessed during free play, such as dressing up, and play dough. Activities such as the pancake races are repeated in the afternoon, so more children can take part.

Children are helped by staff to understand the rules and routines of the setting. They help to tidy up, to lively music, so the job is quickly done. They learn to take turns on the computer, by using egg-timers. Children are very attentive during stories and enjoy meeting visitors such as a policeman. Encouraged by staff they ask questions about the policeman's uniform and what he carries in the pockets so they learn about the protective boots, handcuffs and the radio. Young children are confident to tell staff what they particularly like at pre-school and staff show interest and tailor their questions and responses to suit their levels of understanding. Staff are training to use the Birth to three matters programme, to enhance their care of the younger children and help them develop.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan in advance and ensure they have suitable resources to support their teaching. Parents are advised in advance of the letter of the week and the topic, so they can contribute items of interest to support children's learning. Parents are also invited to share their skills, or help develop children's knowledge of the world about them, so a policeman and a pilot are invited to talk to the children, as part of a theme on "People who help us". Other parents visit to cook pancakes for Shrove Tuesday. Themes are well-planned to give enough opportunities for children to take on board important understanding, such as road safety and personal safety.

Staff carry out observations on their key worker group children. They use a variety of methods, but observations are dated and link to their records of achievement. Staff use these records to help them plan for individual children's next steps. Staff have a high commitment to improving their knowledge and understanding of child development and their teaching skills. Children with special needs are welcomed and receive good support from a qualified Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), and, through her, from other appropriate professionals. The SENCO liaises closely with children's parents to ensure everyone is supporting their children in similar ways, to help them progress. Individual education plans are agreed,

breaking learning down into achievable targets. Progress is monitored and reviewed before deciding on next steps.

Children are developing well in communication, language and literacy. They chat in small groups and ask questions of staff and visitors, and share their own ideas and ambitions with them. They are confident to talk in large groups, make comments and express their feelings of pleasure or frustration. They enjoy songs, rhymes and stories. Children enjoy books and are relaxed in reading the story from the pictures, supported by staff interest and questioning. Children know many letter sounds and can recognise letters from the hand signing staff use. Many children are competently signing letters themselves. Children recognise their own names and words on signs, such as "Stop". They draw recognisable people and give staff wording for captions. They write their own names on their work, including in free play. Children get many different opportunities to make marks and practise emergent writing, using jumbo chalks, crayons, pencils and paint brushes. They enjoy sharing in stories using props from a story sack, such as the hungry caterpillar.

Children develop mathematical understanding through regular opportunities to count in activities, rhymes, using number ladders and in sorting and counting objects by colour. They use number lines, counting out the correct number. Children use numbers on dice and start to match patterns with a card, when threading beads. They learn language for size and position, through activities. They sort and identify three-dimensional shapes, and use stacking toys to order shapes and sizes.

Children develop a knowledge and understanding of the world as they use magnifying glasses to investigate insects, wood grains, and small fir tree branches. They plant things in the garden and monitor their growth. Children use tools such as egg-timers to help them take turns when using the computer. They develop mouse control and use this to select animals on screen, talking about what they see, and identifying sea creatures such as dolphins and whales. They use plastic pen-knives when playing with dough and use table knives to cut fruit, with increasing control. They develop designing and making skills, when fitting extensive lengths of rail track together, during free play. Children develop a sense of time, and know that the stars come out at night, but sometimes the moon can be seen in the daytime. They talk about old and new, when comparing their new boots to the old ones which have sunk to the bottom of the underwater scene. Children complete a daily weather chart, identifying the day and describing whether it is sunny, windy, snowing, cold. They make connections between the chart and what they need to wear to go outside. Children learn about Christian and other festivals, enjoying selecting the topping for their pancakes, and the exuberance of the traditional pancake races. They make a Chinese dragon and hide underneath it to make it move.

Children use a variety of materials in creative activities, such as dough, paint and sand. They mix colours with paints and when making play dough. They paint and glue, make collages and drawings. Children sing to the piano with zest and have a good repertoire of songs. They sing spontaneously during free play. Children explore musical instruments such as violins and recorders, and talk to their parents about the activity, so parents provide shakers to continue the activity to the radio at home. Children do skilled actions to songs, moving to the rhythm. They enjoy role play, taking dolls wrapped in blankets out to the garden to play. They practise being

motorists and a lollipop lady. They dress up and use props to act out stories. Children are supported to express their feelings through facial expressions and in words.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children learn about other cultures through activities and learn that their own families are valued when parents are greeted and welcomed. They learn about diversity through resources such as story and non-fiction books, dolls, posters, and puzzles. Children with special needs are fully included in activities and these are planned to take account of children's needs. Staff are vigilant when new children start at the pre-school and monitor how they settle. The experienced Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) notices any concerns very early on and discusses them sensitively with parents. She liaises with the Area SENCO and other professionals to identify the special needs and to plan for children's progress, to give maximum opportunity for children to make steady progress before starting school. All children's individual needs are taken into account when activities are planned.

Children behave well as staff create an atmosphere which is conducive to learning. They learn rules for safety and socialising and staff give consistent and calm reminders, appropriate to children's stages of development and levels of understanding. Children receive regular praise and staff plan carefully to meet their individual needs, so children are calm and cooperative.

Children's needs are met through effective partnerships with parents. Clear information is collected from parents, at enrolment, so staff are well-prepared to care for children. Parents are given a pre-school prospectus, telling them about the setting, its routines, policies and procedures, and what they will need to provide for their child, such as warm outdoor clothing. They receive advice about the risks of certain types of clothing when children use equipment such as a climbing frame. The pre-school is supported by a parent committee, who help greatly with fund raising for new equipment and play materials for the children. Parents are greeted as they arrive at the pre-school and are happy to talk with the staff.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is good. Parents receive information about forthcoming themes and activities, so they can help provide resources and to facilitate their conversations with the children about what they do at pre-school. Parents are welcomed to participate in activities. They receive information about children's progress verbally, throughout the term, and can meet with their children's key workers, to talk through their records of achievement, though there are minor inconsistencies in record keeping. Parents interviewed are confident that their children are enjoying themselves at pre-school and are making good progress.

Children receiving funding for nursery education are eager to join in with activities. They show curiosity in new games, in visitors and in exploring small creatures through a microscope. They are keen to learn more, ask questions and make

comments. Children play in small groups, chatting about what they are doing. They attempt to use new equipment, such as a salad spinner, to see the effects this has on paint drizzled on a disc of paper. Staff support ensures they are willing to persevere until they get a result. Some children persevere for prolonged periods with a favourite activity, such as construction or looking at books. Staff support new children to separate confidently from their parents or carers and children are quickly having fun. Children learn to take care of their personal hygiene, to wear appropriate clothing and to express their feelings and interests. They learn about the traditions of their community and others. They make good relationships with staff and are happy to hold staff hands when walking in the garden. They are confident to smile at visitors and to ask why they are there. Children know their usual routines and respond with excitement when routines change, for example because of the snowfall. They know what is expected of them and mostly comply with the rules. When excitement levels rise, staff help children to calm by introducing a brief series of actions to help them focus and become quiet. Staff are aware where children's special needs sometimes make this harder for them and plan measures to support them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children attending.

Children are cared for by fully vetted staff and are never left alone with parents, or committee members. However, vetting procedures are not sufficiently clear to ensure that new committee are promptly vetted, even though their support to the pre-school involves them in regular access to children. Nevertheless, children are protected, as staff are vigilant and notice children's movements immediately, taking steps to ensure their safety and security. Staff have appropriate qualifications and experience to care for children and provide their nursery education.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The committee provides much support to enhance children's experiences. Staff-child ratios are high, ensuring that children receive good attention and support from staff. Group sizes are arranged to allow children experience of large group activities and time to work on their individual development, in their smaller key worker groups, or one to one with staff, such as regular support for children with special needs.

Supervisors ensure that staff are aware of available training and maintain records of training attended. Regular staff appraisals are carried out to monitor the quality of the care they give and their teaching. This helps clarify any further training wishes or needs. Staff regularly undertake additional training to update or extend their skills.

Staff assess and monitor children's progress, but recording is not entirely consistent, which reduces the effectiveness of using these records for monitoring purposes and to keep parents informed. Clear records are kept of children's and staff's attendance, and of visitors to the setting. Staff's and children's records are securely locked away, on site. Space and resources are organised effectively to meet children's needs. Staffing levels are appropriately increased for outings, which are well-planned to reduce risks. Documentation is used well to support the care of the children and to

plan activities to help them progress. This is especially effective for children who have special needs.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, staff were asked to ensure that risk assessments identify hazards to children when they are on outings.

This procedure has now been put in place and clear measures are taken to reduce risks. Parents receive clear information beforehand to enable them to choose whether or not they wish their child to go.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was asked: first, to provide regular access to a range of writing tools and materials, so that children can have more time to practice early writing skills by, for example, making lists, and encourage children to write their names or make their own marks on their art work; and second to provide more and better access to investigative resources, so children are able to observe patterns and investigate changes more closely.

Children now have access to a range of writing materials throughout free playtime, as well as during focussed activities. They make regular attempts to write their own names on their work and many do so successfully. They give staff wording for staff to write captions on their work, so they learn that the words have meaning and start to remember what they say. Children now have access to magnifying glasses and interesting objects to view through them. They have been supplied with a new workbench in the garden, so they can plant and watch things grow.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. The provider is required to make a record of all 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):

- strengthen procedures to ensure prompt vetting of new committee members

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 consistency in recording children's achievements to keep parents fully advised of their progress

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