



School Lane Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254259
Inspection date	08 May 2006
Inspector	Rosalie Mary Turner
Setting Address	School Lane, Sprowston, NORWICH, Norfolk, NR7 8TR
Telephone number	01603 408678 mobile 07751 835528
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Registered person	Sprowston Lane Nursery 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

School Lane Pre-School is run by a committee of parents and carers. It opened in 1994 and operates from rooms within a resource centre on the outskirts of Norwich, Norfolk. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.00 during school term times. Children have access to an enclosed play area a short distance from the centre.

There are currently 28 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 18 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and surrounding areas. The pre-school currently supports children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Five of the staff, including the supervisor, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health is at risk because staff do not ask them to wear hats to protect them from the sun when they play outside in hot weather. Their welfare is also compromised if they have an accident whilst in the pre-school because parents or carers have not signed every entry in the accident book. As a result, they may not be able to take appropriate actions to safeguard their children's well-being, especially after a bump to their heads. However, parents have given their written permission to enable staff to seek emergency medical care so that children can receive help quickly if they are seriously injured or ill. Children are cared for in a clean and suitably maintained environment where they are beginning to learn the importance of personal hygiene. For example, the staff remind them to wash their hands after they use the toilet and before they eat their snack to prevent germs being passed from one child to another.

Children enjoy their mid-session snack because they can choose from a variety of fresh fruits such as apples, grapes or bananas. The staff talk to the children as they eat to help them to learn that sweets and fizzy drinks are not good for their health. Therefore, children are beginning to understand that a healthy diet will help their growth and development. They are learning to take responsibility for their own health needs because they are able to help themselves to a drink from their individual water bottles especially after physical play when they may become hot and thirsty.

Children have free access to the outside play area when the weather is fine. As a result, they enjoy playing in the fresh air and are developing a positive attitude to healthy living. Staff provide a range of play activities to encourage children to understand how exercise helps them to stay fit and healthy. For instance, they can use up their energy by climbing, crawling and sliding on the 'eight in one' large physical play equipment or by playing games with the parachute.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are not effectively safeguarded because the staff do not carry out a robust check of the premises to identify and minimise any observed hazards. They are

aware that children could escape through the gate to the outside play area but have not taken sufficient steps to ensure that children are safe. Furthermore, children are at possible risk from the contents of the staff's bags which are stored under the table or from electric shock because some of the low-level sockets do not have protective covers fitted. However, children are learning to be responsible for their own safety as the staff give them pleasing guidance to use scissors and other tools correctly.

Children are becoming emotionally secure because they receive a warm welcome from the staff and they come into the pre-school happily. The new children, who may find initial separation from their carers difficult, quickly settle because the staff provide lots of individual attention. Although the rooms are not child-centred, the colourful toys, displays of art work and child-sized furniture help children to stay relaxed.

Children are partly protected from the risk of possible harm because they are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted or released to adults unless parents have given their permission. However, the staff have no guidance on actions that they should take in the event of a threatening situation developing when children are using the outside play area to ensure that they are fully safeguarded. The staff demonstrate that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of child abuse and they keep local guidance to hand so that they are able to act quickly if they have any concerns. Consequently, children are suitably protected from the risk of possible abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and they get on well with the staff who are kind and friendly in their approach to them. Staff join in with children's play and encourage them to develop their skills by asking a range of meaningful questions such as 'How many...?' 'What colour...?' They chat to the children about what they are doing and clearly repeat words so that the younger children learn to speak correctly.

The staff are beginning to use 'Birth to three matters' to plan and provide a suitable range of stimulating activities. For example, children enjoy making miniature gardens or exploring the depths of the water tray to discover shells, lobsters and other sea creatures.

Children are reassured by the familiar routine because they know what happens next. They are learning to work happily alongside each other as the staff encourage them to share the resources. Children show particularly good co-operation when they use the parachute, working together to successfully shake the toys through the small hole in the middle. Staff are particularly receptive to the quieter children and tempt them to join in so that they develop their confidence.

Children have plenty of free floor space in which to gain control of their bodies. They demonstrate their developing spatial awareness by running or pedalling around the outside play area without bumping into each other.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are developing their skills in most areas of their learning, although there are weaknesses in planning that impact on the progress that children are able to make, particularly in knowledge and understanding of the world. The planning focus sheet does not show how activities are adapted for individual children and the subsequent evaluation is weak. Consequently, staff are not helped to recognise where they are successful in promoting learning and where aspects require improvement. All staff have a suitable knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. The 'all about me' topic gives them an opportunity to consult with parents to discover children's starting point along the stepping stones to the early learning goals. Staff reinforce their findings by observing children as they play and assessing their progress. However, children's assessment records do not always include the next steps for learning so that they are not able to be used to plan activities that offer challenges to extend children's skills.

Children persevere with tasks and some are able to complete jigsaw puzzles or construct a range of objects without help. They show pleasing hand to eye co-ordination as they use scissors and glue sticks to carefully place small sequins on to their collage pictures. Children are encouraged to be responsible for their own personal care from an early age and some can put on their shoes and coats independently.

Children enjoy books and handle them appropriately. However, there is insufficient use of labelling to help them to recognise that print carries meaning and staff do not link sounds to letters to promote early reading skills. Children are attentive when they are in large groups, such as at story times, because the staff make stories interesting. They hold the books so that children can see the pictures, point out items of interest and wait for their responses. As a result, children know the stories well and are able to anticipate endings accurately. Children have valuable opportunities to make marks within their routine play and some are beginning to form recognisable letters.

Children's creative development is particularly well fostered and they have many worthwhile opportunities to freely express their ideas and feelings. For example, the end product of art and craft work is determined by the children and they are given a sense of pride in their pictures because they are displayed to decorate the play rooms. Children also have commendable opportunities to be imaginative and they thoroughly enjoy pretending to be grown up as they bath their 'babies'.

Children actively use numbers in their play. They count each other at registration and can competently reach up to ten and beyond. Staff help children to develop their mathematical thinking by asking carefully posed questions such as 'Can you find the number five?' or 'What shape...?' but children are not sufficiently challenged to solve simple mathematical problems. For example, there is no low-level number line to help them to work out 'one more' or 'one less'.

Children confidently build and design using a variety of construction sets and they have effective opportunities to learn about the natural world by examining insects or planting flowers. However, children do not have access to activities or resources that enable them to question how things work or develop their skills in information and

communication technology. As a result, children are unable to make steady progress towards the early learning goal for knowledge and understanding of the world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children from all backgrounds and of all abilities are made to feel at home in the pre-school because they are treated with equal regard. Staff take time to get to know the children and their families well so that they are able to meet individual needs. They call the children by their names and look at them when they are speaking to show that they are interested in what the children say and do. Consequently, children feel good about themselves. They are reminded of the world around them through the books and topics, such as 'Chinese New Year', that help children to learn about and respect diversity.

Children of all abilities are encouraged to reach their full potential because the staff can quickly recognise, and respond to, any developmental delay. They work closely with parents and are helped by the area special needs co-ordinator to develop individual educational plans. Consequently, children receive appropriate support to enable them to participate to the best of their ability. However, there are no notices in the home language of the children who do not speak English to help them to learn simple words or recognise that print carries meaning.

Children have worthwhile support to help them to manage their own behaviour. For example, the staff remind children to 'use our walking feet indoors' and 'be kind to each other' so that they understand what is expected of them. Children learn right from wrong through the clear explanations that they are given when the staff ask them to change their behaviour. Staff are very good role models because they are calm and polite, quickly recognising when children are becoming restless and diverting them to another activity. Consequently, children behave well.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children show concern for each other and learn to respect the customs and beliefs of our multi-cultural society through the range of positive resources available to them. They understand how they should behave and are learning to take turns and share resources.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are provided with a welcome pack that explains the care that is provided for their children whilst information about the Foundation Stage is displayed on the pre-school notice board. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children's achievements before the start of the Foundation Stage. They continue to talk to their child's key worker as they deliver or collect children and have more formal opportunities to discuss their children's learning stories during the parent interviews. As a result, parents are involved in their children's learning and the information that they contribute enables the staff to plan activities that match the children's interests. Parents are supportive of the pre-school and feel that their children 'are happy to come'.

Although parents and carers feel they are satisfied with the quality of care and education that the setting provides for their children, the pre-school has not developed a procedure to advise parents of actions that they could take if they have a concern. As a result, children's welfare could be compromised as their parents may not be aware of issues concerning practice in the pre-school.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are not able to receive the care they need to meet their overall needs because the staff do not ensure that all of the legally required documentation is appropriately maintained. Furthermore, the attendance records do not always show when visitors are present and the times that children arrive and depart have only recently been recorded. The operational plan is very weak as much of the paperwork is disorganised and there are significant gaps in the policies and risk assessment procedures. Therefore, children's welfare and safety is not fully promoted. However, children are partly safeguarded because the pre-school carries out appropriate checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with them. The adults understand how young children develop and they are committed to ongoing training. For example, staff have completed short courses within the last year and some are working towards higher childcare qualifications to ensure that they have up to date skills and knowledge.

The leadership and management of the provision is satisfactory. The pre-school is guided by clear aims and objectives that help the staff to provide an appropriate environment in which children learn through play as evidenced by the satisfactory progress that they are making. The committee is effective in their recruitment procedures and their ongoing appraisal system that ensures the staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The supervisor provides valuable support to the staff team and they work well together to ensure that children learn. Although the committee members are committed to improving the pre-school, they cannot always find the time to monitor the effectiveness of the setting to ensure that all of the perceived weaknesses from the previous inspection have been robustly addressed.

Overall children's needs are not met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of the quality of care the pre-school agreed to devise a system to monitor that staff are suitably vetted as well as to develop the operational plan and their special needs statement. The pre-school were also asked to increase the number of fire drills that they carry out, to develop staff's awareness of child protection issues and increase their understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour.

The committee ensure they obtain Criminal Records Bureau clearance for all staff and encourage them to complete training in child protection issues. As a result,

children are well protected from the risk of possible abuse. Staff carry out regular fire drills, therefore, children learn the importance of escaping safely and quickly in an emergency. The special needs policy has been reviewed and staff work closely with the area co-ordinator to ensure children of all abilities are able to develop their skills. Some staff have received specialist training to help them to manage children's difficult behaviour but the policy for behaviour management has not yet been reviewed to provide staff with robust guidance on actions that they should take to help children to learn right from wrong. Although the pre-school has an operational file, it is disorganised, some contents are out of date and some of the necessary information is missing. Therefore, the setting does not operate efficiently and children's needs are not effectively met.

At the last inspection of nursery education the pre-school agreed to develop a structure for making assessments and to record children's achievements. They were also asked to adapt planning to identify challenges for children and to introduce a structure for staff appraisals.

Staff have completed training in observation and assessment and have introduced 'My Foundation Stage Learning Story' to record children's achievements. These records clearly show children's progress towards the early learning goals. However, staff do not robustly assess their next steps of learning nor include sufficient details within planning to identify challenges for children. Therefore, they are not able to make the best possible progress towards the early learning goals. A staff appraisal system is in place that identifies their training needs and monitors individual effectiveness. Consequently, the pre-school is more able to assess the staff's strengths and weaknesses and evaluate the provision for nursery education.

Complaints since the last inspection

In January 2006 Ofsted received information raising concerns relating to National Standards 1: suitable person, 2: organisation, 3: care, learning and play, 11: behaviour, 12: working in partnership with parents and carers and 13: child protection. Ofsted investigated by conducting an unannounced visit on 02/02/2006. Evidence showed that there was no breach of standards 1, 2, 3, 11 or 13. However, actions were raised relating to standards 6: safety, 7: health and 12: working in partnership with parents and carers. The actions required a written response, which was received within the specified time and approved. 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure the outside play area is secure and that children are not able to leave unsupervised
- promote safety within the setting by reviewing the risk assessment of the premises and taking action to minimise identified hazards
- ensure the records of accidents are signed by parents or carers
- improve practices to promote children's good health with particular reference to their wearing hats when playing in the hot sun
- develop the operational plan, in particular show how the policies and procedures will be developed or reviewed, to ensure the safe and effective management of the provision
- improve the records of attendance to ensure that the times of children's arrival and departure is always recorded and to show when visitors are present.

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- improve assessments to show the next steps for learning for each child so that they can be used to plan activities that offer challenges to children
- develop planning to ensure that it covers all aspects of learning and shows how activities can be adapted for individual or groups of children
- increase opportunities for children to solve simple mathematical problems, question how things work and to develop their skills in information and communication technology.

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