



Toy Box Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY298298
Inspection date	20 February 2006
Inspector	Stephanie Graves

Setting Address	Wentworth Primary School, Wentworth Drive, Dartford, Kent, DA1 3NG
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Registered person	Carol Sutherland & Alison Pitkin
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets 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?

Toy Box Pre-school opened in 2005. It operates from 2 rooms in a portable classroom in the grounds of Wentworth Primary School, Dartford, Kent. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.30 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 72 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 54 children receive

funding for nursery education. Children come from a local and wider catchment area. The setting currently supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 11 staff. Of these, 4 staff, including the joint providers, hold appropriate early years qualifications and 3 staff have almost completed a qualification.

The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are provided with a good range of experiences, which help to promote their knowledge and understanding of good health issues. For example, they are encouraged to be independent with routine self-help skills, including toilet visits and hand washing. Effective procedures help to prevent cross-infection. This includes the use of antibacterial spray and designated cleaning cloths to wipe surfaces. Children benefit from procedures which ensure they are taken care of if they have an accident or become ill. For instance, accidents are recorded and children do not attend if they have an infectious illness.

Children understand the benefits of a healthy diet. Drinks are readily available and children are encouraged to pour their own drinks at snack times. They are encouraged to make healthy choices regarding the food they eat. The group develop children's knowledge and understanding of healthy foods through well planned activities, including a visit from staff at a local supermarket. Children were able to look at, sample and discuss a range of fruit and vegetables. They choose from a wide selection of fruit at snack time, including bananas, chopped grapes, apples and oranges. Staff work closely with parents to ensure children's individual dietary needs are met.

Children learn the importance of physical activity through the nursery education curriculum. They have regular opportunities to experience fine manipulative experiences, vigorous outdoor play and know when they need to rest. They are beginning to understand the effect physical exercise has on their bodies. They enjoy activities with the younger children and 'work out' during music and movement activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure environment. There is enough space for them to move around and play freely within safe boundaries. Toys, equipment and furniture are checked regularly to ensure they are safe and appropriate for all ages and stages of child development. An effective risk assessment ensures potential

hazards are identified and reduced. For example, both the indoor and outdoor play areas are checked each day and any safety concerns are addressed. Children learn how to help keep themselves safe through meaningful routines and activities. For example, they know that only four children may use the climbing frame at any one time and learn to 'say no to strangers' during singing activities.

Children are well cared for because effective procedures promote their welfare and safety at all times. This includes an emergency evacuation procedure, which is regularly practised with the children and child protection procedures, which demonstrate a sound understanding of current requirements.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are comfortable and settled at the pre-school. They confidently move around the setting and choose from a range of stimulating toys, resources and free play experiences.

Children have secure relationships with staff who know them well and spend time playing and talking with them. The younger children are not afraid to communicate their needs and ideas with familiar staff and one another as they play. Practitioners understand the range of experiences required to enable children to make progress in all areas of learning. The setting has recently implemented the Birth to three matters framework and staff are developing their knowledge of the developmental needs of young children. Investigation through resources including paint, malleable materials, construction and role play equipment, encourages the younger children to represent their experiences and ideas, and make connections as they play. Some children become distracted during larger group activities, such as physical exercise, due to high noise levels within the room. This means they are unable to follow simple instructions effectively. Environmental print features strongly within the setting and includes labels and posters promoting numbers, words and illustrations. This helps to reinforce children's pre-reading skills.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, although this is not always charted clearly. Children's starting points are not identified, although observations commence upon entry until children leave. The staff working with the children have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Planning covers the early learning goals but does not effectively show how activities are adapted to meet the needs of individual groups of children. Whole group activities are evaluated well, although the next steps in individual children's learning are not used to inform future planning.

Children demonstrate a sense of belonging as they play and learn together. They are confident, friendly and well behaved. They are becoming independent learners as they move around the room, choose their own activities and help to tidy away. They use a variety of tools to make marks and some are able to write their names using

correctly formed letters. Children learn to link sounds and letters through meaningful activities, including educational computer games. They enjoy stories where they learn about authors and illustrations and eagerly respond when asked 'what happens next?'. Children are gaining confidence with mathematical concepts. For instance, they use simple addition and subtraction in songs and language such as 'big' 'little' and 'ginormous' to describe size and quantity. Staff provide opportunities for children to solve problems. For example, they plan small group games where children work out two items 'missing' from a range of objects.

Children learn about themselves and the wider world through topics and small group discussions. They show a keen interest in things that grow, as they learn about seeds, plants and flowers. Investigation through resources such as 'gloop' inspires children's curiosity as they become fascinated by it's changing texture and appearance. Children are developing good hand eye co-ordination, for instance, as they pour drinks and confidently drag and click the mouse when using the computer. Regular use of the outdoor area promotes children's developing physical skills. They can play with a range of resources, such as wheeled toys, hoops, bucket stilts and climbing equipment. Children are creative. They enjoy role play and music and movement activities and take part with relish. They interact well with the younger children as they sing and tap out rhythms to familiar songs.

Overall, the provision plans and provides activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly welcomed into the setting and are cared for according to their individual needs. Even children new to the setting settle well and demonstrate a sense of belonging. This is because staff enjoy being with them and strive to include all children in all activities. The younger children are settled and comfortable because they are regularly acknowledged and affirmed by staff. They develop self assurance and confidence when making choices and seeking comfort or help. Children learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and others through toys, resources and well planned activities, which promote positive images of diversity. They learn the difference between right and wrong because staff are good role models and praise children regularly for their achievements and good behaviour. Children benefit from consistency of care. For example, children with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language are supported effectively, because staff provide activities and resources to meet their individual needs and respect the wishes of parents. The provider takes positive steps to ensure that parents are kept well informed about all relevant policies and procedures.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents of children receiving funding for nursery education feel included and informed and are invited to share and discuss children's individual progress records. Planning is not currently displayed for parents, although they are invited into the pre-school to share their special knowledge and

skills with the children. This helps to contribute towards the continuity of care provided. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are comfortable and settled within a generally well organised environment. They feel secure and at ease with familiar staff and their surroundings and can access a range of play opportunities. Effective systems are in place to ensure the adults working with children are suitable to do so, although these have not been updated to current requirements. Staff training needs are identified and addressed and the provider informs Ofsted of any changes. The registration certificate is displayed and the necessary records are in place and shared with parents. Daily attendance records show clear arrival and departure times for children, but not for staff. Children's welfare, care and learning are promoted due to the policies and procedures, which underpin the group's practice.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the group strive to promote the personal development and achievements of all children. Parents receive some information about the nursery curriculum, although this is currently being developed within the operational plan. The integration of care and nursery education promotes positive outcomes in all areas of child development, although children have limited opportunities to concentrate and focus in some areas of learning. The monitoring of teaching and learning ensures the overall effectiveness of the curriculum is evaluated. The provider is committed towards the continuing improvement of the provision. For example, the group receive support from early years advisors and have a positive attitude towards implementing any necessary changes. The group provides a professional service. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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 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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- promote children's ability to concentrate and enjoy larger group activities by reducing noise levels within the room (also applies to nursery education)
- improve the systems in place to ensure adults working with children are suitable to do so
- ensure staff attendance record shows clear arrival and departure times.

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):

- promote children's learning and development by ensuring observations and assessments are clearly recorded and show progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals
- ensure planning is informed by the next steps in children's learning, identifies adaptations made within activities for individual groups of children and is displayed for parents.

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