



Elm Road Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	307137
Inspection date	29 March 2006
Inspector	Angela Cuffe
Setting Address	Elm Road, Gatley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK8 4LY
Telephone number	07780 830 464
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Registered person	Elm Road 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

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?

Elm Road Pre-School is managed by a committee and was registered in 1993. The pre-school operates from the large church hall and a smaller hall in a purpose built building and has shared use with other groups. It is situated in a small village in Stockport. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:00 term time only. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children aged from 2.6 to under 5-years-old on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs five staff. Three of the staff, including the manager, hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected from the spread of infection as adequate hygiene procedures are in place. Staff follow the clear toilet procedure, keep the play areas clean and there are good food hygiene practices within the kitchen. The sickness policy is implemented and understood by parents and staff, as are the procedures for administering medication and first aid, therefore, promoting children's health and well-being. However, children's safety is compromised because the playgroup does not have written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment.

Children demonstrate an understanding of keeping themselves healthy. They carefully wash their hands using the soap dispensers with appropriate levels of staff support. They are also able to point out healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables from the posters and books and discuss healthy foods at snack time. Staff are aware of and cater for children's individual dietary needs. They communicate closely with parents to ensure that young children's routines, with regard to eating and sleeping, are followed. However, children cannot access fresh drinking water independently. Information regarding the children is shared with parents verbally on a daily basis, including details of eating and the activities they have enjoyed.

Regular and varied physical activities allow children opportunities to develop their large muscle and physical skills. A healthy lifestyle is promoted for children as they are taken for regular trips to the local park. All children regularly use the indoor play equipment, sports, sit and rides and other play equipment outside.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the warm, welcoming environment where they develop a sense of belonging. The room is decorated with wall paintings of 'letter land' and other child friendly paintings. Children access the range of activities which are on offer to them. These are well organised and provide them with opportunities to progress in all areas of their development. However, the group's lack of awareness of the Birth to three matters framework impacts on the children's use of natural materials and stimulation for younger children. There is ample space in which to explore and make choices from the wide range of materials and resources available. Children benefit as the

room is organised into learning areas, therefore, allowing them to make informed choices. However, the limited space in the quiet area impacts on children's freedom to rest when they are tired.

Children are protected from harm as the staff follow the procedures to maintain their safety. Staff are observant and vigilant, while allowing children to explore. Therefore, potential hazards are minimised and children are able to develop and become independent. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they are aware of the areas they can and cannot play in. However, children can access garden tools, drains and plug sockets. They learn about road safety and stranger danger whilst on outings and practice fire drills on a regular basis. They also learn about safety as they sing songs about why they should not touch matches.

The building is used by other groups. The rooms used by the playgroup are kept secure and staff supervise the children when they go to the toilet. Children's welfare is maintained as staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of the area child protection procedures and of their roles and responsibilities within them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and develop confidence and self-esteem. They build secure relationships with staff and have fun together. Children are actively engaged in the activities and show interest and understanding in the large group discussions. They eagerly choose their activities and become engrossed in their play, developing good imagination and language skills. However, staff are not using the Birth to three matters framework to inform their planning and practice. Observation takes place and is recorded. This enables all staff to understand the learning abilities of each child. Children enjoy and benefit from regular opportunities to play with sensory and natural materials. They explore dough, corn flour, sand, water, paint and glue. Staff respond to children's interests and they interact well with them giving much needed cuddles when they are distressed or tired. During adult led activities children listen to instructions intently and try to achieve with every effort. The activities provided meet children's individual needs and provide appropriate challenges.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are chatty and gain confidence in speaking within a group during small group times, such as snack and large group discussions. They enthusiastically chat to adults about past events at home and at playgroup. They build close friendships, sharing ideas for play and showing each other their achievements. Children enjoy making choices from the resources on offer. They develop their independence, practice their skills and consolidate their learning. Children begin to recognise the letters in their name. Some children can write their name with varying degrees of support, they make marks and write for a purpose spontaneously during the play sessions. There is a satisfactory choice of resources available for them to do so. Children greatly enjoy exploring books. They handle them carefully and become engrossed as they develop their reading skills by following the pictures and telling a story. They develop their

language and mathematical thinking in group story time.

Children make good progress in relation to maths. They use mathematical language to describe size and shape throughout their play. They often count and can carry out simple calculations and recognise some numerals. Staff take opportunities to question children, encouraging them to practice and develop these skills. Children develop curiosity as they explore various materials and observe changes. They build and design mainly using construction sets and have some opportunity to use technological equipment such as a tape recorder, cash register, telephone and computer.

Children play creatively and develop imaginative skills during their time in the role play area. The creative art activities are available throughout the session, with a good choice of creative materials available. This enables children to develop their individual creativity or imagination in art. Children develop good coordination and large muscle skills through well thought out and varied physical play sessions. Staff allow children to use large play resources in various ways, which presents them with further challenges. Older children climb up the steps and slide down the slide.

Staff have good relationships with children, treating them with care and respect. They work closely with parents and have a sound knowledge of individual children. However, the assessment process does not clearly identify the next steps for the children and is not used to inform the short term or long term plans. Therefore, staff are unable to adapt activities or offer suitable challenges to children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children value each other as individuals. They learn about different cultures through the activities provided and the equipment available to them. They are made aware of the wider world through regular outings and information in books. There is a selection of resources and images, which positively reflect our diverse society. Children take part in and learn about various celebrations and festivals. Children express their needs naturally to enable staff to gain a better understanding and build routines. As a consequence the children are happy and settled in the playgroup. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Good behaviour, children's efforts and achievements are acknowledged, recognised and praised appropriately. Consequently children are confident and have high self-esteem. The staff speak positively to the children. They support and help them to understand simple rules, such as sharing and taking turns. As a result, the children behave well and interact with each other in a positive manner. They understand their boundaries and respond well to discussions and occasional reminders from the staff. Information about children's progress is shared with parents on a daily basis. Staff have a sound knowledge of individual children, they are particularly attentive and quickly respond to their individual needs. Staff value children and allow them to develop their own personalities. Children, therefore, develop a high self-esteem and treat others with care and respect.

The partnerships with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from a very positive partnership with parents. Staff value parents and share information with them in a variety of ways in order for them to meet the individual learning needs of the children. Information is shared with parents regarding their child's day and development. This is effectively recorded and also followed up with observation of each child and detailed recording of this. Children take work and pictures home and bring items from home relating to current themes. This effective communication between parents and staff helps to maintain consistency of care and promote children's welfare, safety and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff work closely together as a team, creating a happy, relaxed environment in which children enjoy learning and playing together. The building is mostly well organised, affording children space to develop in all areas of learning. They benefit from high levels of interaction from qualified staff who are committed to providing a caring environment for them. Children's health, well-being and safety are promoted as most necessary policies and procedures are in place and followed by staff who have undergone all necessary checks and clearances.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager and deputy work closely together and provide positive role models for the staff. They have a good understanding of the setting's strengths and weaknesses and changes are effectively implemented within the playgroup. All children therefore fully benefit from initiatives such as the implementation of the Foundation Stage and planning and assessment methods.

The manager and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the continuing development and improvement of the provision. They attend regular training sessions and work closely with their early years advisor.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to improve the policies and procedures and include the name and address of the regulator in the complaints procedure.

The policies and procedures still need improving to make them personal to the group and the name and address of the regulator has not been included in the complaints procedure.

This impacts on the organisation of the provision and is not giving parents an opportunity to report any issues they may have.

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.

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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 fresh drinking water is accessible to the children at all times
- obtain written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure all areas used by the playgroup are organised to meet the needs of the children appropriately and are made safe
- plan a range of activities in line with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) framework Birth to three matters
- develop further the group's policies and procedures and include details of the regulator in the complaints procedure.

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):

- develop an assessment process, ensuring that it is based on observations of children, shows their next steps and is used to inform the short term planning
- continue to develop and monitor short term planning, ensuring that it covers all areas of learning and provides appropriate challenges for children

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