



Springboard Opportunity Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511262
Inspection date	29 March 2006
Inspector	Rachael Williams / Mary Daniel
Setting Address	2a Princes Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7SZ
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Registered person	Springboard Opportunity Group
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 good. 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?

Springboard Opportunity Group is a well established group for children with special needs in Clevedon, North Somerset. Children have access to a large, bright room for play, a smaller room for IT and individual work, a parent's room, toilet facilities and a fully enclosed outdoor area.

The group is open Monday to Friday from 09:15 to 11:45 and Monday to Thursday from 13:00 to 14:45 term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The group offers care for children up to eight years. Currently, 49 children attend for a maximum of two sessions throughout the week. There are 18 children receiving funding for nursery education. All children attending have special educational needs.

There are eight members of staff who work directly with the children. All have a minimum of a level three early years qualification. The staff are supported by regular volunteers.

Springboard is a registered charity, a Company Limited by Guarantee, a self help group and a voluntary organisation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of hygiene through established routines, such as appropriate hand washing before cooking activities; using liquid soap and paper towels to prevent the cross contamination of germs. However, nappy changing arrangements do not fully encourage children to be aware of hygienic practices. For example, some children's nappies are changed whilst they are standing up and the children are not cleaned before a new nappy is applied.

Children are introduced to a healthy lifestyle through the provision of a range of nutritious and varied snacks. Children are beginning to be aware of their own needs and, through the use of pictures and signs language, are able to make decisions. For example, a two-year-old points to the picture of a banana for his snack taking to pieces as requested.

Children are protected from illness and infection through clear arrangements to ensure their well-being. For example, there are clear procedures to record the administration of medication and accidents where appropriate consents are gained. However, the medication record is not countersigned by parents to ensure clarity of what medicine has been administered. Children remain healthy as staff are accessing relevant first aid training.

Younger children benefit from daily opportunities to be active. For example, children have opportunities to jump on the trampoline and to develop their physical skills on the soft play equipment, such as the rocking seesaw. Children have frequent opportunities to walk to the nearby park to further develop their large muscle skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely around the safe, well maintained environment which is spacious and welcoming. Staff have good knowledge of the children and organise space well to accommodate their needs, for instance ensuring a large play space to accommodate wheelchairs and walking frames. Children are closely supervised by

suitably cleared staff who deploy themselves effectively to meet their needs. A good range of suitable, safe resources are available to the children. Storage of resources does not fully encourage children's independence as they need to ask staff to reach them, for instance the tape recorder.

Children benefit from a safe and secure environment which is monitored well. For example, there is a well documented visitors record and a clear child collection procedure. There are good arrangements in place to assess and identify potential risks and hazards. However, fire drills have not been appropriately recorded to maintain children's well-being.

Children's well-being is safeguarded through the staff's good knowledge of child protection issues. Staff are aware of the possible signs of child abuse, the procedure to follow and the confidential recording of such incidents. The child protection policy does not include the procedure to follow if allegations are made against a member of staff. However, staff are clear on this procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly into the small and friendly group. Strong links are established between staff and children which ensures they are confident and happy. Children are provided with a stimulating range and balance of activities which help them make progression in most areas of their development. For example, children enjoy developing their co-ordination skills when rolling table tennis balls through cardboard tubes and responding to the sound it makes as it bounces on the floor. Younger children are beginning to follow the instructions, for instance when creating Easter nests and respond well to the staff's clear direction and explanations.

Staff are developing their knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework to provide appropriate experiences for the children according to their needs. Children are encouraged to communicate in a range of ways, both non-verbally and through speech. For example, children use actions to explain how they want children to greet them for the hello song. Informative observations are made to assess their children's progress. However, as yet, these are not linked to the Birth to three matters framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are committed and are familiar with the different ways in which children learn. They use a range of resources and methods to meet children's differing abilities and interests. For example, songs are regularly used to encourage children's curiosity and help them recognise daily routines, such as with the group 'Hello' song time. Children readily respond to this group activity. They have fun pushing the 'name wheel' to a friend and enjoy joining in with clapping their hands or stamping their feet to the song. This encourages children to become involved and learn through their play. Staff are qualified and experienced. They support children's learning satisfactorily through their understanding of their particular needs. Planning incorporates all areas of learning

and activities are aimed at each child's individual needs in liaison with other involved agencies. Staff plan a range of interesting and stimulating themed activities. However, the learning intentions of weekly planned activities are not clearly identified, and there are some areas of learning in which children are not always effectively challenged.

Children relate well to staff and are encouraged to interact within their peers. They hold hands together for the 'Hokey Cokey' song and dance. They sit comfortably together for group activities and are encouraged to share. This helps them in starting to form relationships at their level. Children settle easily and are content to explore the play areas. They enjoy playing with toys put out for them, for example, in the home corner, but cannot always independently access a wide range of play resources. As a result, they are not so well supported in making choices, or extending their own ideas in play.

Children develop some sense of community as they meet people who help them, such as a policeman, and they visit the local library and shops. They start to learn about the outdoor world as they explore worms, frogs and snails and watch the birds and animals at a nearby garden centre. This awareness is extended through ongoing displays around the premises, and use of an interest table. This helps children develop some sense of their natural environment, although they do not see many positive images of the differences within their world through general play. Staff are approachable and caring. This helps children to develop confidence and they are relaxed and at ease within the group. For example, they listen happily to a story and enjoy holding up their animal puppets to show the brown bear or red fox. They join in with repeated refrains, such as in 'huffing' and 'puffing' with the 'Three little pigs' story. Some children enjoy using crayons at an easel, and some begin to form recognisable letters of their name. However, this skill is not extended to encourage mark making for a purpose. As a result, children are not always fully challenged in some activities.

Children develop their hand-eye co-ordination skills through a variety of suitable activities. For example, they are encouraged to pour out their own drinks at snack time. They carefully spoon their Easter nest mixture into the cake cases. This promotes their small muscle control and independence skills. Children are encouraged to move in different ways at the 'Hello' group time and they stamp their feet and clap their hands. Some manage to 'turn upside down'. Children have opportunities to play outside or to jump on the trampoline indoors. They enjoy this exercise and have fun using up their energy. However, there are times when physical play opportunities are limited and do not effectively help all children in developing their gross motor skills.

Emphasis is put on supporting children's communication skills. All staff learn a recognised sign language and reinforce these actions with words and symbol cards. They recognise the responses of children with limited or no speech and speak clearly at their level. As a result, children feel valued and included and their individual needs are respected.

Children's spatial awareness is supported as they put their photo card at the top or bottom of the 'Springboard bus' picture. They find their own space as they choose a

mat to sit on for group songs and story time. Staff encourage children to become familiar with numbers as they enjoy a variety of songs, such as 'Five green and speckled frogs', and some attempt to join in with counting. Staff frequently use number language within general discussion and they talk to children about how many raisins to put into their cake cases. However, this is not always sufficiently reinforced, and some children take too many or too few without staff noticing. Written numbers are not often used to extend children's awareness, for example, within everyday routine activities. Consequently, there are times when children are not sufficiently challenged in using numbers for a purpose.

Children explore colour and texture through a variety of creative activities. For example, they mix paint, flour and water together and feel compost or wood shavings. They have use of many tactile and interactive toys. This encourages them in learning through sensory experiences and helps all children feel included. Staff aim to help each child feel an appropriate sense of achievement through their play and praise them often. For example, for waiting patiently or being kind to a friend. Staff have realistic expectations, appropriate to children's particular needs. They give a calm, positive approach and maintain consistent boundaries, which help children feel secure. They talk with children about 'happy' and 'sad' faces. As a result, children are supported in managing their own feelings and developing their self-esteem.

Staff meet daily to discuss children's progress and assessment records are regularly reviewed. Achievable targets are set to help children's development. This helps them to make progress at their level and enjoy their play. They benefit from a key worker who makes observations of their activities. However, the assessment system does not clearly show a child's development across the stepping stones of the Foundation stage. Planned activities are not frequently evaluated. This means there are times when children are not always sufficiently challenged to take the next step in their learning. Consequently, children are not effectively supported in all areas of their development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident and settled within the welcoming environment. They confidently separate from their parents, showing a sense of belonging as they self register. Children are valued and respected for their individuality and close relationships have been established to ensure continuity in care. For example, staff have good knowledge of children's backgrounds and individual education plans and use this knowledge to involve children in familiar routines, such as preparing a meal in the role play area.

Children are beginning to become aware of routines and expectations. Photographs are used to encourage children to take turns, for instance on the trampoline. Staff use appropriate strategies to manage behaviour, such as clear explanations and limited choices. For example, a three-year-old who is finding it difficult to sit and listen is asked to either sit on the mat or on a member of staff's lap. Incidents are recorded appropriately however, they are not readily available or shared. Some children are

keen to help within the provision and enjoy tidying up before moving to another activity. All children's achievements, no matter how small, are acknowledged and praised by the staff. Staff are calm and have established positive relationships with the children. They are encouraged to be kind to others and share their toys. Children visit their local community and join in with a nearby summer fair. They develop a sense of belonging as they hear the 'Springboard' group song. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff have good knowledge of special needs and provide effective support for the children. There is good communication with outside agencies and parents to ensure continuity. Through regular visits within the community children are becoming aware of their local environment. Some resources are available to encourage children's understanding of the diversity in our society.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are well supported in settling their child into the group through flexible arrangements, which includes home visits. Children benefit from the friendly working relationships staff form with parents. This gives children reassurance and helps them to settle in happily. Parents receive a clearly laid out prospectus and relevant information on the six areas of learning of the foundation stage curriculum. Children's continuity of care is supported through regular liaison and exchange of information. This contributes towards meeting children's individual needs. For example, parents frequently share in children's assessment records. However, these records do not clearly show children's developmental progress across the stepping stones. Consequently, parents are not able to fully share in all of their child's achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care, welfare and learning is promoted through well written procedures, policies and good relationships with parents. Appropriate recruitment and induction procedures ensures consistency between staff. However, ongoing suitability arrangements have yet to be formalised.

The well organised, safe environment encourages children to move freely under close supervision of well-trained professionals. Although high ratios are maintained the register does not clearly identify accurate times of attendance for staff, children and volunteers. The operational plan is used well to provide a stable environment. Children are well supported by their key worker as two are nominated to ensure that at least one is attending with the child. Overall, the setting meet the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. There is a clear management structure in place and staff are well supported in their own professional development. For example, they have regular appraisals and training opportunities. All staff attend special needs training. This supports them in planning interesting activities and helping children to feel valued and welcomed.

Management and staff work well together on identifying areas for improvement and

are starting to form action plans relating to the outcomes for children. Staff are dedicated and have regular meetings to discuss issues arising. This pro-active approach has a positive impact on children's learning and enjoyment. However, the system for assessing children's progress is not fully effective and as a result, some areas of their learning are not sufficiently monitored.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection recommendations were raised relating to safety and enjoying and achieving. Both recommendations have been satisfactorily addressed.

Springboard Opportunity Group have established an informative risk assessment which identifies potential risks and hazards to the children. Appropriate actions have been detailed to provide a stable and safe environment for the children.

Planning relates to the foundation stage curriculum and the Birth to three matters framework. It has been made accessible to all staff to ensure continuity and understanding of learning intentions.

At the last inspection of nursery education a point for consideration was made relating to the assessment records of children's sensory experiences.

Staff have looked at how this could be improved for some children with particular needs, but are currently still working with the same checklist. As a result, overall children's sensory experiences are not effectively monitored.

Complaints since the last inspection

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see and request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to OFSTED.

There have been no complaints made to OFSTED since the last inspection.

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 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):

- ensure fire drills are consistently carried out and recorded appropriately
- further develop the registration system to show accurate times of attendance for staff, volunteers and children
- further develop consistent hygienic practices to ensure children's health is maintained

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):

- review the system of recording observations and assessment to clearly evidence children's achievements and show their progress across the stepping stones
- review the organisation of toys and resources to encourage children's independent choice in play, and support them in initiating and extending their own ideas
- develop the system of monitoring and evaluating planned activities to ensure children are sufficiently challenged in all areas of their learning

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