

Army Air Corps Preschool

School of Army Aviation, Middle Wallop, Stockbridge, Hampshire, SO20 8DY



Inspection date

17 June 2015

Previous inspection date

8 December 2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Requires improvement	3
The setting does not meet legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- Sleeping arrangements do not include a separate room for babies, and floor matting is unhygienic where toddlers nap and pre-school children rest.
- Staff do not always promote children's good health through well-thought-out arrangements for nappy changing around mealtimes.
- Children and parents do not always benefit from timely actions because the flow of information and decision-making across the leadership team is often slow due to postings and staff changes.
- Leaders and managers do not use fully effective systems to ensure the suitability of staff for their role with children.
- Staff do not always maintain their sharp focus on sharing children's next steps in learning across the pre-school team.

It has the following strengths

- Staff are particularly good at settling new children into the pre-school. As a result, children demonstrate they feel safe, secure and excited to explore the highly stimulating learning environments they prepare for them indoors and out.
- A superb special educational needs coordinator guides all staff as they observe, challenge and review children's progress across all areas of development.
- Staff are skilled in helping children excel in their personal, social and emotional development. Their experience is evident as they support children through times of change and separation when children's parents are working abroad.
- Staff prepare children very well for the next stage in their learning and for their moves to school and to other new locations.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that premises are suitable for babies and young children to sleep undisturbed in hygienic conditions
- promote children's good health by providing suitable hygienic changing facilities for babies' nappies away from tables where staff serve food and children are eating
- strengthen recruitment procedures to ensure suitability of staff for their role, for example, by obtaining and keeping a record of references
- improve information sharing across the leadership team to ensure that children, their parents and carers benefit from more timely decisions.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- make full use of procedures to share children's next steps in learning across the staff team to help all staff raise children's achievements to the highest levels.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed a wide range of activities across all areas of the pre-school and talked with staff and children about what they were doing.
- The inspector reviewed documents and procedures relating to safeguarding, staffing, supervision, risk assessment, equal opportunities, and health and safety, and checked a selection of other policies.
- The inspector sampled a range of children's records and the pre-school's systems for planning, evaluation and exchanging information with parents and external professionals.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and reviewed written communication from parents.
- The inspector met with representatives of the leadership team and conducted a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Helen Robinshaw

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Children make good progress in their learning and development due to the teaching skills of well-qualified staff. Comprehensive assessments ensure staff develop children's strengths, fill any gaps in their learning, and prepare them well for their move to school. However, staff do not always update charts to share children's next steps across the team. Staff work effectively with external agencies to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many parents speak very highly of the prompt, dynamic and sensitive support that staff give them and their children as they prepare for the next stage in children's lives. Staff create a wide range of interesting areas that motivate children to investigate and confidently share their opinions with others. Staff provide a good balance of activities to challenge children's thinking, encourage them to discover, strengthen physical skills and play imaginary games. Children relish sensory and messy play. For example, babies enjoy handling paste and water, toddlers make their own play dough, and pre-school children manipulate scissors as they cut dried pasta.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children requires improvement

Attentive and caring staff sooth and regularly check sleeping children. However, sleeping arrangements for babies and toddlers are not sufficient as they remain in the same room as other children who stay awake, busy and in need of daylight. The foam matting where children rest and take naps is ingrained with dirt from outdoor shoes. Similarly, staff do not always think through their hygiene practices as they change babies' nappies in very close proximity to children eating their morning snack. Children show self-control and learn to manage small risks as they help to wipe spills, sweep up and work as a team. They learn how to keep safe and to channel or pump water as they pretend to put out fires. Children benefit from plenty of fresh air and physical exercise each day.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision requires improvement

The manager and two other members of staff apply their training from degree courses in early years to monitor and raise the quality of teaching on a daily basis. Management uses evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvement. However, this has not identified the weaknesses in the levels of hygiene and welfare for very young children. On occasion, decisions across the leadership team are slow to follow through the manager's responses to parents' concerns and improvement planning. Although staff have the required Disclosure and Barring Service checks, management does not consistently carry out or record other checks to ensure staff suitability, such as references from previous employers. Nevertheless, the manager and staff team have a good understanding of the child protection procedures and know how to implement them effectively to safeguard children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	109880
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	824910
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	58
Name of provider	Army Air Corps Playschool Committee
Date of previous inspection	8 December 2009
Telephone number	01264 784381

The Army Air Corps Preschool registered in 1995. It is located within the Army Air Corp base at Middle Wallop, Hampshire. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9am to 3pm during term times. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four. All 10 staff who work with the children hold relevant early years qualifications at level 2 to level 5. The pre-school also employs a cook and an administrator.

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