



Pippin Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219303
Inspection date	17 October 2005
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	Roecroft Centre, Church Road, Stotfold, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 4NE
Telephone number	01462 834897
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Registered person	Pippin Pre-School 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Pippin Pre-school Group is run by a voluntary management committee. The group has been established in excess of 37 years and has occupied the current premises since 1994. The group is located within the Roecroft Centre in Stotfold, Hertfordshire. There are 3 main rooms and children have access to a secure outside play area. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open during school term-time and sessions are daily from 09.00 to 12.00.

There are currently 36 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. The majority of children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school is able to support children who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs six staff. Two of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. They are learning about the importance of personal hygiene, for example, they wash their hands before snack time and staff discuss the relevance of this with them. Children are offered healthy and nutritious snacks, including fresh fruit, bread sticks and savoury biscuits. Snack time is very much viewed as an extension of children's learning and development. The group operates a 'snack bar' system and children choose when to have their snack, sitting in small groups and enjoying a variety of discussions with their peers and with staff members. They find their name cards, help themselves to food and drinks, and tidy their plates away afterwards, thus promoting their independence, social, literacy and communication skills.

Children enjoy an extensive range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in adult-led activities such as music and movement sessions. The group also makes excellent use of the outdoor play area, providing daily opportunities for children to use equipment such as ride-on toys, balls, hoops, slides, tunnels and see-saws. Much thought has been put into the design of this area and children's imagination and learning is extended as they play creatively, using the roadways and playground games marked on the playing surface and the magnetic, chalk and white boards built onto the walls.

Staff are skilled in encouraging children to develop their own play and ideas, further promoting their confidence and overall development, for example, when playing with bean bags and hoops, staff allow children time to determine their own play but also encourage them by showing how to throw the bean bags into the hoops, improving skills such as co-ordination and balance. Children's independence is promoted and they are developing an understanding of their own needs, for example, pouring their own drinks and visiting the bathroom independently. This area of practice could be further improved if children had free access to drinking water at all times, helping themselves when needed. Staff ensure that all relevant paperwork and records are in place so that children's health can be promoted at all times. However, children's confidentiality could be compromised as parents can see previous entries when signing the medication record.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work is creatively displayed and resources are exceptionally well organised and easily accessible. Staff set out the equipment and resources for each session and give this much thought, paying attention to the smallest details and arranging toys appealingly, helping children to feel enthusiastic about the activities and ensuring that they feel secure and settled. Their safety is given a very high priority by experienced, knowledgeable staff who are continuously vigilant in all areas. They carry out formal daily safety checks of all areas used by children, identifying hazards and taking immediate steps to remove or minimise these. Children have an exceptionally good understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are consistently given clear explanations by staff and understand the importance of turn-taking and listening to instructions in order to prevent accidents. They regularly practice fire drills and staff take note of any issues or areas for future improvement.

Children's safety is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly sized tables and chairs. Children independently select toys and activities from an extensive range of high quality resources. Staff check these at the beginning and end of each session to ensure that they are clean and safe. They are given further guidance in this area in the pre-school's comprehensive 'Equipment and Resources Policy'. Children's welfare is given a high priority as staff have a thorough understanding of child protection procedures and are able to identify, report and follow up any concerns. Children are protected at all times as there are stringent procedures ensuring the recruitment and employment of suitable staff and their ongoing suitability whilst employed by the group. There are also clear procedures regarding student placements, ensuring that all adults coming into contact with the children are able to work appropriately and promote the safety of the group at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy, secure and settled, thoroughly enjoying their time at the pre-school. They are eager to participate and are enthusiastic about the activities and play opportunities provided. All children are exceptionally confident in their relationships with each other and with staff. Their personal development and self-esteem are consistently promoted through highly sensitive support and interaction from experienced, caring staff. Children and staff are often engaged in creative discussions about a variety of topics, enabling children to develop their social and communication skills.

Children show a high level of independence as they competently choose resources and activities throughout the session. They are consistently offered new and challenging opportunities, which are always linked to their individual interests, needs and capabilities, thus ensuring the promotion of all areas of development. All staff make excellent use of open questions, taking every opportunity to extend children's

learning and encourage them to think further. An example of this is when playing with the building blocks, staff members allow children time to play and experiment, intervening at appropriate times to ask children which blocks balance best, which towers are the tallest and how many blocks are in a tower. Staff also carry out regular, detailed assessments of individual children, making excellent use of the information from these to inform future planning and ensure that activities are balanced and reflect the needs of individual children.

Younger children's learning and development is thoughtfully and carefully planned and promoted. Staff have an excellent knowledge of child development and a very clear understanding of each child. They use this knowledge and their vast child care experience to ensure that all activities are offered at an appropriate level for every child, thus ensuring that children make excellent progress and are able to realise their full potential.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making excellent progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, planning and adapting activities appropriately. The majority of activities are child-initiated, with staff providing support, encouragement and additional resources whenever needed. Staff are exceptionally skilled in using this method, making clear judgements about when to intervene and when to allow children time to develop their ideas and determine their own learning. An example of this is when making 'treasure boxes', children were not told which shape of box to use, which decorations to put on or where to put objects. All completed boxes were highly individual and children were extremely proud of them. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use excellent methods for assessing them, fully utilising information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered and determine future activities.

Children show their great enjoyment as they participate in the extensive, balanced range of activities. These include regular opportunities to participate in imaginative role play scenarios, crafts and construction using a vast range of materials and equipment. Staff use their experience and knowledge to ensure that children are purposefully occupied and are consistently offered challenge in their play. Children show great skill in handling small tools and implements such as pencils, scissors, paint brushes, glue spreaders and playdough cutters. They are given numerous opportunities to write and clearly enjoy this, writing their names on paintings, compiling imaginary lists and drawing detailed pictures.

Children are highly motivated and fully engaged in their play and activities. They have a very good understanding of their own needs and are confident in meeting their personal needs. They have excellent relationships with their peers and listen carefully to each other, discussing activities and organising imaginary games and turn-taking. They count and use mathematical language in their daily play and conversations, and staff are skilled in making the most of opportunities to increase children's knowledge, for example, counting the number of children in the line, looking at how many girls and boys and which is the greater number.

Children are gaining a thorough knowledge of their community and the wider world through the provision of a range of resources and activities. These include visits to local facilities such as the lower school and church, and innovative games such as 'Stotfold Lotto' where children can identify local landmarks and places of interest. Children show an avid interest in stories and rhymes. They listen intently, joining in with rhymes and predicting story endings.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full and active part in the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Chinese New Year, Divali and Christmas. Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. Their behaviour is excellent throughout the sessions as they choose their activities and competently organise turn-taking and sharing. They respond very well to staff, and the positive approach and excellent staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is implemented, working sensitively with individual children and parents to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines.

The quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. There is a strong commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are kept very well informed of their children's progress through regular newsletters, meetings with staff and open access to their children's files and assessment records. There is a website and highly informative notice boards containing information about a number of issues including the current themes and activities, snack menus, health and safety. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and high quality care can be provided for each child. Children also benefit from the pre-school's active involvement in the local and wider community. Examples of this include providing creative displays for a local event and ongoing fundraising carried out for local and national charities.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The high quality of the provision means that the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children who attend. Children's care is greatly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation and they benefit from the care provided by the qualified and highly skilled staff. Thorough staff supervision and monitoring ensure that the nursery's comprehensive policies and procedures are consistently applied.

Children's play opportunities are enhanced by the excellent organisation of space, allowing them the freedom to move safely and independently from one activity to another. This enables them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Children's welfare, care and safety are consistently promoted through the staff's practical knowledge of the nursery's policies and procedures. There are stringent procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children and this is supported by an excellent induction process for new staff, ensuring that all are able to work appropriately with the children.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the excellent understanding that the play leader has of her role and responsibilities, ensuring that she is aware of all regulations and changes in legislation. She acts as an excellent role model and staff are highly motivated, regularly attending additional training. Sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of opportunities throughout the day. Children are always given sufficient time and resources to enable them to complete their activities and tasks. Their progress is tracked through comprehensive ongoing assessments and parents are kept well informed of this. Staff meet regularly to plan future work, ensuring that the needs of individual children are met and the development of all children is promoted.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the group was asked to look at a number of issues relating to behaviour management and to children's health. Staff have attended additional training and have thoroughly reviewed their policy to ensure that all staff are able to manage children's behaviour consistently and confidently. They now ensure that there is at least one member of staff qualified in first aid on duty at all times and have increased their knowledge of infectious diseases so that children's health can be further promoted.

The group was also asked to look at a number of issues relating to policies and procedures. They have reviewed their operational plan and a number of the policies within this. There are now clear procedures for child protection, complaints and emergency evacuation of the building. Staff have also ensured that they have written parental permission for emergency first aid and for taking photographs of children. These measures further improve the safety and welfare of all children cared for.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints received by Ofsted. 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 children's confidentiality when parents sign the medication record
- ensure that children have access to fresh drinking water at all times.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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