

Sturminster Marshall Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	144318
Inspection date	20 June 2007
Inspector	Brenda Joan Flewitt
Setting Address	Rear Of First School, 78 High Street, Sturminster Marshall, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 4AY
Telephone number	01258 858 395
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Registered person	Sturminster Marshall Pre-School & Toddler 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sturminster Marshall Pre-School was established in 1973. It is run by an elected committee of parents and operates from a self contained unit in the grounds of Sturminster Marshall First School, near Wimborne, Dorset. Children attending are predominantly from the local village community. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday during term time. Sessions run from 09.00 to 11.45. A lunch club session is offered from 11.45 to 13.00.

A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 29 children on roll aged from two to five years. Of these, 23 receive funding for early education. The group support children who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are five staff employed to work directly with the children, most of whom either hold or are working towards relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted at all times. They enjoy a healthy lifestyle. There are daily opportunities for children to have fresh air and exercise. The outside area is utilised well to provide a wide variety of activities. Children use a good range of large and small equipment which helps develop their muscle skills. For example, some children skilfully manoeuvre wheeled vehicles, avoiding each other and obstacles. Others wash dolls and dolls' clothes and use their fine motor skills to peg the dripping items on the washing line. Visits to the school garden enable children to run, jump and balance as they move in and out of the trees. They like to sing and act out the familiar song 'Five little speckled frogs'. Children learn to make healthy choices at snack time from options such as bread sticks and a selection on fruit. Children observe how an orange has been cut into 'slices' or 'segments' and relish tasting fruits similar to the ones in the story they have enjoyed earlier, called 'Handa's Surprise'. Children can have a drink whenever they feel thirsty because the resources are made easily accessible to them. They learn about the importance of protecting themselves from the sun, as they put on hats before playing outside.

Children develop independence in good practices for their own personal hygiene. They learn to use the easily accessible toilet and hand washing facilities without help, and routinely wash hands before handling food. Children are protected from the spread of infection through staff procedures and there is clear information to ensure parents know that children must not attend if they have an infectious illness. Children's medication and accidents are well managed. Most staff hold an up-to-date first aid certificate and resources are readily available both in the pre-school and on outings. The relevant records with regards to children's health are completed appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and learn in safe and secure premises where hazards and risks are identified and minimised. The effective security arrangements mean that children are protected from uninvited visitors and cannot leave the building unsupervised. Children move around freely and in safety because the space available is arranged well to provide various areas of play. They use furniture, equipment and resources that are well organised and kept in good condition.

Children know what is expected if they must leave the building in an emergency, as they are involved in regular fire drills and discussion. Staff are clear on their roles, fire exits are clearly marked and each practise is recorded and evaluated. This all contributes towards children's safety in a real situation. Children are protected on outings through staff's routine procedures which include an increased adult-to-child ratio, risk assessments and making sure that a phone and contact numbers are available. Regular head counts are completed when moving to and from outside areas.

Overall, staff have a sound understanding of how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow with concerns. The policy has been recently updated and provides clear reference material. However, children's existing injuries are not recorded as routine, therefore, their safety is not fully promoted in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy settled and secure. They enjoy their time at pre-school and make positive relationships with staff and each other. The 'My pre-school' photo album helps to prepare new children for the routine and activities on offer. Parents are encouraged to take the book home to share with their child to help them settle. Children develop confidence in making their needs known as they can be sure of a friendly response. Children play in a welcoming, busy environment where they are encouraged to use their senses to explore and investigate. They enjoy a good balance of adult-led and self-chosen activities where they learn in all areas of development. Children use a very good range of resources which are organised well to encourage them to select for themselves and extend their own play. Children develop independence in practical skills such as pouring their own drinks, managing their clothes and using hand washing facilities.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear working knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn through play. They use this to provide a broad range of activities and experiences for children across the six areas of learning. There is an effective key worker system. Staff know children very well as individuals through observations and the support offered in the children's play, which leads to appropriate challenges being set. They complete progress records linked to the stepping stones and plan for each child's next step. Therefore, children are making good progress in their learning.

Staff provide an environment where children are encouraged to extend their own learning through exploration, particularly through 'messy play'. For example, children delight in making their own 'recipe' as they mix flour, water and powder paint. They use their knowledge of number to count out the spoonfuls of flour, they observe the changes as they add different ingredients mixing with their hands or spoons. Some use their imagination to pretend they are making 'chocolate cake' and describe the texture as 'sticky' and 'bumpy'. There are daily opportunities for children to express their ideas as there are always resources available for painting, craft, 'writing' and drawing, and role play. Children learn to recognise their written name through daily activities, and write for a purpose in their play and by naming work. Some children are forming recognisable letters. Most children are confident and use language well to communicate, initiating conversations with adults and peers. They listen very well to stories in a group, predicting and recalling and joining in with familiar phrases.

Children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They construct and design using a wide variety of materials and use technology on a regular basis through meaningful activities. For example, they use a digital camera to take photos of their friends which are then displayed in the pre-school. Computers are available on a daily basis and some children are competent in the skills needed to complete a simple programme. Visitors into the pre-school and outings around the village help children to learn about their local environment, and people and their jobs. Children use numbers for counting and solving problems in various situations such as identifying the number of children present and linking it to the correct numeral. Older children enjoy playing a game to guess how many pennies are 'hiding' under a cup, by counting how many are left from a group of four. They look at shapes in the environment around them and sometimes transfer what they can see to paper using paint and shaped objects for printing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave well. They learn to take turns through their play. Staff introduce codes for helping children to understand, which leads to a harmonious group. For example, children quickly learn the rule of 'only four at a time' in the new sand 'boat'. They wear a tabard when it is their turn and can easily see if there is a spare one so that they can have a turn. Children are encouraged to be polite and display good manners and respond positively to being given tasks of responsibility, such as handing out food at snack time and counting the children. Children receive much praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements which helps build their self-esteem.

Children are valued as individuals. Staff are interested in the children and their lives. Children with additional needs are well supported. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator and one-to-one workers liaise with parents and connected professionals to ensure that all children are fully included. Children develop a strong sense of being part of a community. They see their art work and photos of themselves displayed in the pre-school, and have individual, named coat pegs. They become familiar with the school premises as they take part in particular activities within in the school and often see older siblings on the same site. Children learn about their local community through visitors coming in and walks in the village. They start to develop a positive attitude to the wider world and people's differences through topic work, such as exploring festivals like Diwali and Chinese New Year. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the positive relationships between staff and parents. There is good information supplied about the setting which includes useful written material on the curriculum, about various activities and how children learn from them. There are daily opportunities for parents to talk to key workers, however, there are no formal opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress records. Staff actively seek parents' knowledge of their child on admission, and their opinions about the provision. Parents form the management committee which gives them an active voice in their child's care and education.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by well qualified and experienced staff who work effectively as a team to provide smoothly run sessions. Children know what to expect and therefore, settle quickly. There are clear staff recruitment and induction procedures to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with children, and are well informed to be able to carry out the policies and procedures that promote children's health, safety and welfare. There is a comprehensive operation plan which provides good reference material for staff and committee.

The effective organisation of the premises, resources and structure of the session means that children play in a safe environment and take part in a broad range of experiences, both inside and outside. All the required documentation and records are in place, well organised and generally completed clearly. However, there is no routine recording system for existing injuries.

Leadership and management is good. There is a strong committee who have a clear vision for the pre-school and implementing improvements. There are plans in place for enhancing the outside area taking place this summer, to encourage a free-flow system for children to choose

inside or outside activities. There are good systems in place for monitoring the provision for nursery education which includes staff appraisals and support for staff training. The information for parents does not include any formal opportunities for them to view and discuss their child's progress records. The positive links with the school supports the children's smooth transition as they start in the reception class. The 'rising fives' use the school hall for 'PE' sessions and meet the reception teacher in the term before they start. This helps them gain confidence as they are familiar with the premises and people. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection recommended that the organisation of space and staff deployment was reviewed, to ensure all areas are fully utilised.

The pre-school room has been re-structured to bring the quiet area into the main activity room, which enables staff to support all activities effectively.

The last nursery education inspection recommended: that planning was reviewed to include detail of challenge for older and more able children; and that opportunities were increased in maths and communication, language and literacy to extend children's learning.

The planning system has been developed and together with the assessment procedure and staff's knowledge of individual children, appropriate challenges are set to help all children progress. Staff use every day, meaningful activities to encourage children to use and extend their knowledge of maths and communication, language and literacy skills.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- record existing injuries as routine.

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 more formal opportunities to share children's progress records with parents.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk