



Applepips Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221912
Inspection date	08 December 2006
Inspector	Sheena Osborne
Setting Address	C/O Offord Primary School, Millers Close, Offord D'Arcy, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 5SB
Telephone number	01480 810488
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Registered person	Applepips Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Applepips is the amalgamation of two groups, Little Pips Pre-School and Applejacks Out of School club. The groups merged in 2005. It operates from its own mobile building located in the grounds of Offord D'Arcy Primary School, which is situated in the centre of the village of Offord D'Arcy, Cambridgeshire. Applepips serves the village and the surrounding area.

There are currently 20 children from two years six months to five years on the Pre school and Seedlings roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early education. Thirty-five children are currently on roll for the Out of School club. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special needs.

The group operates a variety of sessions. Pre school sessions are offered five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08:50 until 11:30. Lunch club is offered five days a week

from 11:30 to 12:30. A Seedlings session is offered on Thursday from 12:30 until 15:00 during school term time for children from two years six months to five years. Before and after school sessions run five days per week during school term time from 08:00 until 08:50 and from 15:00 until 18:00. The holiday play scheme runs for two weeks during the summer holidays.

Two full-time members of staff and two part-time member of staff work with the children. Two have appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards appropriate qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted because staff ensure that the premises are clean and hygienic. Through daily routines and guidance from the staff children learn the importance of following good hygiene practices as a way of staying healthy. For example, they know the importance of washing their hands after visiting the toilet and know to discard food which has fallen on the floor as a way of preventing the spread of infection. All staff hold current first aid qualifications and all of the required documentation which supports children's health is in place and used effectively. This enables staff to deal with any accidents the children have effectively.

Children develop a good understanding of the benefits of exercise as part of healthy living. They take part in daily outdoor activities which are challenging, stimulating and fun. They enjoy energetic games such as 'What's the time, Mr. Wolf' and 'The Farmer's in the den'. They use the schools adventure play area where they have the opportunity to develop their climbing and balancing skills and enjoy digging in the garden whilst planting vegetables and looking for mini beasts.

Children learn about the importance of healthy eating because staff offer them a good variety of fresh fruit at snack time. Although children self-select from the range of fruit staff talk to the children about their choice and gently encourage them to try something different, thus helping them to develop a palate for a wider range of tastes. All children are able to access drinking water independently, thus encouraging them to develop an awareness of meeting their bodily needs. Pre school children have the opportunity to attend the lunch club. Many parents provide their children's food. The others have a school meal. Children and staff sit together at lunchtime and enjoy this social occasion.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and safe environment. Staff ensure that an effective cleaning rota and risk assessment is completed before the start of each session and this ensures that the premises are safe when children arrive. The group's safety procedures and policies are mostly implemented effectively by the staff, thus reducing the risks to children from any potential hazards. For example, they monitor access to the premises and keep a record of all

visitors. However the way in which the fire evacuation procedure is practised does not ensure that all children are familiar with it.

Children are supervised both indoors and outdoors which means that they can develop their independence in a secure environment. They have access to safe, clean and well maintained equipment. Child accessible storage is in place. It is used independently by the children to select resources of their own choosing, including books in the book area, small world play and construction toys.

Children's welfare is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the group's child protection policy which they would refer to and follow if they had concerns about a child. There is an identified person to take the lead in this area and staff work in co-operation with other agencies to protect and safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled because they enjoy warm and positive relationships with staff and each other. They have opportunities for self-initiated play which supports most areas of their developmental needs and enables them to follow their own interests. However resources to support messy and creative play such as sand, water, play dough and junk modelling are limited to planned activities. This limits children's opportunities to explore and investigate texture or freely express themselves using a stimulating range of media.

Staff have a sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This helps them to plan a suitable range of activities to support younger children's learning. Children enjoy the activities provided, playing together harmoniously and confidently involve adults in their play. Older children enjoy their time at the out of school club where they can be active or relaxed in accordance with their needs and interests. During out of school sessions and the holiday play scheme children enjoy a good range of interesting activities such as tee-shirt painting, sand art and cooking.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and provide a satisfactory range of activities and experiences. Planning covers the six areas of learning and staff work their way through the stepping stones systematically. Focused activities detail the learning intention, although these are not always related to the children's next steps of learning and are not effectively evaluated to inform future planning. Although the staff have a generally sound knowledge of children's individual abilities they are currently reviewing the way in which they collate this information. As a result there are inconsistencies in the monitoring and assessing of children's achievements and their next steps in learning are not always identified. Staff listen to children, answer their questions and respond to their comments, which ensures children feel valued.

Children's independence skills are developing and they competently tend to their personal needs, such as putting on their coats and shoes by themselves. Most children are confident

communicators, initiating conversations with adults and speaking to a familiar audience. Some children can recognise and link sounds to the letters that their names begin with correctly, while other children do this with support of an adult. Children enjoy listening to stories and happily share books with each other. Writing materials are readily accessible and staff encourage children to try writing or mark making by writing their names on their own art work. Clear labelling of resources and displays around the room helps children understand that print carries meaning.

Children demonstrate an understanding of numbers, counting and calculation in a range of practical activities and during daily routines. For example, children are given opportunities to count aloud when counting the children at the snack table and look at number as they complete the daily calendar and weather chart. They learn about simple calculation as they participate in number rhymes such as 'Five little ducks' and use mathematical language to describe shape as they build with a range of construction resources like 'Lego and Stickle bricks'.

Children find out how things grow and change. They plant pumpkins and know that the plants need, soil, water and sun to make them grow. They learn about space as they play in the garden and develop co-ordination and control as they play with balls and on the obstacle course. Children learn about their community as they take part in event such as visiting the local church and being involved in the local art exhibition.

Children are offered a variety of key activities in music and enjoy singing. They are encouraged to develop their imaginations through activities such as small world play and role play. The children are offered opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape, but these are limited as messy play is only accessed as planned activities. There are few opportunities for children to be spontaneous in this area. This impinges on children's creativity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed and included in the provision. The positive relationships with parents contributes to the children's care and well-being. The staff gather and share information with the parents effectively. Daily discussions and newsletters keep parents informed of day to day activities and any changes that may affect their children's care. Systems are in place to support children with special needs. This ensures that they are supported appropriately and their needs are respected.

Children are beginning to learn about diversity and the wider world by taking part in a suitable range of planned activities. They celebrate festivals together, such as birthdays or Christmas and learn about festivals from other cultures, such as Chinese New Year in practical activities. Children are encouraged to work together and support each other. This helps them to develop their understanding of differences and similarities and to become aware of the needs of others. Children's behaviour is good. They respond well to the clear guidance, praise and encouragement they receive from the staff. As a result they learn about taking turns, playing together and sharing with each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Parents receive basic information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and are informed of the current topic and of the learning intentions to be covered. At present the staff gather limited information from the parents on what their children know and can do. However a new system has been introduced during the inspection period to enable parents to contribute to their child's assessment records. This means that staff will have a fuller picture of children's attainments and help them to support children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff work together well organising space and time effectively enabling them to manage necessary domestic tasks whilst still providing appropriate care and support for the children. The provider uses effective recruitment procedures to ensure that staff are vetted, which ensures children are protected. Staff have suitable experience and qualifications to work with children and an appraisal system is in place. Policies and procedures and other legally required documentation are in place to support practice. These are shared with parents and are regularly reviewed. This contributes to children's health, safety and welfare. Overall, children's needs are met.

The quality of leadership and management of funded children is satisfactory. The provider is committed to further improvements and has identified some of the training needs of the staff. They understand where improvements need to be made and have implemented some changes that benefit children's progress. For example, gathering information from parents on what their children know and can do.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last child care inspection for the Pre school a number of recommendations were made. The provider has taken some steps to address these. Staff and volunteers are deployed effectively enabling them to provide appropriate care and support for the children.

Fire evacuation procedures required development to include procedures initiated by the setting as well as those which are initiated by the adjacent school. Some progress has been made in this area. However, further improvement is still recommended, as detailed in this report.

At the last child care inspection for the out of school club a number of recommendations were made. The provider has taken positive steps to address all of these. The Certificate of registration is clearly displayed and the group's complaint procedure has been updated. This ensures that both staff and parents have clear guidance to follow if they have any concerns with the provision or the care provided.

Children's welfare is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the group's child protection policy which they would refer to and follow if they had concerns about a child.

Children have access to a suitable range of resources and activities which supports their independence and enables them to pursue their own interests in most areas.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to improve planning. Staff have taken some steps towards this. They now ensure that planning identifies the six areas of learning, that learning intentions of focussed activities are clearly shown and weekly plans show learning intentions in all six areas of learning. However these are not always clearly linked to the weekly activities.

The provider was also asked to improve assessment by using it effectively to plan the next steps of learning for individual children. Some progress has been made and children are satisfactorily progressing towards the early learning goals. However, improvement in this area is still recommended and is detailed in this report.

The provider has taken sufficient steps to develop the programme for communication, language and literacy, thus supporting support children's all-round language development. The provider has also organised resources to enable children to have free access to a suitable range of equipment to support children in developing their construction skills and to explore different methods of joining.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- continue to further develop the system for practising fire evacuation procedures to ensure that all children become familiar with them

- increase opportunities for children to express their own ideas through art and craft activities and to explore and investigate different media (this also applies to nursery education).

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):

- further develop planning to ensure that learning intentions support children's individual needs
- ensure that a coherent assessment procedure is used to clearly identify children's achievements and identify how they progress to the next steps in their learning
- continue to develop opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning.

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