



First Class Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY335188
Inspection date	18 January 2007
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe
Setting Address	Houldsworth Valley Cp School, Rowley Drive, NEWMARKET, Suffolk, CB8 0PU
Telephone number	07845 915595
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Registered person	Velda Joan Le Cocq
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

First Class Pre-school is a privately owned setting, which moved to the current premises in 2006. It operates from a room within Houldsworth Valley county primary school in Newmarket, Suffolk. Some of the children on roll will go on to attend the primary school. There is an outdoor play area and children have use of the school playing fields.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 69 on roll aged between two and five years. Of these 27 are eligible for nursery education funding. The setting supports a small number of children who speak English as additional language.

The nursery is open each weekday from 08.45 to 15.15 during school term time. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

Six practitioners work with the children, of these five have appropriate early years qualifications.

The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is promoted well and they are protected from the risk of cross-infection by sound hygiene procedures. Staff offer children good role models as they wash their hands, for example, before food preparation or after nappy changes. Children learn about good hygiene as they talk with staff about washing fruit or hands to 'get rid of germs'.

Sufficient members of staff have current first aid certificates to ensure children receive appropriate treatment in the event of an accident. Records are kept and parents countersign to say they have been informed. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the administration of medication, but records of administration are not always clear, which potentially affects children's health and safety.

Children benefit from some opportunities to be active. In good weather they use the outdoor area throughout the session, which ensures they have daily fresh air and exercise. The school grounds provide extensive areas for walks, circle games or vigorous exercise. Outdoor climbing equipment, for example, gives children opportunities to climb and balance. Indoors however, children have limited opportunities for active play in inclement weather. Free flow routines enable children to choose times for rest or quiet activities, which ensures children are well rested. Children use tools and equipment with confidence, for example, they cut with scissors and show good hand-to-eye coordination.

For their snacks children choose when to eat and drink, they find their cup and plate and sit at the table to take an active part in food preparation. They benefit from good quantities of fresh fruit, such as oranges and bananas and enjoy a drink of water or milk. Water is easily accessible throughout the session so children satisfy their thirst according to their own needs. Children who stay for lunch have lunchboxes provided by their parents or carers. Good advice is given to parents to help ensure food is healthy and suitable, such as including an ice pack and avoiding, for example, crisps and sweets. Staff know the children well and are fully aware of any food allergies or special dietary needs, which promotes children's safety.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures, such as a secure high bolt on the entrance. There are clear plans for emergency evacuations and children practise the fire drill regularly so they know what to expect. Risk assessments ensure children's safety on a daily basis, for example, ensuring equipment is safe and the outdoor area is clear of hazards. Staff help children learn to keep themselves safe as they instruct children in moving equipment in

an appropriate manner. Occasionally, staff deployment does not ensure children are effectively supervised to keep them safe and prevent unwanted behaviour.

Areas used by the children are well organised to promote their independence. Low level storage enables children to self-select toys and resources freely and safely. The room is bright, cheerful and welcoming, with attractive displays of children's work, including self-initiated art work and their emergent writing.

Children are protected from harm as staff have a sound understanding of child protection. They attend training to update their knowledge and understanding and know who to contact if they have concerns about children's well-being. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place that follow guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the setting with enthusiasm and separate from their carers with confidence. Good settling in procedures ensure younger children receive individual care and attention so they are secure and content. Children of all ages show high levels of independence, they prepare their own snacks, help to tidy away and access toys and resources with interest and enthusiasm.

Children enjoy active story sessions, they gather together eagerly to listen to new stories invented by creative staff, or join in with a familiar tale, such as 'three little pigs'. Younger children listen to one or two stories, but are then invited to return to their play, which recognises their age and stage of development. Older children remain to explore more stories using persona dolls or puppets. Children choose their favourite books, they sit with a friend to turn pages and read about, for example, the gingerbread man or enjoy a one-to-one story with an adult. The book area has cheerful and inviting furniture, but the range of books available limits children's choices.

Children benefit from a very good range of resources that enable them to play imaginatively. 'Real' cups and plates, for example, help them create home environments, where they invite their friends to tea. Children talk to 'daddy' on the telephone or put their 'babies' to bed.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Practitioners show a good understanding of the early learning goals and know how children learn. They work together well to plan and provide a good range of interesting and meaningful activities. Staff support children well and ensure older and more able children have sufficient activities to interest and challenge them.

Assessments of children's learning are linked to practical meaningful activities, staff meet together frequently to share what they know about the children. This ensures they have a broad understanding of children's individual attainments in the setting in order to plan for children's next steps.

Children thoroughly enjoy stories and gather together with enthusiasm to listen. They sit together to look at books, handling them with care and turning the pages, although the range of books available on a daily basis is limited. Children understand the elements of stories and speculate about what happens next. Some identify familiar letters and most find their own name cards with ease, for example, at registration or for snack time. Children use various tools to develop their pre-writing skills such as brushes, pencils and threading games. Their efforts at mark making are valued by staff and prominently displayed.

Children use mathematical language confidently, for example, finding larger or smaller bricks when building a tower. Practical activities, such as preparing their snacks help them estimate, for example, how many pieces of banana they would like. Children have independent access to a variety of resources that develop their understanding of everyday technology, such as calculators, tape players and a digital camera. Watching and recording the changes in the African land snails helps children develop an understanding of change and the world about them

Children move to music with enjoyment and confidence. They join with songs and rhymes with enthusiasm and choose songs such as 'wheels on the bus'. Materials such as junk modelling, paint and play dough enable them to explore their creativity in self-initiated art work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met because staff know the children well. Good information is collected from parents, such as the 'all about me' forms, so staff are well informed about children's preferences and abilities. The free flow play environment ensures children of all ages make decisions about their play and develop their independence well. Younger children benefit from attentive and supportive adults, who ensure they participate in all the activities. Older children approach their learning with interest and pleasure as they access toys and resources freely. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed into the setting and staff have an understanding of how to access additional support where necessary.

Children show a sense of pride in their achievements, for example, they display their work in their own 'art gallery'. Generally, they behave well and show caring attitudes as they make room for other children on the sofa for story time, or help to tidy away resources. Staff provide good role models, they say 'please' or 'thank you' and have high expectations that children will do the same. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff invite parents to settle children into the setting and ensure they collect information about their starting points. Key workers have developed good working relationships with parents and carers, which helps to ensure children are settled and happy. Parents and carers receive information about the Foundation Stage through newsletters and the parents notice board. Newsletters also give information about topics and themes so parents know about their children's activities. Parents discuss their children's progress informally with staff so they understand about the activities. There are few planned opportunities for parents to contribute to the records of learning, which affects the planning for children's next steps.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are protected by rigorous systems that ensure any adults working with them are safe and suitable to do so. Procedures are in place to supervise unchecked adults, such as students and a log of visitors is kept. Induction procedures are followed to ensure new staff have a good understanding of the routines, which helps to keep children safe and well. Registers are consistently maintained so children and staff are safely accounted for. All necessary documentation is in place, including, for example, emergency contact details. Most records are well-kept, although some medication records are incomplete.

The setting and resources are organised effectively so children make best use of time and space. The free-flow play environment ensures children make decisions about their activities, which promotes their self-esteem and continuing development.

Leadership and management is good. The owner and her well qualified staff team work together to plan and provide the activities that help children progress well. Staff demonstrate good teamwork and organise themselves so each has designated areas of responsibility, where they use their considerable skills to support children and encourage their progress. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration since 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):

- improve the record of medicines given to children to ensure it is clear when parents have given written permission and have signed the record book to acknowledge the administration of any medication
- increase the range of books accessible to children on a daily basis and provide books for information as well as pleasure (also applies to nursery education)
- improve the deployment of staff to ensure children play safely and develop their understanding of good behaviour.

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):

- improve the range of planned activities that enable children to take part in energetic play indoors (also applies to care)
- increase parents and carers opportunities to share in their children's learning by enabling them to contribute frequently to the records of children's progress.

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