



Swallowfield Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148684
Inspection date	17 January 2007
Inspector	Lynne Elizabeth Lewington
Setting Address	Swallowfield Parish Hall, The Street, Swallowfield, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 1QX
Telephone number	01189 883075
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Registered person	Swallowfield Pre-School Committee
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?

Swallowfield Pre-School was established in 1974 and meets in the Parish Hall. The pre-school has the use of a room at the rear of the hall on Mondays and Fridays, and the main hall the rest of the week. There is easy access to hard standing immediately outside the hall and a field and play park.

The pre-school is open to families within the local community and surrounding villages.

The pre-school offers sessional care and education for twenty four children aged between two and five years: of these there should be no more than four children under three. The pre-school is open every weekday during term time only. The Monday and Friday sessions are called "Swallows" sessions. These sessions take place in the Davies room and are held between 09.15

and 12.15 catering for a maximum of twelve children. The rest of the week, the sessions are held in the main hall and are between 09.15 and 12:00.

There are currently 27 children on roll; of these there are 23 receiving Nursery Education funding. The setting supports children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school is run by a committee, elected annually and they employ a staff team of four. The staff hold childcare and teaching qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and is supported by the field worker and development workers from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The clean and well maintained welcoming premises provide a healthy environment for the children's activities. Sensible cleaning routines and hygiene measures prevent the spread of germs and encourage children to learn good hygiene practices. For example, children independently use the soap and paper towels provided. Staff are watchful allowing the children their independence and offering help if required.

All staff and helpers have access to information about children's health and dietary needs ensuring that they are safely followed at snack or cooking activity times. This ensures appropriate care is offered at all times. Clear accident and medication records are signed by parents ensuring that good communication is maintained at all times. All staff hold first aid qualifications and well equipped first aid kits are available to deal with incidents.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills both indoors and outdoors in the setting. Indoors they confidently and competently move around the setting using the toys and activities available. The outdoor environment provides a safe and interesting environment for a variety of activities including running and climbing. Indoors the children move freely between the activities in the large hall, they push cars along the road mats, assemble the train track and carriages and build with bricks. This develops their hand and eye coordination. Children enjoy the challenge of bandaging each other and the soft toys in the 'vets' a task which entails concentration and dexterity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children develop their awareness of safe behaviour through gentle reminders and discussion. The setting is welcoming providing an attractive arrival area for the children and their parents and carers. Premises are large with good lighting and easy access to fresh air, heating and natural light. Children can safely and independently move between the activities on offer in the spacious environment. They have access to an outside area and the local community park and playing fields enabling regular outdoor activity. The setting is very well equipped with good quality toys and equipment which is stored appropriately to maintain its condition and promote easy access.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of potential dangers and risk assess the areas they use and the activities they provide in order to keep the children safe. However, the radiator and pipes in the smaller room which is used on two days of the week can become very hot to touch. The children develop their awareness of safe behaviour through gentle reminders and discussion.

The children's safety is safeguarded through regular evacuations of the premises ensuring that they can all leave the premises swiftly in the event of a fire. Staff ensure equipment and resources used are in good condition and suitable for the ages and abilities of the children.

Staff learn about child protection through training courses. The manager has a clear understanding of the action they would take if they had concerns for the welfare of a child in their care. Policies ensure staff and parents are aware of their role in reporting concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit positively from the enthusiastic and well qualified staff teams commitment to their work. The daily routine provides a sense of security for the children, they know what will happen next, enabling them to confidently go about their play. The staff are adaptable and confident in their practice, they listen to the children and provide activities that the children request, adapting their plans to promote the children learning at all times. They successfully provide an interesting and stimulating environment where the balance of activities allows both active play and relaxation.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Each day children benefit from opportunities to undertake activities related to each area of learning throughout the session. This helps to consolidate their learning as they return to activities to experiment and explore further.

Children undertake many name recognition activities in their daily routine and some can successfully write their own names. They understand that print carries meaning as they use good quality fact and fiction books. Story time each day provides a relaxing time when the children attentively listen and anticipate familiar stories. Labels written clearly in lower case letters help the children to become familiar with words. Opportunities for emergent writing ensure the children can write for many purposes. For example, in the 'vets' a child scribbles on a pad whilst talking on the phone, and another carefully makes marks on paper and then folds the paper until she can fit it into an envelope, another child writes numbers. The staff encourage children well in activities, enabling them to express their ideas and thoughts. With an adult they look and talk about two toy monkeys, exploring the toys and describing them. The adult asks questions, some children were keen to participate and experiment to find the answers. Confidently the children explained to the group that the monkey's hands stuck to the chair and the door, showing self confidence as they spoke in the group.

Children are recognising numbers in their play; they count at various times as a group and as individuals. They enjoy the five little speckled frog action song and develop understanding of simple adding and taking away. Children's awareness of shape, position, size and numbers is developing well. Children enjoy a dough making activity and talk about the quantity of ingredients they need to add to their individual mixture. They talk about the round ball of dough they make and then its changing shape as they flatten it. Activities enable them to explore pattern using cotton reels and make symmetrical patterns in paint by folding the paper in half.

Children gain confidence in their physical abilities through the freedom to move around the enjoyable activities. They develop co-ordination, and balance in an activity each day where they listen and learn to co-operate with their peers. For example they form a long train and follow the marked lines like a train or they use a parachute making it billow in turn. This increases their awareness of space, themselves and of others. Children handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials with increasing control. Some children recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. Some know that the x-rays are pictures of inside a body and that the stethoscope listens to a heart beat.

Children undertake a good variety of creative activities including art, craft and music. Their ideas are appreciated as the staff encourages the children to express their own ideas and creations. They use instruments and sing and dance with confidence using play microphones. They paint their hands and make hand prints, butterfly patterns, and mix colours experimenting and developing their creative skills. They have access to glue, scissors, tape and junk materials enabling them to devise their own creations. Adults carefully supervise and encourage but allow the children their self expression. However, the area offered for painting and modelling does not provide the children with sufficient space to fully use their creative instincts and is not always planned to provide all children with the same opportunities. For example the paint is soon mixed by individuals meaning that others do not have the opportunity to use fresh colours.

The setting promotes children's confidence and independence well. The children confidently speak within the group and often come to the front of the group to try something. Children talk about events at home and pre-school. They watch the computer screen avidly to see friends and themselves at past events. They remember old friends from the pictures and inform others that they have gone to school now. Children develop their independence well, as they hang up their coats and put belongings in their trays. They are all encouraged to tidy the environment at the end of the session and take pride in their environment. They pour their own drinks and make a choice about when to have a snack and what activities they undertake.

Children investigate objects and materials, using all senses as appropriate. For example, a play tray is set up with dinosaurs and lots of dried lavender on stems. The aroma of the lavender is evident as the children play with the creatures increasing their awareness of smell. Children demonstrate an awareness and knowledge of everyday technology and use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning. Children talk on the phone in the 'vets' and competently use the computer mouse to select items on the computer screen. They sometimes choose to listen to stories wearing headphones and using a tape machine. They learn about the natural world as they grow bulbs and observe the seasons and the weather.

Staff plan an interesting curriculum taking into account children's individual learning needs, interests and development. Activities are evaluated as a team and ideas generated for future use. Regular good quality observations inform the staff of the next steps required in the children's learning; however these steps are not always clearly recorded.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents all speak very highly of the service offered; they feel welcome and confident in the level of care and education provided. If they have any concerns they are addressed and resolved by the efficient and knowledgeable staff team. The staff make parents feel welcome, they organise introductory sessions and events where parents can learn about the areas of learning and what the children do in the setting. Parents contribute to an initial assessment of their child. This ensures staff have a good knowledge of individual needs and achievements and helps staff to build on what children already know. The regular newsletters keep parents informed of the topics the children are following and suggest ways parents and carers can help to promote their children's learning. Parent consultations help to provide information regarding children's progress in addition to the informal daily contact. The parent's rota enables all parents to be a part of the service and understand what happens.

Behaviour is managed in a gentle and consistent way, consequently behaviour is extremely good. Children learn how to resolve difficulties and develop self confidence from this skill. The staff demonstrate a good understanding of development and set excellent examples to the children. Good manners are encouraged and children are developing an awareness of the effect of their actions on others. They learn to take turns, share and accept differences.

Children's individual special needs are particularly well addressed. The staff work closely with parents and other professionals to develop individual education plans which are followed to ensure the children enjoy and develop their skills in the pre-school. The staff plan and adapt the activities and environment ensuring that all the children have equal opportunities to participate in the activities and benefit from the pre-school experience.

Staff work hard to ensure children and their families are valued and respected. Resources reflect a diverse society and children actively learn about their local village community. They visit the local post office, post letters and enjoy visits from the police officer. Activities at appropriate times of the year increase their awareness of cultural and traditional events. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. The children benefit from the enthusiastic staff teams commitment to their work. All staff are suitably qualified and checked. The committee is supportive and parents are interested in the setting. Policies and procedures support all areas of the settings work and are updated and reviewed as required. The staffing allows for a high staff to child ratio enabling the children to have a good level of attention at all times and

individual needs to be addressed. The staff meet regularly to evaluate their work and plan for future sessions, they use appropriate literature and documentation to inform their work. Individual staff development is encouraged through regular supervision and training opportunities. They work effectively as a team. They proactively evaluate the activities and service they provide and are realistic about their strengths and weaknesses. All resources are used effectively and staff actively work with early years professionals to further develop their practice. All required documentation is well maintained and easily accessible providing a clear record of the settings work. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection improvements were required to policies and procedures, regarding child protection and special needs, and the need for regular evacuations. Effective improvements have been made to all the previous recommendations. Regular evacuations ensure the premises can be evacuated quickly and efficiently in an emergency. Clear policy documents inform parents and staff of the child protection procedures and the settings procedures concerning special needs and equal opportunities. They have access to professional advice and seek the support of parents if concerns are raised about a child.

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):

- ensure children's safety with regard to the radiator pipes in the Davies room

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 planning of creative activities to enable children to make choices, experiment with colours, paper and shapes, in a space suitable for their activities
- continue to improve recording and planning to include the next steps in children's learning

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