



East Hanningfield Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402223
Inspection date	06 March 2007
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	East Hanningfield Village Hall, The Tye, East Hanningfield, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8AE
Telephone number	07732 951613
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Registered person	East Hanningfield Pre-school
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 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?

East Hanningfield Pre-school is run by a committee. It opened in 1995 and operates from the two rooms within the village hall in East Hanningfield, located adjacent to the village primary school. Children have access to outdoor play on the recreational playing field. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens four days a week during school term times. Session times are Monday to Thursday from 09:15 until 11:45.

There are currently 15 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs six staff, of whom two of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority, the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and the Danbury Cluster Group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a varied and healthy snack menu. For example, they enjoy eating fruit, carrot sticks, cheese or fromage frais. Children are developing an understanding of why they eat nutritious food. Discussion about likes and dislikes and where food comes from takes place over the snack table. The staff ensure that they are aware of any allergies or dietary requirements so that children's individual needs are met. Menus are displayed for the parents to view each day. A choice of drinks are available, although children do not always have the opportunity to independently pour their own.

Children learn about the importance of effective personal hygiene through the daily routine. They wash their hands after playing outdoors or using the toilet and before eating. They have liquid soap, paper towels and usually fresh running water to prevent the risk of cross-infection. Staff protect children from illness and infection. There are written guidelines that cover communicable diseases and exclusion periods. Staff have attended food hygiene courses and one member of staff holds an up to date first aid certificate to enable her to deal with minor injuries. Appropriate records are kept regarding accidents and administering medication.

Children develop a positive attitude towards exercise. They eagerly put on their coats to play outside and relish the opportunity to run freely in the fresh air and play games such as 'Please Mr Crocodile'. Apparatus is provided indoors for children to practise their physical skills and experiment with different ways of moving. For example, they balance, move backwards, sideways and forwards and they construct with larger materials such as large building blocks. During inclement weather children have the opportunity for physical play in the larger hall on the premises. Children negotiate space successfully, playing racing and chasing games and use physical equipment such as hoops to develop their coordination. They engage in acts that require hand-eye coordination such as manipulating play dough. Children can relax or rest according to their needs. A comfortable area is created each day where children can play quietly or look at a book.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a welcoming and generally safe environment. Posters and examples of the children's artwork are displayed for their appreciation. Staff undertake daily risk assessment to keep children safe. Play equipment and furnishings are appropriately child-size so that children can play, eat and relax in comfort. There is a wide selection of safe and suitable play materials. Careful thought is put into new purchases and a record of resources is held on an inventory. Toys and resources are checked regularly for damage and cleanliness. Children use tools such as scissors with care and in safety.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as they are starting to understand that it is safer to walk rather than run while indoors. Fire drills are regularly practised so that children and staff understand the emergency evacuation procedures. The staff give careful consideration to the security of the children and they keep the main entrance door locked during sessions. Visitors are monitored and are informed about fire safety procedures on arrival. However, children's safety is potentially compromised as other key holders of the premises sometimes gain access to the hall without authorisation from the staff.

Children are safeguarded because the staff understand their child protection responsibilities. They attend training and hold the up to date child protection guidelines issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This ensures that all staff know what to do if they have concerns about the welfare of a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have fun and are interested in the planned activities. Play materials are organised so that children are encouraged to make choices and take decisions about their play. Children are curious, ask questions and enjoy investigating the range of learning experiences offered each day. They acquire new knowledge and skills, for example, as they examine shells or take part in cookery activities. Interaction between the staff and children is lively and friendly. Staff spend the whole of each session playing with and talking to the children. The key worker system ensures that children receive sufficient support or challenge. The staff have attended training relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They are just starting to link the planning with the components from this framework to support the youngest children attending the pre-school.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff are developing a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a broad range of activities to support the children's learning. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Focused activity planning directly links to all areas of learning. However, children's learning is not maximised as staff do not identify how the everyday basic provision is used to promote broad learning objectives. Sessions are well paced and the indoor learning environment is resourced to provide a balance of adult-led activities and choices that children make for themselves. However, staff do not currently include reference to the outdoor area when they plan the activities, in order to enable children to develop in all areas of learning when playing outside. Staff observe children as they play and record their progress and achievements. They have just acquired a document to help them plan for the children's next steps in learning.

Children's independence skills are developing satisfactorily. They understand the routine, respond confidently to the register and know that they need to wear aprons when painting or playing with the water. Children form friendships with each other and play harmoniously as they collaborate and build very tall towers. They are beginning to understand the need for responsible behaviour and most listen attentively. However, there are times when they are easily distracted and lose concentration. Children are given opportunities for communication

each day at circle time. They say good morning to their friends as they pass the doll to each other and animatedly talk to staff about events at home.

Children have opportunities for writing and mark-making each day. Resources are provided in role play scenarios for example, writing lists or making appointments in the doctor's surgery. Children practice pencil control as they learn about the letter of the week and link the letter to sounds. They look at books in small groups and take care to turn pages correctly. A range of fiction and non-fiction materials are provided each day. Children learn about numbers as they play games. They count the spots on the dice and move spiders or snails along the board. They recognise and match simple shapes and learn about measurements as they complete a growing chart. Each day children count the number of children and adults present at register time and take part in simple calculations as they sit around the snack table.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through themes and topics. They learn about the natural world and talk about the weather. Children experiment by making raindrops as they pour water through a sieve. They explore growing things and a table is set aside with artefacts and scientific items so that children can explore the properties of magnets, torches and binoculars. Feely boxes are provided so that children can use their senses to explore natural items such as shells or pine cones. They learn about different waterproof fabrics such as leather, plastic or rubber that make the clothes or boots for teddy to wear in the rain. Children have good opportunities to learn about technology as they independently access the computer and adeptly use the mouse to control movements on the screen.

Children's imagination is developing well. They explore colour mixing as they paint highly individual pictures and use a variety of collage materials, glue and sticky tape to make Mother's Day gifts with support from staff. Children readily express their ideas, real life experiences and feelings through role play. Themed props, costumes and resources are provided for added interest and stimulation.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are valued and included in the setting. They feel a sense of belonging as they find their name card for self-registration and they confidently part from their parents or carers at the start of the session. Detailed records and regular opportunities for discussion with parents ensures that staff get to know the children well. Systems are in place to support children with additional needs. The special educational needs coordinators have attended relevant training and work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that all children receive appropriate support to help them participate to the best of their ability.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children show fascination, awe and wonder as they observe how the bulbs they planted in the autumn are now flowering. They develop self-esteem and respect for others. Social skills and good manners are promoted as children learn to take turns on the computer, share equipment or remember to say 'please' and 'thank you'. They are eager to help the staff with tasks such as ringing the triangle at tidying up time. Children become aware of wider society by learning about different

festivals throughout the year and they look at books or play with resources that portray positive images of diversity.

Children behave generally well and most play cooperatively during the activities. Staff are working hard to provide positive and consistent behaviour management strategies to enable all children to maintain attention, and persevere for extended periods of time at an activity of their choosing.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Warm and friendly relationships exist between the parents and staff team. Staff make time to talk to parents about children's progress, achievements or discuss any concerns that a parent may have. A wealth of written information is available to parents on notice boards or in newsletters. Open days are held for formal appointments with key workers and good verbal feedback is given each day. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning. They help their child to self-register on arrival or contribute items for themes or topics. They assist staff by joining the committee and/or the parents' rota to help set up equipment or clear away at the end of the session. Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive and appreciate the efforts of the staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All the essential documentation required for the efficient and safe management of the provision is in place. Confidential records relating to the children are securely stored in locked cabinets. Overall, policies and procedures are implemented well to promote children's health, safety and well-being.

Children are cared for by a very supportive and caring staff team. Sessions generally run smoothly because a very effective adult-to-child ratio is maintained. Space and resources are used successfully to ensure that children have fun and learn as they play. Staff attend short training courses to keep up to date with current childcare issues and trends. However, the qualification levels of the staff team do not currently meet the requirements of the National Standards. The action plan for staff training has not been updated to show how half the staff working with the children will hold at least a level 2 qualification in childcare. All the current staff have been cleared through the Criminal Records Bureau. However, the written staffing policy and procedures do not indicate how recruitment and vetting procedures for new staff will be made robust.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager of the setting is supported by the management committee and the staff team. Regular staff meetings are held, activities are evaluated and an appraisal system is in place. All staff have input into the planning and the delivery of the curriculum. The manager is new to her role and has worked hard to ensure that the pre-school provides positive outcomes for children. She is realistic and is fully aware of the settings strengths and areas for improvement. Her focus is to improve the consistency of the nursery education and care provided.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that evidence of vetting is readily available. A staff file is now kept on site with relevant clearance letters from Ofsted and the Criminal Records Bureau. As a result this provides evidence that children are currently cared for by adults who are checked as safe to work with children. However, written recruitment procedures for new staff are not yet fully robust to meet the changes made to the National Standards in October 2005. This relates to obtaining references and any other necessary checks, for example, regarding the employee's physical and mental health.

At the last inspection for nursery education three key issues were raised. The provider was asked to develop the activity planning sheets. Short-term planning now includes more information to enable the staff to offer support or challenge so that children achieve as much as they can. The provision to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world has been enhanced because there are now more opportunities for children to investigate objects and materials from the natural world. Children are also able to record their findings on wall charts and posters. The provider was also asked to improve the provision for mathematical development by providing more practical activities to introduce children to early calculation. Children now use everyday situations such as register time and snack time to count, calculate and take part in simple problem solving. Consequently, the provision for children's nursery education has been enhanced.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- assess the risks to children in relation to access by the other key holders of the premises and take action to minimise these

- update the action plan for staff training to show how at least half of all childcare staff will hold a level 2 qualification in childcare
- update the staffing policy to show that there are effective procedures in place for checking that new staff are suitable to work with children.

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):

- extend children's learning by consistently planning activities for the outdoor area, which contribute to all areas of learning
- identify how the everyday basic provision is used to promote broad learning objectives.

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