

King Street Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 221878 |
| Inspection date | 23 May 2007 |
| Inspector | Jean Goodrick |
| Setting Address | Wesley Methodist Church, King Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB1 1LG |
| Telephone number | 01223 352115 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | King Street 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?

King Street Pre-school opened in 1971. It operates from a large room at Wesley Methodist Church which is situated close to the centre of Cambridge. The pre-school serves the wider area.

There are currently 29 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 18 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have English as an additional language. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00.

Three staff work with the children. Two of the staff members have early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from an early years mentor.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children really enjoy the regular outdoor activities during which they develop their physical skills. They have a good selection of wheeled toys to pedal, scoot and push along. They balance on the stilts and play ball games. The large cardboard boxes and the water play provide a source of good fun. Children also develop their fine motor skills using a variety of tools and equipment, including paint brushes, stencils and scissors.

Children enjoy a healthy snack, which usually includes fruit, provided by their parents. They all sit together at snack time and staff encourage their independence in pouring out their own drinks of milk and water and taking their cup and plate to the sink when they have finished. However, staff do not generally sit with the children and opportunities are missed to develop children's social skills. A jug of water and beakers are available throughout the session but children are not always encouraged to have a drink during hot weather and after energetic exercise so that they remain well hydrated. Younger children also find it difficult to pour from the large jug.

Staff generally follow suitable hygiene procedures as, for instance, they clean the tables thoroughly before children have their snack. Children are encouraged to be independent in their self care as they help themselves to a tissue and go to the toilet by themselves. However, children do not consistently wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack which may adversely affect their welfare. Required records are kept up to date to ensure that children have good continuity of health care. One staff member has a current first aid certificate so that she is confident to take action for the welfare of the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children move around safely in an environment in which risks have been minimised. For example, access to the pre-school is monitored carefully particularly at times of arrival and collection and the outside play area is secure. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they practise the fire drill and procedures are clearly displayed. Risk assessments are carried out but not always comprehensive as, for example, they do not include relevant information to be taken on outings.

Staff manage the storage of equipment as effectively as possible given the limited storage, particularly for outdoor equipment, in the shared premises. They work hard to provide a warm and welcoming environment for children and their families. The room is cheerfully decorated with children's craft work. Resources and equipment are age-appropriate and checked for hygiene and safety. However, children have limited opportunities to select resources independently to follow their own interests and ideas.

Children are suitably protected as staff understand their responsibilities. The pre-school has policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and these are available to parents. Most of the staff have attended basic training in child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and their families receive a warm welcome from staff when they enter the pre-school. Children form warm, affectionate relationships with staff and with their peer group. Staff listen and respond to the children with respect so that they develop good self-esteem. Staff are generally deployed effectively so that children receive attention and support individually or in small groups. For example, staff sit on the floor with children as they co-operate in completing the large floor puzzle. Children thoroughly enjoy stories and 'snuggle in' with staff in the book area. Play dough is a firm favourite with some of the children and they enjoy messy play activities.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of child development and have attended training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework which they use as a reference tool. They generally plan a suitable range of activities for the children. However younger children are not always well supported in age-appropriate activities. Older and more able children sometimes become bored and aimless wandering around the activities without settling to anything meaningful.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The pre-school leader has a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage, however other staff lack understanding of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, which sometimes impacts on the learning opportunities they provide for children. Children are not always encouraged to extend their thinking and develop their ideas. Assessment records are in place for each child, but have not yet been sufficiently developed to be informative or effective when planning for the next step in individual children's learning. Therefore, older and more able children are not challenged.

Children display good levels of confidence and are eager to participate in new activities. They have access to a satisfactory range of resources to support their learning but cannot always do so independently to help them further develop their play. Some activities are not presented in an interesting way, which means children are not always motivated by what is on offer.

Most children are confident communicators, initiating conversations with adults and speaking to a familiar audience. For example, at 'show and tell' time children talk enthusiastically about what they have brought to pre-school and answer the questions from their peers. Children handle books with great care and enjoy stories such as "The Gingerbread Man" joining in and predicting what will happen next. They recognise their names at registration and snack time. Children have some opportunities to develop early writing skills but limited opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and link sounds to letters.

Children count confidently and recognise numbers as they sort the animals into the kennels putting the same colours together. However, problem solving and early calculation skills are not consistently supported in everyday practical activities and routines. Children develop an understanding of nature, patterns and change through topics, such as the life cycle of frogs and insects although they have limited opportunities to observe and investigate. They plant seeds and talk about what the seeds need to help them grow. Parents are invited into the pre-school to help children learn about festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Divali so that children learn about the wider world. Children build and construct using a variety of resources.

Children use their imagination in the role play area as, for example, the inspector is offered a meal cooked in the microwave and warned that the oven is 'hot'. Children enjoy playing in the small tent but they are provided with insufficient resources and support from staff to extend their imaginative play. They have some opportunities to develop their creativity as, for example, they paint freely using brushes and sponges both indoors and outside. However, art and craft activities are mostly adult-led which limits children's creativity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed into the provision and they are valued as individuals. Staff get to know children and their families well so that children have a good sense of belonging. Parents give good reports of the flexible settling in process and describe their children's growing independence and social skills. However, children with English as an additional language are not always given relevant support and resources, activities and images which help children to value and appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity are limited. The setting has satisfactory arrangements to care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and staff have some knowledge and understanding of the issues involved.

Children generally behave well. Staff help them to understand expectations of behaviour and use positive strategies, giving plenty of praise and encouragement and, for example, asking children where they are allowed to run when they become rather exuberant indoors. Children learn to share and take turns and staff encourage them to help to tidy up at snack time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Staff and parents exchange information on a daily basis. Recent 'reports' make good use of photographic evidence and give descriptions of children's behaviour, interests and enthusiasms which parents recognise and value. Parents appreciate the recently introduced newsletter and say that communication is improving. However, they receive limited information about the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and how they can contribute to their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the rigorous system of ensuring staff working with children are vetted and suitable to do so. The pre-school has a comprehensive framework of policies and procedures which contribute to the health, safety and well-being of the children. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and they are conscientious about keeping records up to date with respect for confidentiality. There is a satisfactory induction process for new staff.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The committee and staff team recognise that they are re-building the provision after a difficult transition period. They are very committed to the development of the setting and work well together. However systems are not yet in place for the monitoring of nursery education. The staff team meet regularly to plan and review. They are developing their understanding of the Foundation Stage and applying their learning in practice with support and advice from their local authority mentor. The committee have agreed to introduce staff appraisals which ensures areas for individual development are recognised and supported for the benefit of staff and the setting.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection it was agreed that child protection policies and procedures would be improved to include procedures in the event of allegations against staff. It was also agreed that at least half the staff would obtain relevant childcare qualifications. The safeguarding of children's welfare has improved as the pre-school now have policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board including procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against staff. Two of the staff team have relevant childcare qualifications and they are committed to further training for the benefit of the children.

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.

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):

- ensure that drinking water is easily accessible to all the children throughout the session so that they remain well hydrated
- continue to develop resources and activities which help children to value and appreciate cultural diversity and ensure that children with English as an additional language receive appropriate support
- ensure that all children participate in a broad range of stimulating age-appropriate activities.

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 systems to monitor and evaluate the provision of nursery education
- continue to develop assessment and planning using the stepping stones towards the early learning goals so that activities build on what individual children know, understand and can do.

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