

South Street Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143131
Inspection date	23 November 2007
Inspector	Carole Argles
Setting Address	Wincanton Primary School, South Street, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 9DZ
Telephone number	07890 395290
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Registered person	South 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?

The South Street Pre-school is situated at Wincanton County Primary School, Wincanton, Somerset and is managed by a voluntary parent committee. It occupies a classroom which is attached to the school hall. The children have use of the school's outside area and the hall for physical play. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday during school term times and provides morning sessions for children who receive funding for nursery education and afternoon session for children aged two to three years.

The pre-school is registered for a maximum of 24 children at any one session. There are currently 38 children on role including 18 who receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff who work with the children of whom four hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are effective measures in place to promote the children's health and staff minimise the likelihood of any infection spreading between them. For example, children are not cared for if they are ill or infectious and sound nappy changing procedures are put into effect. The premises are cleaned daily and staff wipe the tables before snacks with antibacterial spray. Suitable hand washing facilities are available both in the school and the playroom. The children learn good hygiene routines. They wash their hands before eating and they know where to fetch tissues and how to dispose of them appropriately in the bin. There are sound procedures in the event of illness or an accident to a child. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate and suitable first aid kits are available. Appropriate consents are in place for the safe administration of any medication and details of any accidents are recorded and shared with their parents.

The children receive nutritious snacks which often include a plain biscuit and pieces of fruit which they bring in to share. They have a drink of milk or water to accompany the snack and drinking water is available for them to take whenever they are thirsty. Staff are careful to respect any dietary needs and, for example, remind children not to eat fruit they are allergic to. The children begin to learn about the importance of eating a healthy diet and they take part in cooking activities, making a variety of foods including cakes, pizzas and savoury sandwiches.

There is ample room for the children to run around freely in the school playground or the hall. They have opportunities for exercise daily and this helps to keep them fit. They are developing good control and coordination of their movements. Many children can pedal tricycles competently, carefully negotiating obstacles. The staff plan activities to help the children learn new skills. They throw and catch balls, and match movements to music. They have opportunities to climb and balance and to move across larger equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The playroom is bright, warm and well maintained. The area is made welcoming to the children and their parents with many displays of children's artwork, posters and notice boards with information for adults. Staff prepare the room and set out activities before the children arrive. There are no toilet facilities within the building but staff ensure that the children are well supervised when using those in the main school. Staff use space well so that the children can take part in a range of activities and they provide a comfortable area where children can look at books. There is a wide range of furniture, equipment and toys to meet their developmental needs. These are of good quality and staff are careful to promote the children's safety by ensuring that they only use items which are appropriate for their age. A variety of toys and resources are stored in low units where they are readily accessible for the children to see and select independently.

The staff have a sound understanding of safety issues and take appropriate action to reduce the risk of accidental injury to the children. They conduct regular risk assessments and check all areas of the premises daily before they are used by the children. The premises are kept secure and cleaning materials are stored well out of reach. Suitable fire precautions are in place but fire drills are practised irregularly and therefore many children have not had the opportunity

to take part. The children begin to learn about safety through discussions with staff who explain the possible consequences of their actions. For example, they talk about why they must take care when a member of staff is lighting candles on a birthday cake.

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how to safeguard children from harm. They ensure that they are only collected by authorised adults and that they are never unsupervised with people who have not been vetted. They know the signs that may indicate that a child is being abused or neglected and have suitable procedures in place in the event that concerns are raised about the welfare of a child at the pre-school. This contributes well towards keeping the children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Most children come readily into the pre-school and settle quickly at the activities. Those who are less willing to separate from their parents receive sensitive support from the staff until they feel more confident. There is plenty of interaction and conversation between the children and the staff, who are genuinely interested in them as individuals. They talk with the children about their interests and lives and give them praise and recognition for their achievements. This helps children to feel valued and develop good self-esteem, as well as supporting their communication skills. Children are encouraged to be independent, putting on aprons for water play and their coats before they go outside. They can make choices about what they do and can select different resources from the shelves. Children are interested in the activities and keen to take part. Many show good levels of involvement, for example, when completing puzzles or making a Christmas card. They understand the routines of the day and readily help to tidy up. Staff are flexible in their expectations for the children and, for example, provide an alternative activity for an anxious child who does not want to join the others at snack time.

There are separate sessions for children of different ages and this allows the staff to structure the routines and activities to meet their varying needs. For example, free choice periods are longer and group times are much shorter for the youngest children. Staff provide an interesting variety of activities and set out resources before the children arrive. They make use of the Birth to three matters framework when planning activities for the younger two groups of children and these are well matched to their ability. Development records for these children are updated regularly thereby allowing staff to monitor their progress. The children are well occupied at all times and enjoy what they do.

Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This helps them plan and provide a wide programme of activities for the children across all areas of their learning. There is a suitable routine for the sessions which includes self-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as times for the children to have exercise and snacks. However, the staff do not carry out regular observations to assess what the children can do or record their development consistently. Consequently, they cannot be sure how well each child is progressing towards the early learning goals or use this information to help them plan the next steps in their learning. Although generally the activities meet the children's needs at times, the staff do not extend the more able children or encourage them to solve problems.

The children are settled and confident and relate well to others, playing cooperatively together and readily waiting their turn when playing a game. They understand there are times when they should sit quietly and they listen carefully at singing and story times. They are willing to help others, for instance by collecting the musical instruments. Most children speak clearly, taking turns in conversations with others and talking about real and imaginary ideas. The children learn new words. For example, when reading a story, a member of staff carefully explains the meaning of the word lonely to them in a way they understand. All children are learning to use sign language and use it to accompany the words to their songs. This ensures that all children can join in. Although children self-register when they arrive at the pre-school, finding a card which bears their name and a picture, there are few other opportunities for them to begin to recognise their names or other familiar words.

There are many activities which help the children begin to develop good hand-eye coordination and the muscle control they will need for writing. They thread beads, join puzzle and construction pieces, and make patterns placing small pegs in boards. Some children enjoy drawing as a self-chosen activity and eagerly talk about their pictures, sometimes carefully cutting out their design. However, staff do not always put these skills to good use, for example, by encouraging children to make marks to represent their names on their pictures. The children use their imaginations well in pretend play activities. The staff question them so that they think and talk more about what they are doing, for example, by asking what their doll may like to eat or play with. There are creative art activities provided for the children daily and they use a variety of media; for example, they have recently made candle holders with clay. However, some activities allow the children limited challenge or scope to use their imaginations or try out their own ideas. For example, they were decorating pre-cut shapes with glue and glitter even though some children are beginning to cut out and draw competently themselves.

The children have opportunities to use a computer to support their learning and some can control the mouse with skill. However, sometimes the programmes are not matched to their ability and the task is too difficult for them to complete. The children are interested in numbers and many are beginning to count competently, linking numbers to objects, for example, matching spots on dice to those on cards. They are beginning to learn the correct words to describe and compare the size and position of objects, for example, saying whether they are shaking bells up high, down low or to the side of them. Some children recognise simple geometric shapes such as a circle or square and staff help them draw shapes, talking with them about the number of corners and sides. Although staff ask the children questions, for instance, about how many chairs they need for the children at snack time, they do not take full advantage of these opportunities to encourage them to solve problems themselves, for example, by asking them how many need to be taken away so they have the correct number. Staff provide opportunities for the children to find out about the world around them and how things work and change. The children explore water toys, take part in cooking activities and grow plants. With staff assistance, they have used woodwork tools to make a bird table. They begin to learn about their community and the jobs that people do, and this has included visits from a police officer, a pilot and a vet. The children celebrate each other's birthdays and festivals that are relevant to them and they talk about the culture and traditions of people in the wider world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The children behave well and are learning to share fairly and take turns. They receive praise and recognition so that they understand when they have done well. All are very pleased when staff give them a sticker

because they have joined in enthusiastically at singing time. Staff have a sound understanding of positive ways to manage children's behaviour and are good role models for them, treating them with courtesy and respect. They work closely with parents so that there is an agreed and consistent approach to managing the children's behaviour.

There is a friendly relationship between parents and staff and an effective process to help new children settle quickly at the pre-school. Parents and children are encouraged to spend time at the pre-school and staff take this opportunity to find out about the child's individual needs so they can adapt activities and routines to take account of these. Parents receive satisfactory information about the pre-school through the prospectus, regular newsletters and information on notice boards to help them understand what is provided for their child. There are close links with the school whose facilities the pre-school shares and this helps children make a smooth transition into the reception class.

There is a variety of resources in use including many photographs, dolls and pretend play resources which reflect positive images of diversity. Children take part in art and other activities to help them value and understand that there are different cultures and lifestyles in society. There is satisfactory support for children who speak English as an additional language. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive able support from the staff who work closely with their parents and other agencies involved in their care. Additional adult assistance is provided for children where appropriate. Their learning is carefully planned and their progress reviewed regularly. Staff adapt activities so that all can take part and this promotes inclusion. Recent alterations to the premises have ensured that they are accessible to all.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff display copies of the plans and talk with parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum to help them understand what activities will be provided for their child. They frequently exchange information about the children informally and are reminded that they can arrange to discuss their child's progress in more depth although detailed records of their development are not currently available. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child until they are settled at the pre-school and they can become involved with the management of the pre-school. At present, there is little information to help them take an active role with their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Suitable policies and procedures are implemented to promote the children's safety and welfare, although copies of these documents are not readily available for parents to read. Satisfactory systems are in place to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with the children. Most of the required records, including written consents, accident and medication logs, are maintained and signed by parents. However, the format of some records does not fully maintain confidentiality of information.

There is an established staff team who work cooperatively together and ensure that the sessions run smoothly for the children. The children receive plenty of support and attention because there is a good ratio of adults to children and the staff work directly with them at all times. Qualification requirements are met and members of staff continue to undertake relevant training to increase their knowledge of child care issues. However, at present, there is no key person system in place to facilitate the sharing of information with parents and to coordinate the planning and record keeping for individual children.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Systems to allow the provider and staff to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the pre-school are not clearly established. However, the staff have a positive attitude towards the development of the pre-school and have begun to identify some areas for improvement and are starting to implement plans to address these. For example, they intend to develop the storage of resources such as puzzles to allow children to select them independently. The staff meet together every half-term to plan and evaluate activities. However, they do not consistently observe what the children can do or record their progress towards the early learning goals. Therefore at present, they cannot monitor and evaluate the quality of the teaching or the children's learning effectively.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the provider was asked to ensure that children do not have access to hazards in the outside area, to review data collected on the children's registration form, and to review the content of child protection procedure. At the Nursery Education inspection, there were no significant weaknesses identified but it was recommended that there were more opportunities for children to attempt writing and for staff to develop areas of the partnership with parents.

Since then, a fence has been erected in the playground to prevent children accessing potentially hazardous areas. Procedures have been revised making it clear the course of action that the provider would take in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. This action has increased the children's safety. The staff now ask parents for information about each child's beliefs and first language and this enables them to take account of this and to meet each child's needs more effectively.

Children now have access to use a range of mark making materials, papers and scissors and they enjoy using them for their own purposes, for example, drawing pictures and cutting them out. However, staff do not always take advantage of meaningful situations to encourage the children to make marks, for example, to represent their names on their artwork and pictures. Systems have been put in place to increase parent's involvement with the nursery. Parents are reminded that they can meet with staff to discuss their child's progress and some take advantage of this. Their views about the pre-school and nursery provision are researched by means of annual questionnaires. Parents are offered the opportunity to make suggestions about changes to the pre-school.

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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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):

- develop key person groups to coordinate the planning and record keeping for individual children and to facilitate the exchange of information with their parents
- review the format of some records to increase the confidentiality of information

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):

- ensure that systems to monitor and record the children's progress are implemented effectively to help staff when planning the next steps in their learning
- develop procedures to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the pre-school and the nursery education

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