

Woodpeckers Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127786
Inspection date	12 June 2007
Inspector	Jackie Liffen
Setting Address	Quaker Lane, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 2HF
Telephone number	01580 720195
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Registered person	Woodpeckers Preschool
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Woodpeckers Preschool is a committee run group. It opened in 1998 and operates from single storey, purpose built premises on the outskirts of Cranbrook, Kent. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday, term time only. On Mondays it opens from 09.00 to 12.00 and Tuesdays, Wednesday, Thursdays and Fridays it is open from 09.00 until 15.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 49 children aged from two and a half to under five years on roll. Of these 37 receive funding for early education. Children come from the local community and outlying villages. The nursery currently supports some children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these four hold appropriate early years qualifications and the others are working towards a qualification. The group receive support from Kent Early Years Advisory Teachers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are proactive in keeping the setting very clean and as a result children flourish and quickly become adept at adopting hygienic routines themselves. For example, children ably use the toilet and always remember to wash their hands afterwards because the facilities are low level and convenient. Children are extremely well protected from infection because staff work with parents to ensure that sick children are not received into the pre-school. Staff also wash floors, equipment and surfaces regularly to make sure that germs are not spread. Children understand good health practices. For example, they all clean their hands before eating and staff make regular checks to monitor this; staff also provide antibacterial hand cleanser for them. Children's welfare is highly promoted at all times and the group have very effective accident and medication procedures in place. Children comfortably rest and sleep according to their needs in the book corner, or on the special sleep mats where staff place individual slips underneath their heads. Staff plan purposeful activities which children relish as they develop their physical skills; all children take part in daily exercise regardless of the weather.

Staff ensure that children are extremely well nourished by providing sustaining snacks such as fruit and vegetables and advising parents on what to put in packed lunches. These are stored carefully in the fridge to ensure that the food is well preserved and children do not suffer from eating anything unsuitable. Children have their special dietary needs met by staff who ensure they are familiar with any particular requests. Children regularly learn about healthy eating as staff take every opportunity during the session to discuss the effect different foods have on their bodies. Fresh water and milk is easily accessed so that children help themselves to a drink whenever they are thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are totally secure within the welcoming, child-friendly, comfortable and clean indoor and outdoor environment which is especially built and developed for the purpose, risk assessed and well maintained. They have plenty of space to explore and play in safety and enjoy the freedom of going outdoors whenever they wish. Staff ensure that the outside gates are effectively padlocked so that children do not attempt to leave the setting unaccompanied. Children use well maintained furniture and equipment, all of which is age-appropriate, safe and attractive. Staff keep a check list to ensure each area is clean and suitable and as a result children play enthusiastically with an exceptionally high quality range of toys and activities.

Children tend to avoid accidental injury because staff use a daily risk assessment to ensure the premises reach a consistently high standard. Staff also carefully check the gardens before children play outside. Staff frequently remind children of simple safety rules such as no running inside the building, and as a result they quickly learn how to keep themselves safe. The group also use a range of strategies such as socket covers, in order to reinforce children's safety. Children are familiar with the potential dangers of fire because they experience at least one fire drill every half term when staff ensure that they understand the implications. Children are safe on outings, especially when they walk to the neighbouring school farm, as parents accompany them to ensure that a high adult:child ratio is maintained. Staff are committed to safeguarding children's welfare and have very clear child protection procedures which are followed if they have concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children eagerly enter the group with their parents who help them find their own names to put in the post box and hang their coats on the very easily accessed pegs. They competently put their home/setting communications books into their trays and very quickly settle in the main playroom where they search out a stimulating activity from the vast range of toys available to them. Children are involved in a broad range of planned and spontaneous events which support their development and learning. They actively seek out games and experiences, some of which are new to them, and enjoy exploring and experimenting with the different toys, materials and media. For example, some congregate around the water tray animatedly testing how much water fits into different sized containers, whilst others purposefully manipulate the play dough or develop their vivid imaginations in the home corner.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are taught extremely well because the staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals is excellent. They put the Foundation Stage into practice very effectively by having a 'loose theme' which is flexible enough to allow them to work with children individually to achieve their objectives identified on their learning plans. Children are successfully helped to develop and progress because the staff work alongside them following their interests. Children are challenged throughout the session as staff ask many inspiring questions to promote their learning; they also address any worries or concerns appropriately. Children relate to others and respond to adults who are interested in what they do and say because staff are totally familiar with each child's needs and individual stage of development.

Children become very self assured as they confidently explore and investigate their surroundings and the immense variety of activities available. For example, in the garden, a four year old informs the inspector how his car works, and then shows her into an adjacent shed which is kitted out as a garage; he then enthusiastically explains how each area is used. Children are given plenty of opportunities to make good choices throughout the morning and staff constantly encourage them to take decisions. Children are developing personal values such as honesty and fairness as they play extremely well co-operatively, sharing experiences and investigating properties of materials. For example, at the sensory table, different groups of children congregate constructing imaginative scenes and excitedly making up stories.

Children interact, negotiate and speak clearly showing an awareness of the listener because staff consistently encourage them to talk about different aspects of life. They extend their vocabulary exploring the meaning and sound of words as staff encourage them to discuss their experiences. Children listen and respond with enjoyment and attention to stories, songs and rhymes and have great fun acting out favourite tales such as 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Children quickly learn to write their own names helped by sensitive staff who encourage them to put their names onto all their creations. Children explore a range of texts and love looking at books. They use the comfortable, secluded book corner to seek out interesting stories which they often then show to staff who frequently keep children enthralled whilst reading to them.

Children continue to progress and learn when investigating the special sensory activities, such as the garden, during their play. For example, when a child puts a piece of paper into the water tray, the supervisor encourages him to study the change in appearance and texture and in the garden there is a wide range of different instruments and plants to enhance children's

appreciation of sound, touch, smell and colour. Children are constantly finding out about and identifying natural objects and events. For example, a child tells the inspector about global warming and why she should use a bicycle instead of a car. Children ask questions about why things happen and how things work as they look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. They build and construct with a wide range of tools as they help themselves easily from the adjacent storage units. Staff take every opportunity to expose children to number and children easily recognise the figures displayed on the walls, hanging from the ceiling and in books. They are frequently encouraged to count up to 10 and most of them are beginning to develop mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. They show a coherent understanding of addition and subtraction and use relevant language to describe and compare shape, position, size and quantity. Children spontaneously burst into song throughout the session, sometimes accompanied by staff. They enjoy making sounds with the musical instruments indoors but especially learn a great deal from the sensory instruments in the garden. For example, a child finds out for himself, how sound is created from vibrating coils which resonate in the metal barrel underneath. Children freely create paintings and objects out of junk promoting their imaginations and linking their creations to the real world. Children move with control and co-ordination as they play imaginative games and show awareness of space both in the garden and in the building. For example, they develop games outside using the apparatus and natural features of the garden. Children recognise the importance of staying healthy and the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. They are also encouraged to do things for themselves and independently see to their own needs, such as when they put on protective aprons for messy play or use easily reached tissues to blow their noses.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff ensure that all children are involved and included in all the activities regardless of their background, age, stage or ability. They keep careful records so that children are valued and their individual needs met extremely well. Children play with a wide variety of activities and resources which are selected to help them develop respect for themselves and for other people. They all acknowledge and practise equality of opportunity because the group's activities are open to everyone and resources are chosen to give children a balanced view of the world and an appreciation of the rich diversity of society. Overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have their specific needs met exceptionally well by the staff who work in close partnership with parents and carers in order to improve on their knowledge and find out how to give each child the best care possible. Staff become extremely well acquainted with each child's needs and work with early years professionals to adapt the provision so that each one receives ideal attention. Children very quickly learn to respond to appropriate expectations for their behaviour because staff encourage them to learn the basic rules both at circle time and during the session. They are confident and able to deal with challenges appropriately because staff speak with them gently and sensitively and are always available for them. Children rapidly learn to respect others and to consider the consequences of their words and actions. They are stimulated and learn to communicate effectively with each other so that they listen and learn about other people's points of view. Children are gaining in self esteem as they learn to work harmoniously with others within a very stimulating and flexible environment where they have lots of opportunities to pursue their different interests and staff take every opportunity to praise them for their achievements.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children's well-being is extended because staff work closely with parents, who keep them up to date with the progress children make at home, so that this can be built on at the setting. Staff speak with parents on a regular basis and keep them well informed about their children's activities by using daily diaries and regular parents' evenings. Children's co-ordination of care is constantly enhanced because the staff are friendly and approachable and encourage parents to become actively involved in the parent committee where their views are taken into account.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's security and development is consistently extended because all adults have a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. For example, staff use their own self evaluation forms to assess their strengths and weaknesses so that they give optimum care to all children. The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The chairperson of the management committee is extremely efficient and steers the group towards marvellous outcomes for children. Children find staff members inspiring because the adults have an excellent knowledge and understanding of child development; they also have the skills to put their competences into practice. Despite this, staff continue to undertake further training in order to help children extend their learning and progress in as many ways as possible. Children's well-being is enhanced because all the adults involved give high regard to the organisation of the group; they plan activities within the setting which promote the individual learning needs of each child. Children also benefit from the spontaneous celebration of different events within the group because the staff are child-led and react immediately to exciting ways of developing learning that the children themselves often suggest. Policies and procedures work very well in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Children's security is extremely well guarded because all files are comprehensive and kept confidentially in a locked filing cabinet.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the group were asked to devise a system to show that parents are informed about medication administration. They now have a satisfactory system which also checks that parents bring all medicines and have ultimate responsibility for its administration. They were also asked to update the complaints procedure and this has now been completed in accordance with recent legislation.

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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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