

Harrold Pre-School

— Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 17/07/2007
Inspector Paula Jane Hayhow

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Registered person Harrold pre-school
Type of inspection Integrated
Type of care Sessional care

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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 provider must give a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must give a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Day Care and Childminding (inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 No 2300 Regulations 5 and 6).

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.
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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Harrold Pre-school has been at its present location for over 30 years. It is managed by a voluntary parents committee. The pre-school operates from three rooms within the community hall in the village of Harrold in Bedfordshire. It is situated in a rural location.

- A maximum of 35 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.30 until 12.00 term time. There is an option to provide a lunch club on Mondays and Wednesdays when there are sufficient children to make it viable. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 33 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the catchment area and surrounding villages. The group has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six staff. Three of the staff, including the pre-school leader, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities, such as obstacle courses, circle games, music sessions, using the parachute, climbing frame, action rhymes or practise for Sports Day. The children have access to an outdoor play area where they use apparatus such as bicycles, trucks, scooters, skipping ropes, tunnels, balls and bean bags. The use of small equipment such as pencils, glue spreaders and small construction pieces aid the development of children's finer manipulative skills.

Children are generally well nourished and gain an appreciation of healthy eating through options offered at snack time, which include fruits, plain biscuits, cheese and bread sticks. Parents supply the snacks and are encouraged, through newsletters, to provide healthy options, limiting food high in fat, sugar and salt, thus encouraging the children to eat healthily. Staff develop children's understanding of healthy living through project work such as eating noodles during the celebration of Chinese New Year and growing and cooking vegetables like potatoes. Children discuss the importance of sleep and taking regular exercise, as well as why some foods are not good for them. Snack time promotes the children's independence, as they manage their milk carton threading the straw into the opening, and provide opportunities to

learn valuable social skills such as good manners and turn taking. Children's special requirements with regard to diet are clearly documented and respected by staff at all times.

Children are learning good hygiene practices and their immediate welfare is promoted because staff have a good understanding of the policies and procedures involved, such as cleaning the tables before snack with anti-bacterial cleaner, and using the specific mops and clothes when clearing away a spill. Children collect nose tissues when needed, put their hand over their mouths when coughing and wash their hands thoroughly before snack time. They regularly have opportunities to discuss the relevance of this with staff. Their independence is being encouraged as they manage bathroom facilities unaided and help themselves to drinks, ably using the water jug.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work is displayed and resources are attractively arranged for easy accessibility. Their safety is promoted as staff carry out informal daily safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. Children's play opportunities are encouraged because they are able to move independently throughout the setting, making choices, using safe and well maintained equipment. However, their safety is affected as they have access to free standing fire extinguishers, the fire evacuation procedure is not displayed in the play rooms and children have access to broken items in the garden area.

Children are gaining a good understanding of taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are given clear explanations by staff and understand the importance of turn-taking as they line up carefully, so as not to bump into each other, and tidying toys away in order to prevent accidents. On outings children are well supported through high adult ratios, the use of a safety hand rope, communication radios and the vigilance of the staff. Children's safety is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly sized tables and chairs. Children independently select toys and activities from a good range of play materials. Staff regularly check these to ensure that they are clean and safe. Children's welfare is soundly promoted as staff have an effective understanding of child protection procedures and would know how to report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good:

Children are happy, secure and settled. They enjoy their time at the pre-school, coming in happily at the start of the session and enthusiastically participating in the activities and play opportunities provided. Their personal development and self-

confidence are consistently promoted because staff treat all children as individuals, interacting and offering appropriate support. For example, children are individually greeted at circle time and their hands shaken in welcome. Staff sit at the children's level and join in with their play and conversations, enhancing children's confidence and self-esteem. New children settle well, quickly becoming secure within the setting because staff are calm and confident, and make sure that they receive the support they need.

Children's interest is maintained and their natural curiosity encouraged because they are able to freely access the play area, thus determining their own play. Children confidently make choices about their play and activities throughout the session and participate in the group's themes and topics such as 'Castles', 'Heraldry' and the 'Life Cycle of the Butterfly'. The children ably match the staff member's shields, discuss why castles have small windows, talk about why knights need armour for their jousting and explore the changes the caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly. Staff make good use of open questions and discussions to encourage the children to think further and extend their knowledge. An example of this is a staff member organising a jumping game, asking children to recognise particular shapes. The staff make sure the more able children were give only a few clues such as square, circle or triangle whilst the less able children are asked to find the red, round circle.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum for the foundation stage, and use sound teaching methods such as ensuring that all activities and routines are learning opportunities. Children spend their time purposefully because staff are skilled in monitoring them throughout the session, allowing them time to develop their own ideas but noticing when they need further encouragement and fresh direction. An example of this is when a group of children constructing a castle appreciate the staff member's suggestion that they needed towers and a moat, and how this could be accomplished. Children's progress in all areas is balanced, as staff use appropriate planning and assessment methods, and are skilled in assessing individual children. However, written assessments do not consistently show the rate of the children's progress, which could lead to a delay in highlighting potential areas of concern and lead to missed opportunities to promote individual learning and development.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities. These include regular opportunities to engage in role play, the use of information technology equipment, reading and a wide assortment of crafts and construction. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a variety of themed topics, providing opportunities for them to look more closely at subjects such as 'Elizabethan Times' and 'Growing'. A good example of this is the children being given a chance to see and experience Elizabethan times through a superb presentation from a parent. She gave them opportunities to ask questions, try on the clothes of the time, feel the implement they used such as horn and bone spoon and to see the money and toys of the era. They learn about the growing vegetables in the garden area, observe wildlife through visits to the country park, discuss and

observe the changes to their tadpoles and enjoy seeing the inside of the bird's nest and wasps nest on the interest table. Children interact well with others, confidently initiating conversations and using language to explain their thoughts, and negotiate plans and activities. An example of this is a group of children making dinosaur dens, banking up the sand to protect them and feeding them, discussing the sizes and which one was the biggest, smallest or hungriest.

- Children enjoy books and demonstrate their understanding of this area through activities such as telling each other stories, using favourite books, or the development of their vocabulary through topic work, learning the meaning of words such as jousting, shields, gown, illustrate, window slits and fox's brush. Children participate in activities such as small construction and sticking and gluing, which improve early writing skills, and hand eye co-ordination. They recognise letters and can write their names of their craft work. Children have a good understanding of numbers, for example, counting how many children are present at register time or sequencing numbers to match the caterpillar body. They understand and use positional and size language, for example, when involved in the outdoor climbing apparatus they confidently recognise concepts such as under, over, through, higher and lower. They are gaining an awareness of their own culture and that of others through activities and regular access to resources such as dressing-up clothes, books and puzzles, which provide both information and positive images.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and respected as individuals. They are offered a wide range of opportunities and resources to promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Chinese New Year, Easter, Divali, Christmas and various Saint Days such as Saint Patrick's and Saint George's Day. Children gain further understanding of this through discussion, craft work linked to these festivals such as making shields, and talking about jousting and knights protecting themselves with armour. Children are kind and thoughtful to each other and to staff. They make friends and include them in their games, such as inviting them to read books together or share out the bricks when making castles. Children's behaviour is good throughout the session as they choose their activities and competently organise turn taking and sharing. For example, lining up at toilet time and for outdoor play, children know this short wait is to help them be safe. They respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling promotes good behaviour and good manners, such as helping to pack away the toys cheerfully and remembering to say 'please', 'thank you' and 'excuse me'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There are clear and thorough systems and practical policies in place for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff members have implemented these, and worked sensitively with individual children and their parents to make sure that all are included in the daily activities and routines. Children's needs are well documented

and met because staff have a good relationship with parents. An informative prospectus, policies and procedures explain to parents the aims and objectives of the setting. This provides information enabling the parents to feel confident that their child is spending their time purposefully. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to feel part of the setting through the use of newsletters, a parent's notice board and an open door policy encouraging them to discuss any concerns they may have or advice needed.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given good quality information about the Curriculum for the foundation stage, with helpful tips as to how they can support their child at home documented in the prospectus and through the children's wall displays. Parents are well informed about their child's progress through informal discussions with staff, open access to all the children files and profiles, and regular questionnaires relating to the running of the group. This positive attitude helps ensure that parents' views are valued, standards maintained and appropriate care provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall the needs of the children are met. Children's play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space, allowing them the freedom to move safely and independently from one activity to another. This enables them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Children's welfare, care and safety are consistently promoted through the support provided by experienced and qualified staff who use their practical knowledge of the pre-school's policies and procedures. There are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children and this is supported by a sound induction process for new staff, ensuring that all are able to work appropriately with the children. There are regular appraisals and weekly group meetings which ensure that the pre-school's policies and procedures are understood and consistently applied. Children's welfare is maintained because staff share in the responsibility for the organisation of all records and documents. These are confidentially and securely kept in a locked filing cabinet. However, some entries in the medication book have not been completely filled in and policies and procedures are not consistently reviewed to include the latest information, which could lead to parents receiving out of date information.

Staff are actively involved in evaluating and improving their own practice and work closely, together with the committee, to improve and enhance the care and welfare of the children. For example, questionnaires and action plans are regularly undertaken. Staff work closely together to plan and coordinate the activities and routines for the children. Good organisation of all play areas ensures that children are offered a wide range of stimulating activities and opportunities both within the building and outside. For example, children are able to make full use of the outdoor and indoor play area because staff continuously assess the situation, deploying staff wherever they are needed throughout the session. On walks around the village and on nature trails the group ensure that there is a high adult presence.

The quality leadership and management is good. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the clear understanding that the play leader has of her role and responsibilities, ensuring that she is aware of all regulations. The play leader acts as a good role model, attending additional training and demonstrating her enthusiasm and enjoyment of her daily work with children. Staff feel motivated and are dedicated to create a positive atmosphere within the setting. All sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of activities throughout the morning. Children are given sufficient time and resources to enable them to complete their activities and tasks. Their progress is tracked through ongoing assessments and monitoring. Staff organise the planning of future work, ensuring that the needs of individuals are met and the development of all children is promoted. The children's learning is re-evaluated weekly to ensure that all areas are consistently being covered.

Improvements since the last inspection

The pre-school were asked at the previous inspection to promote children's understanding of good hygiene practices by encouraging them to wash their hands before having their snack. With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the group was asked to provide more practical everyday mathematical experiences to develop basic addition and subtraction.

The pre-school has a daily routine which encourages children to wash their hands at relevant time and know the importance of these hygiene practices. The group provides regular opportunities for children to develop their understanding of subtraction and addition, such as counting the number of chairs needed at the snack table, singing number rhymes and matching and sequencing number cards. These measures further improve the children's welfare, education and learning.

Complaints about the childcare provision

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

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.
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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- improve the daily risk assessment to include areas such as the free standing fire extinguisher, the broken plastic sheeting and display the fire procedure so all can view it
- ensure that written records of accidents to children are consistently signed and dated by parents in acknowledgement of their entry and policies are regularly reviewed and updated.

The quality and standards of nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further improve assessment methods to ensure that children's progress can consistently be monitored and any issues be highlighted at an early stage.

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