

Sedlescombe Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109371
Inspection date	25 May 2007
Inspector	Liz Margaret Caluori
Setting Address	The Village Hall, The Street, Sedlescombe, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0QE
Telephone number	07779794180
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Registered person	Sedlescombe Pre-School
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sedlescombe Playgroup has been registered since 1993 and provides full day care. It is a committee run group, operating from a hall, with two adjacent group rooms, in Sedlescombe, East Sussex. The group serves the local community. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. It is open from 09.15-15.00 Monday, Wednesday and Friday, term time only.

There are currently 27 children aged from two to under five years on roll, including 17 in receipt for funding for their nursery education. The group is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those with English as an additional language.

There are four staff who regularly work with the children all of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications. They are supported by two bank staff, one of whom is a qualified teacher and the other is unqualified.

The group is a member of Bexhill and Battle Under Fives Association and works closely with the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy very good opportunities for physical exercise each day, both indoors and in the enclosed outdoor area. They have access to an extremely good range of resources to support their play including balls, hoops, stilts, skipping ropes and climbing equipment. Children move with good control and co-ordination. They use the equipment imaginatively, for example, exploring different ways to travel down the slide. The children are also supported to develop specific skills such as throwing and catching.

Children show a good understanding of the value of healthy eating and speak knowledgeably about a wide range of different fruits. Nutritious snacks are provided by the setting and packed lunches are sent in by parents and carers. There is a written request, in the welcome pack, for parents to support the setting in promoting healthy eating. However, they are not given specific guidance on items to include in a healthy lunch box. Snacks times are organised in a 'café-style', with children visiting the table independently within a set time frame. This provides them with a very positive, sociable experience. Children are not routinely offered plates and generally place their food directly onto the table. Whilst the hygiene arrangements are very good, this does not help to promote children's social skills. Drinks are constantly available.

Children are protected from sickness and infection by the effective hygiene routines in place throughout the setting. Tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray after messy activities and before food is served. Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene and most are able to wash their hands independently. Younger children are given support as required.

Staff with first aid qualifications are present each day to ensure that children can be effectively treated in case of a minor accident and records are generally well maintained. The arrangements in place to care for sick children and to administer medication are entirely appropriate.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The group has good arrangements in place to protect children in case of a fire. Emergency exits are clearly identified and free from obstruction and fire fighting equipment is in place. Children take part in regular practice evacuation drills and a written record is made in the register.

Children are extremely well supported to learn how to keep themselves safe. Staff are vigilant in their supervision but are committed to promoting children's independence. Children listen well to the advice and guidance they receive and respond well to gentle reminders, such as not to run in the group rooms. They also benefit from well planned activities to teach them specific skills such as safe road crossing. In addition to regular opportunities to cross a local road with staff, children have been provided with a zebra crossing and road signs to play with in the setting. They are also taught about the potential risks of talking to strangers.

Children play with a very good range of toys and resources. These are well maintained and are generally stored so that children can select items for themselves.

The manager acts as the child protection co-ordinator and is very clear on the responsibilities attached to this role. The whole staff team are inducted in the procedures and the manager is

confident in identifying the potential signs and symptoms of abuse. All the relevant contact details needed to make a referral are held on site; as a result children are effectively safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in the wonderfully child-centred pre-school environment. They are extremely happy as they explore their environment and confidently choose the activities they want to take part in. Staff act promptly to ensure that children have the resources and support they need to extend their play.

Staff listen with genuine interest to all children. They encourage them to think for themselves by asking their opinions and giving them many opportunities to make choices and decisions. Children's individual emotional and care needs are very well understood and respected. As a result, they are settled and secure and are developing very good self-esteem.

There are clear routines in place and these are well understood by the children. However, these are very flexible to ensure that children are not rushed. Very clear explanations are given so children know exactly what is going to happen next.

There are two group rooms set up with activities when the children arrive. These are very well resourced and are attractively presented. Whilst the children spend the majority of the day playing and working together, they are separated into two groups for registration and carpet time. This supports the younger children to learn to concentrate and focus on activities. These times are very interactive as staff use white boards to write the names of each child to record that they are present. The children are then encouraged to identify their own name and to mark it with a tick. Older children are supported to write their own names. This information is then transferred into the register by a member of staff. This is an extremely popular activity with even the youngest children confidently beginning to sound out initial letters.

Whilst all children generally play with the same resources and take part in the same range of activities, these are very skilfully adapted to offer each child the appropriate level of challenge.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Adults working with the children have a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum. They are very competent at identifying each child's stage of development and skilfully plan activities to meet their individual needs.

Children are making very good progress in all areas of learning. Those who are approaching or have met the Early Learning Goals are provided with activities that continue to extend them and prepare them for school. Children demonstrate exceptionally good levels of concentration as they engage in their freely chosen play. They also show great interest in the adult supported activities.

Children are extraordinarily well supported in their reading and many are able to identify most letters of the alphabet. They listen with great enthusiasm to the very well read stories and confidently request their favourites. They have use of a very comfortable book corner to use their free play time. They also enjoy regular visits from the librarian. Children are developing excellent vocabularies allowing them to express themselves freely. An example of this came from a child who was watching a daddy-long-legs trying to escape from the group room. He

turned to his friend and said 'obviously it will need to fly much higher to get out of the window'. His friend agreed, laughing as he suggested that it might like to consider 'climbing up the water spout'. Conversations of similar complexity are common place throughout the setting.

Children also make very good use of the resources provided for them to practise writing. These are invitingly displayed to engage children's interest. Many are able to form recognisable letters and attempt to write their own name.

The range of resources to support children's mathematical development is also extremely good. They count very confidently and routinely engage in activities such sorting, matching and sequencing.

Children are particularly well supported to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through a range of topics. These are implemented through a variety of imaginative activities and well presented activities. For example, to support a topic on mini-beasts, children were taken to look for insects and small creatures in the local environment. They then studied and discussed what they had seen and collected. They were also provided with an extensive range of plastic mini-beast toys to use in their free play. They were given opportunities to re-enforce their learning by sitting with a member of staff to take part in art activities such as drawing and making salt-dough models. They engaged in conversations about the creature they were creating and were able to describe many similarities and differences between other creatures. The written planning for the group shows that children are provided with many activities of a similar quality.

Children have regular access to a computer and are learning to use the keyboard and mouse to operate a number of programmes. Whilst this is a very popular activity, most children find it necessary to stand up as the computer is housed in an adult sized cabinet.

Creatively children are also progressing well. Many choose to draw pictures and show good attention to detail. They enjoy regular opportunities to take part in creative activities such as painting, gluing and sticking and using chalks. They also show great enjoyment in joining in role play games with their friends. They giggle infectiously at the comical situations they dream up and show very vivid imaginations.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The behaviour of the children attending the setting is extremely good. They are caring and have very good manners. They frequently mimic the behaviour of the staff by making supportive and complimentary comments to their friends.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their individual personalities are very well understood and valued. As a result, their self-esteem is very effectively promoted. They learn about a range of different cultures and religions and often enjoy meeting visitors from different ethnic backgrounds. They play with a range of resources that promote positive images of people from throughout the community and wider world. They also take part in activities to mark a range of festivals and special days.

The manager and staff team have a very positive attitude towards meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Effective systems are in place to identify and

address children's individual needs. The group is also able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

Partnership with parents is good. Those whose children receive funding for their nursery education are well supported to understand the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum. They receive written information in their welcome pack and are given a verbal explanation during one to one meetings with their child's key worker. They have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress and to contribute any observations from home. All parents are provided with a good range of written information about the setting and sign to confirm that they have read the policies and procedures. There is always a member of staff available to speak with parents as they drop off or collect their child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the careful organisation to meet their care, learning and play needs. Space is very well used to allow an extremely wide range of activities to take place at the same time. Staff are also very effectively deployed to ensure that children are appropriately supervised. By planning effectively and working co-operatively, the staff team are able to undertake domestic tasks, such as preparing snacks, with minimal disruption to the children.

There are four members of staff working regularly with the children and they are supported by two bank staff. In addition to holding appropriate childcare qualifications, staff regularly attend short courses in order to continually develop their skills.

The leadership and management is good. The chairperson of the management committee and the manager work closely together and are supported by an extremely strong staff team. This creates a very positive, effective and harmonious environment for children. The procedures in place to recruit staff are entirely appropriate. They are vetted to ensure their suitability and are inducted in all policies and procedures.

There is a range of clear written policies and procedures in place and all required documentation and records are appropriately maintained. This contributes to the effective running of the setting.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection a number of actions were set and recommendations made. Since that time there has been an almost total change in the staff team and a new manager and chair of committee have been appointed. Therefore, many of the practices have changed considerably and, as a result, the majority of the recommendations made no longer apply.

An action was set to ensure that staffing ratios are met and to improve the maintenance of written records. The group employs sufficient staff to ensure that ratios are met at all times and has additional bank staff available. Similarly the arrangements for maintaining and storing written documentation are now considered to be good.

It was recommended that the group improve the range of activities on offer and these are now considered to be outstanding. Other recommendations included ensuring that parents are

provided with the contact details for Ofsted and minor amendments to the registers. These issues have now been successfully addressed.

These improvements have contributed to the very high quality of the service offered to children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted. On 16 October 2006 concerns were raised that a child was allowed to play in the car park unsupervised and staffing levels were too low. These concerns relate to National Standard 4: Physical environment and 2: Organisation. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit on 03 November 2006 and found that the provider was not recording staff numbers or times in the relevant registers. The provider was therefore given two actions under National Standard 14: ensure that daily record of attendance is kept and ensure that complaints procedure complies with the relevant children's act.

The provider met the National Standards and remains qualified for registration.

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 above complaint has been included in the written records held by the setting.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- provide children with plates during snack times and consider giving parents written guidance on specific items to include in a nutritious lunch boxes

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):

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