

St Edmunds Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251646
Inspection date	05 November 2007
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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?

St Edmunds Pre School is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of local people and parents of children at the pre-school, past and present. It opened in 1973 and operates from St Edmunds Village Hall in Hoxne near Eye, Suffolk. The group have the sole use of the premises during session times. This comprises of a play room, large hall, kitchen and cloakroom. A maximum of 26 children aged from two to under five years may attend during term time and children aged from two to under eight years during holiday time. The pre-school is open from 09:30 to 12:00, Monday to Friday, during term time only. A lunch club is offered each day between 12:00 to 13:00. An afternoon session is offered until 15:00 on Monday. Occasional holiday sessions are available from 09:30 to 15:00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 21 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school serves the village and surrounding local area.

The pre-school employs four members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is a qualified teacher. The pre-school receives support from the Local Authority and has achieved the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is greatly enhanced as they play in a spotlessly clean and hygienic environment where excellent personal hygiene is actively encouraged throughout the daily routine. Consequently, children understand why it is important to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and when taking part in preparing snacks. Pictures of hand washing are displayed by the low-level sinks to remind children to wash their hands properly using the liquid soap and individual paper towels provided. Children independently help themselves to tissues when they need to wipe their noses and automatically place used tissues into the bin. Throughout the day staff follow strict cleaning routines to ensure all areas remain thoroughly clean. For example, staff routinely check and clean the toilets with antibacterial spray throughout the session and nappy changing procedures followed are very clear and systematic to maintain high hygiene standards. In addition, staff and children change into Wellington boots for outdoor play and wear shoes when indoors to ensure children's health is enhanced even further. Younger children can sleep peacefully in the designated, very comfortable quiet area with bedding which is washed frequently. Staff are dedicated in following the parents' wishes regarding sleep routines and are vigilant in monitoring any sleeping children.

Excellent procedures are followed by all staff to ensure children receive exceptional care should they have an accident or become unwell. For example, detailed records are kept when medicine is administered to children and information about accidents is also recorded and shared with parents, ensuring children's health is fully promoted. Staff are highly proactive in supporting children's individual medical needs as they all hold first aid certificates and some have completed training with a health care professional to enable them to safely administer medication via an epipen.

Children readily help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the day. Children confidently pour their own drinks. Healthy and nutritious snacks are prepared in the kitchen. They feature seasonal fresh fruit and a wide range of savoury foods. High standards are maintained during the preparation of snacks by staff who have attended food hygiene training. An innovative rolling snack time, which children take full responsibility to prepare, enables children to access their snack as required and allows time for individuals to eat at their own pace. Appealing and well thought out routines ensure staff know who has accessed the snack, while still allowing children to take full responsibility. Children clearly enjoy the social snack time where staff sit and support children as they encourage their good table manners. Children help one another by pouring out milk and squash and take their plates to the trolley once they have finished. Healthy eating is consistently promoted and parents fully support this by providing children with healthy packed lunches. Children's individual dietary needs are given high regard as staff obtain detailed information from parents which is displayed prominently in the kitchen for easy reference. Children are developing their understanding of healthy eating during frequent cooking activities. They care about and work to protect their environment by recycling their packaging and food waste at lunchtime, one child confidently relishes the great responsibility of emptying the tub into the compost bin.

Children have boundless energy and love to play in the highly inviting and inspiring outdoor area. They delight in sitting listening to the wind chimes, watching ribbons sway in the breeze and playing with leaves as they take in the fresh air. Children busy themselves with a range of activities that develop their physical strength and co-ordination, contributing to a healthy lifestyle. For example, they dig soil from one area and decant it into wheelbarrows, buckets and tyres. Their spatial awareness is excellent as they run around freely in the large hall, swerving to avoid each other during a music and movement session using coloured floating materials.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and cosy environment that is extremely safe. The organisation of space is very creative with attractive and colourful displays and photographs on the walls. A superb range of stimulating resources are stored at a low level which promotes children's independence extremely well. These provide a balanced range of activities that are interactive and promote children's learning in all areas. Toys and equipment for younger children are vibrant and stimulating, these provide a wide range of sensory experiences. Daily toy checks that are clearly documented ensure that all equipment is clean and well maintained. Thorough and consistent procedures ensure that any hazards to children are effectively minimised.

The premises are extremely secure and staff manage arrival and collection times safely using careful systems to ensure children's safety. Detailed and clear operational procedures for outings and emergencies are well planned and documented. Regular fire drills that are evaluated and documented ensure that staff and children know what to do in the event of a fire. Fire prevention equipment is regularly checked and all recommendations are met. Children are kept safe on regular outings with good adult to child ratios and excellent forward planning. Children recently enjoyed a trip to 'Hoxne Man' and staff creatively involved the children in creating boundaries with canes marked with coloured ribbon, to identify where it was safe to go. Furthermore, they cleverly reintroduced this idea again when children watched staff demonstrating the safe use of sparklers before they recreated them as part of a craft activity. Written consents are obtained from parents for all outings where staff are extremely careful to ensure that venues are safe and suitable.

Children are extremely well protected from harm by knowledgeable and dedicated staff who have attended child protection training. Informative and relevant information is clearly displayed in order that correct procedures are followed in the event of a concern. Children are protected well by stringent policies and caring responsible staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very enthusiastic about learning and arrive each morning keen to explore the very wide range of activities provided. The day begins when they eagerly and happily announce their arrival and find their names and photographs and stick them to the self-registering board. These well-established routines enable children to feel secure and develop a true sense of belonging. Within this atmosphere, their self-esteem, confidence and capacity to work together develop very successfully.

Children gain high self-esteem through carefully planned encouragement to become independent, make choices and take on responsibilities. For example, they independently help themselves to the dustpan and brush to sweep up the sand. They learn quickly to share, take

turns and work together because these opportunities are integrated into their learning experiences. All children are confident and secure in the group and respond well to all the staff, displaying great affection for them, which is appropriately returned by staff. The atmosphere is very industrious and children show an eagerness that bubbles over into all their activities. When they choose their own activities all the children occupy themselves very productively, many concentrate for a long time, playing quietly and chatting with their friends. All children behave exceptionally well and have very good manners.

Staff use their extensive knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to skilfully plan activities that fully incorporate the needs of younger children. Younger children experience excellent levels of support in the form of praise for their achievements and encouragement when they communicate their ideas. An excellent settling-in policy ensures that younger children are supported to deal with separation from their parents. For example, staff respect children's use of comforters as they are kept close by in small bags in a pot. The setting offers numerous natural resources such as pegs, wooden spatulas, large pebbles and brushes, all of which stimulate children's senses and exploratory play. Children delight in the messy activities they are offered. For example, they freely use their hands to explore trays of cornflour with glitter and mould ants with play dough.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff display great skill supporting children in their play, extending their learning effectively, or standing back, allowing children to concentrate and persevere. Children benefit from the very secure understanding and knowledge staff have of the Foundation Stage. This is evident in the comprehensive planning which covers all the areas of learning and the staff's consistent understanding of what children are learning from play and activities. Staff have the confidence to allow children to try things out for themselves and they know exactly when to intervene in order to extend learning. Questions are pitched at exactly the right level to ensure that all children are involved and able to make very good progress. The staff recognise that children learn in different ways and plan meticulously to meet individual needs. Staff follow a strong philosophy that children learn most successfully when they are encouraged to follow their interests. As a result, the curriculum is planned to be flexible, so it is able to respond to the child's interests or to particular events, such as the thatching of the roof on the house opposite.

Assessment procedures are very comprehensive and ensure that staff are fully aware of each child's progress. This information is used very effectively to influence the next steps in learning for each child. Planning for children's learning is very detailed, ensuring that all areas of learning are fully covered and providing a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Between the focused sessions, whilst children explore very high quality free-choice activities, all staff work with one or two children at a time moving their learning forward and recording what they know and can do. Staff make very good use of the assessments to plan activities that match children's maturity and provide sufficient challenge for their varying abilities. There is a very successful balance between adult-led activities and free-choice activities and so children remain motivated and enjoy their learning.

Children are keen to do well because they are enthused by the wide range of activities on offer. Staff are well aware of how younger children learn and use every opportunity to develop their basic skills. For example, staff are very precise in their pronunciations of letter sounds and as a result, children make rapid progress in their speech. Children with learning difficulties are provided with very effective support, enabling them to make progress at the same rate as other

children. Their behaviour is consistently good and they are very independent. They are confident and make sensible decisions about what they are going to do and quickly become absorbed in their work. Speaking and listening skills are a priority and children speak confidently telling their news to the group and are learning to be considerate when listening to others. They work very well together and on their own, maintaining high levels of concentration because the activities are so exciting.

Children eagerly participate in well-organised circle times where they are developing core skills, such as listening, concentration and talking. Staff have high expectations of what children will achieve. They use number rhymes and sequencing songs effectively to help children learn to count and understand pattern. Children discuss numbers confidently and learn to recognise numerals, many opportunities are provided for children to practise writing numbers. Children enjoy interactive experiences and learn well through trial and error and constant practice. For example, children experimented with their observational skills when moulding ants from play dough, closely referring to the details on the pictures and example provided. Children began to draw from their own observations as they distinctively knew how many sticks to use for legs. During water play children learn comparative language, such as 'full, empty' or 'holds more than' as they enjoy pouring water from one bucket to another.

Children walk around the immediate area to become more aware of their environment. Learning is also brought to life by a range of visitors, such as the local police officer and fire brigade. Activities, such as the composting of waste and learning about recycling, as well as the other secure basic skills that they develop, prepare them well for the next stage of their education and for later life. The creation of the wormery encourages children to investigate their surroundings and ask questions about the life of worms. The children understand how to turn on the tape recorder and how to follow a computer program. They show natural care for living things, for example, after planting their flowers and vegetables outside they know that the plants need water. Children select materials independently when making models. They successfully and competently join materials effectively and know how to use a range of tools safely. Children's understanding of different cultures and beliefs is very well developed through their participation in planned activities throughout the year.

Overall, children make outstanding progress in their learning and have excellent levels of achievement given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children enthusiastically make choices and decisions throughout the session choosing their activities and accessing the equipment. They have opportunities to continue their chosen activities during group times if they do not wish to join the group. Staff encourage the children to join in for group story and have snack, although ultimately the children's choice is respected by the staff if they prefer to continue their chosen activity. Children are eager to arrive at pre-school and cope with separating from their parents extremely well. Staff work closely with parents to ensure they know the child's interests, likes and dislikes in order for them to support the child to feel safe and secure when their parents leave. Parents are welcome to join the sessions on a rota system. They are encouraged to contribute to the group in other ways, some choose to join the committee, offer talents or special skills, help with fundraising or with general repairs and maintenance.

Children develop self-esteem and respect for others through the excellent resources for diversity, for example, books, posters, dressing-up clothes, dolls, small world figures and musical instruments. Children discover other cultures and countries as they join in with religious festivals and other celebrations from the wider world, actively promoting positive attitudes towards other. All children are included fully in the life of the setting, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff are highly trained and work closely with parents and others to plan effectively to help all children progress. The setting welcomes children with additional needs and the layout of the building makes it accessible to all. Children are supported to communicate more effectively using signs and picture timetables which all children can access.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour within the setting is consistently of a high standard. Children understand right and wrong as staff give clear explanations and encourage them to support each other and play together. Children happily take turns on the computer and simple ideas such as, using a sand timer can be easily accessed to time themselves. They are skilled in negotiating and organising themselves as they make space for each other around the table at lunch time. Children are aware of using good manners, for example, at the snack table as they pass the snack round thanking each other.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is outstanding. Parents are welcomed as they arrive and there is a member of staff always available to speak to them. Parents are encouraged to share in their child's learning at pre-school, they are provided with regular newsletters containing ideas of how to extend their child's learning and link into the topics at home. Planning documentation is clearly displayed giving them prior notice of planned activities. Parents are involved in their child's records. They complete a booklet providing information about their child before they start and then access their 'step by step' records periodically throughout their time at pre-school, which provides the parents with the opportunity to record achievements they have noticed at home and the activities their child enjoys. Records are shared with the parents and they have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress with their child's key worker. Parents receive information about the curriculum through meetings, discussions and displays on the notice board as well as laminated sheets at different activities around the room, keeping them well informed.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for extremely well by genuinely dedicated and motivated staff who are highly qualified and experienced in meeting children's individual needs. Highly professional recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are safeguarded, including a successful procedure for the induction of new staff. Staff are highly vigilant to ensure children are never left alone with adults who have not been suitably vetted.

Children's care, learning and play are significantly enhanced by the highly effective organisation of all aspects of the provision. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of the National Standards and understand how to promote outstanding outcomes for children. Children experience excellent levels of supervision and direct support as the adult to child ratios are above and beyond requirements and staff deployment is expertly managed. This ensures there are always ample staff available to cover for staff absence or emergencies. The committee and manager work effectively with the staff to continually review policies and procedures in the comprehensive operational plan, ensuring that children are offered consistent care. Children benefit from ongoing improvement at the setting. All staff are involved in completing the self-evaluation

process and they are skilful in identifying innovative ways to build on their existing outstanding practice.

The leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding. Staff work together as a highly motivated and cohesive team as they share a commitment to offering the best possible experiences to children and their families. The Foundation Stage curriculum is expertly delivered as all staff are involved in contributing to weekly reflection and planning meetings. As a result, children benefit from activities which embrace their interests and they experience consistency in the teaching they receive. Children benefit significantly as staff strive for outstanding practice, constantly monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. Annual staff appraisals provide valuable opportunities for all staff to reflect on their individual strengths and to identify their individual training needs, which are prioritised.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the pre-school was required to: review the operational plan to identify any changes necessary with reference to the change from sessional day care to full day care and the incorporation of a more flexible approach to physical play. An action plan was immediately drawn up and successfully completed, any changes identified were promptly acted upon and the operational plan remains of a very high standard and truly reflects all aspects of the registration and daily provision.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection, to improve the nursery education, the pre-school was required to: consider the planning of the outdoor environment for all areas of learning. The group have created a highly successful 'outdoor classroom' which children freely enjoy throughout the whole session, all year round. All areas of learning are innovatively promoted and children become fully involved in activities that motivate and interest them.

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

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 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