



Rettendon Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203895
Inspection date	19 September 2006
Inspector	Jacqueline Oldman
Setting Address	The Memorial Hall, Main Road, Rettendon, Essex, CM3 8DS
Telephone number	M07762909351
E-mail	carol@wager.plus.com
Registered person	Rettendon 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?

Rettendon Pre-School is committee run. It opened in 1984. It operates from two rooms within the Memorial Hall in the centre of the village of Rettendon. A maximum of 25 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open on Monday from 12:30 until 15:00 and Tuesday and Wednesday from 09:30 until 12:00 during school term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 18 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these eight children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local and wider community. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs four members of staff. Of these two staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years

qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), Pre-School Learning alliance (PSLA) and the Area Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a range of activities that contribute to their physical, nutritional and health needs. Daily outdoor activities help them learn to enjoy the benefits of fresh air while developing their physical skills, this promotes a healthy life style. For example, they skilfully manoeuvre cars and bikes avoiding others, they delight in jumping on the trampolines or enthusiastically take walks in the nearby cricket field. Children repeat a range of movements through following the example of staff and learning action songs such as 'ring a ring of roses'. They are becoming aware of the way activities affect their bodies, learning when to rest or have a drink.

Children learn about hygiene and personal care through the daily routines. They are encouraged to wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet or playing outside. Children have their own hand towels and a written sickness policy is shared with parents to help prevent the spread of infection. The management of medicines is organised to enable staff to act in children's best interests if they are unwell. Children's welfare is protected as staff can deal with children's minor injuries, most are trained in administering first aid, and written parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment has been obtained.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of a healthy diet as some staff use snack time to highlight the benefits of certain foods. Children can help themselves to easily accessible drinks to stop them from dehydrating. Snacks are supplied by parents, supported by staff. Parents are encouraged to give children fresh fruit and minimise snacks such as crisps. The pre-school supply children with drinks and a biscuit. Staff are made aware of any specific dietary requirements to help ensure children's individual needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children can play and investigate in safety as sound procedures ensure they are cared for in an environment that is risk assessed to minimise potential hazards. Children are asked to wear plimsolls to protect young toes from being trodden on by heavy shoes. There are clearly written fire safety procedures that are frequently practised to keep children safe. Fire equipment is tested regularly and the children know what to do if they need to leave the premises in the event of an emergency. Children use safe and suitable toys and equipment that are checked regularly for damage and cleanliness. Good use is made of safety items such as socket covers to ensure children are kept safe, this helps them learn about potential hazards.

Security and personal safety is impressed upon the children and reinforced each time they move between the indoors and outdoors, thus keeping them safe and secure. On outings staff have attendance registers and conduct head counts to ensure that everyone is present. Children

learn and practise the 'Green Cross Code' using all their senses to keep themselves safe. They begin to understand the reasons for the restrictions imposed on them as clear explanations are given. All visitors to the premises are carefully screened and made aware of the emergency evacuation procedures to ensure they can support staff in keeping children safe. Arrival and collection procedures ensure children are safeguarded from unauthorised persons and prevent them from leaving the premises unnoticed.

Staff have a sound awareness of the need to safeguard children. They understand their responsibility for child protection and are fully aware of the need to implement appropriate procedures if concerned about a child's well-being. Children are protected and their welfare paramount as relevant important phone numbers are displayed and ready should any concerns be identified.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settling well and developing confidence. On arrival they quickly choose from the range of activities offered each day and begin to play. Good use is made of the nearby cricket field and wooded area to provide a stimulating learning environment. Children show confidence and interest in nature as they gather leaves and fruits and fit acorns into their cups. They investigate objects in a feely bag, this provides good opportunities to build on children's natural curiosity. A variety of learning experiences are provided using the indoors and two outdoor areas. Interaction between the staff and children is good. Careful use of open-ended questions encourages children to think and give interesting answers. Children have some opportunities to represent their unique and individual perception of the world through a range of materials, for example, with colouring pencils or 3D modelling. Key staff have attended training regarding the 'Birth to three matters' framework and demonstrate an understanding of how activities might be adapted for the youngest children. However, this has not yet been fully implemented to ensure planning consistently reflects their needs.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children follow a curriculum based on the Foundation Stage. They participate in activities designed to help them make progress through the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals. Children are motivated and persevere at their chosen activities. They enthusiastically select the toys and resources they wish to use from those set up ready for them and know they can ask for alternatives. A range of planned activities helps to ensure staff provide children with appealing and interesting learning opportunities that provide challenge. Activities are generally evaluated and have some contrast built in. Staff record positive observations to evidence each child's achievements and the information is transferred into a record showing what children can do. However, this information is not yet sufficiently detailed or consistently used to plan children's next steps in learning to ensure opportunities for individual children are maximised.

Children acquire new knowledge and skills through a theme based activity programme. They are curious and ask questions. Children use technology such as computers, key boards and telephones in the office role play area. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they investigate and examine growing things. Children show curiosity as they observe the changing seasons and delight in looking closely at and feeling the prickly texture of sweet chestnut shells or running their fingers along a feather. They record their findings by creating collage pictures of what they discover. The outdoor environment is used well to give children an understanding of the effect of the wind by watching how bubbles move. Children benefit from opportunities to run in the large open space of the nearby field and spontaneously engage in roly-poly and head over heels games. Visitors such as the dentist and fire officer help children to learn about and respect the wider community. Children have positive first hand experience of diversity gained through volunteers who support them in the setting.

Children show an appreciation of books and make good use of the 'cuddle corner' to look at them on their own or in groups. Staff provide children with some opportunities to mark-make and practise their emergent writing through everyday and role play activities. Children recognise some letters of the alphabet and can link some letters to their name. Most children easily count to five and have opportunities to use simple calculations, for example, when they count how many peas are left in the pod or they work out how many horses can have a carrot. Children show an interest in shape and space as they find their group's shape card for snack time or when matching shapes in puzzles and games. Children demonstrate an understanding of positional language as they move their bodies with control and coordination, following the lead of staff. For example, stretching up or down or moving their arms over and under their head.

A wide range of costumes and a puppet theatre are provided so children can express themselves, act out stories and play alongside other children who are engaged in the same theme. Children's creativity is valued as artwork is shared with their parents. They show pride in their achievements and enjoy showing visitors completed pieces of artwork. Children listen to a range of music and enjoy clapping along to the rhythm. They enthusiastically join in familiar songs both as a group and individually.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging because their name cards are ready for self-registration on arrival. They are valued as individuals and enjoy making choices and taking decisions about their play. Children play cooperatively and learn about responsible behaviour. Staff use positive behaviour management strategies including photographs clearly displaying wanted behaviour. Staff offer plenty of meaningful praise and encouragement together with sticker rewards to raise children's confidence and self-esteem. There are effective systems in place to support children with additional needs. The qualified special educational needs coordinator works closely with other professionals regarding children that may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Key workers work closely with parents to ensure that all children develop, progress and have fun whilst in the setting. Routines are arranged to effectively support young children making the transition from home to admission at pre-school.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn to respect the needs of others as they take turns and share equipment. Children benefit from first hand experiences of difference and enjoy helping staff with simple tasks such as collecting their own snacks. Topics and themes allow children to learn about the wider world and they play with toys that reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity and disability. Festivals and traditions from around the world are celebrated. They actively participate in charity events and support the wider community in initiatives such as the Homeless Action Resource Project.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. A wealth of information about the pre-school and about children's health and safety is displayed each day for parents to view. Open days are held, newsletter are sent out and parents have the opportunity to share information and make comments about their child's progress and achievements. The relationship between the staff and parents is very friendly and good verbal feedback is given each day. Parents become involved in the running of the pre-school by helping with fundraising or attending the annual general meetings and open days. Parents become involved in the children's learning by helping during sessions, attending outings or bringing in items related to themes or recyclable materials for creative work. All parents speak positively and warmly about the pre-school, paying compliments about the friendliness and approachability of staff and the lively fun personality of the manager. Parents show their appreciation for the special support the key workers offer their children in meeting their individual needs. There is not yet a complaints log that can be shared with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the care of a committed and conscientious staff team. All staff have been cleared through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the manager has given thought to ensuring robust recruitment and vetting procedures for new staff are maintained. There is an action plan for staff training needs and they regularly attend one day courses to keep up to date with current childcare issues and trends. Space and resources are organised to support play and provide a stable environment for children to gain confidence and security. Routines are organised to help support children to make the transition from home to school. This is strengthened with a parent helper rota.

All essential documentation supporting the safe and efficient day to day running of the pre-school is in place. There is a well organised operational plan that is shared with parents. However, a copy of the current National Standards and associated guidance was not readily available during the inspection. The written complaints policy does not contain all the relevant and up to date details and some other policies require minor changes. Written information about the children is securely stored having regard for confidentiality.

Funded education

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Since the last inspection the manager has worked closely with other professionals to improve outcomes for children. The manager and staff team monitor the effectiveness of care and nursery education through evaluating the weekly programme of activities and regular staff meetings. However, information shared does

not yet consistently contain sufficient detail to ensure it provides the next steps in children's learning to maximise the progress of individual children. Regular opportunities are offered for staff to continue their professional development.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection an action plan has been implemented and at least half of all childcare staff have achieved a level 2 qualification, with a further member of staff working towards a level 3 childcare qualification. Fresh drinking water is made available to children at all times to prevent them from dehydrating.

Funded education

The setting has made some progress since the last inspection. The manager and staff have attended training for the Foundation Stage and have achieved a better understanding of the stepping stones and early learning goals. As a result the pre-school has worked closely with the development worker to review and revise the planning system to ensure planning now covers all aspects of the six areas of learning. For example the mathematical programme has improved so that children are provided with practical activities, such as number songs and rhymes to help develop their understanding of addition and subtraction. Children play games such as 'five currant buns' to help them use number names and recognise groups of objects accurately in play. New equipment has been purchased and purpose made to help children make satisfactory all round progress.

Staff demonstrate an understanding of what children are expected to learn and there is some contrast in the planning, although this generally gives emphasis to the more able children. Regular evaluations of activities take place. The assessment system records observations of children's achievements, however, this is not always sufficiently detailed to be effective in establishing individual children's progress. There is limited formal evidence to suggest that these records consistently inform the planning regarding individual children's next steps in learning.

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 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 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):

- implement recent training regarding the 'Birth to three matters' framework to continue to improve outcomes for children under 3 years
- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the National Standards by obtaining copies of the current National Standards and associated guidance. Update policies and procedures to meet the revisions to the National Standards of October 2005. (this refers to complaints procedures)

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):

- develop further the planning cycle to ensure observations and differentiation are used effectively to challenge or support individual children to achieve as much as they can
- develop further the system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching of nursery education.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk