



Eldene Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507879
Inspection date	18 October 2006
Inspector	Nikki Whinton
Setting Address	Eldene Centre, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 3RZ
Telephone number	01793 488802
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Registered person	Eldene 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 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?

Eldene Pre-School opened in 1979. It operates from three rooms within the Eldene Community Centre. A maximum of 51 children may attend the provision at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 and 12.45 until 15.15 Monday to Friday. In addition, the group offers breakfast and lunch clubs. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 68 children from two to under eight years on roll. Of these, 37 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 12 staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a varied menu of healthy nutritious snacks, such as grapes, apples and bananas. They take turns to go shopping with a member of staff for the daily supplies. Through this practical approach, children are increasing their awareness of healthy options as part of the setting routine. Allergies or parental preferences are discussed prior to a child commencing in the setting. All requirements are recorded and transferred to notices in the playrooms for staff reference. This helps to ensure all needs are successfully accommodated. Bottles of water and beakers are available to children on low-level units within the playrooms, although screw top bottle lids discourage children from freely accessing water themselves.

Children learn about good hygiene practices, such as hand washing before cooking and eating or putting hands over their mouths when they cough. They benefit from the staff acting as good role models and their awareness of the correct administrative procedures to follow if accidents occur or children require medication. Hygienic nappy changing arrangements are in place. Children's good health is supported through the setting's policies and procedures. For example, written parental permission has been obtained for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice and health information within the prospectus advises parents when not to send their child to pre-school.

Children have daily chances for fresh air and exercise within the setting's fully enclosed garden. They take part in planned activities and use a variety of equipment such as a climbing frame and balance beams, to support their large muscle development. In addition, children visit the local park, where they can use additional equipment to help improve their physical skills. Children evolve their fine motor control and coordination, through the safe handling of a variety of tools, including pencils, rolling pins and scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play and relax within secure premises that are clean and suitably maintained. Older children within the Foundation Stage rooms are able to visit the toilet independently, which helps them to develop their independence and self-care skills. They play with a suitable variety of safe, suitable, age appropriate resources and benefit from the staff's good understanding of safety issues regarding the purchase and ongoing maintenance of toys.

Staff are well deployed to support children's safety, both indoors and outside the provision. Correct staffing ratios are maintained. They undertake daily written risk assessments of the premises and equipment prior to the setting opening. However, these checks are not always comprehensive. Exposed electric sockets are evident in areas accessible to children. In addition, emergency evacuation drills are not practiced on a regular basis. As a result, children's safety is put at risk.

Children's welfare is supported by the manager and staffing team having a very clear understanding of child protection issues, confidentiality of information and the correct procedures to follow if concerned about a child. Comprehensive information is given to parents, detailing the provider's child protection responsibilities. Children's well-being is actively promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enter the provision willingly and separate easily from their main carer. They quickly settle into the setting routine, with older children knowing to sit quietly for register before completing their own self-registration. Children develop their social skills as they learn to take turns, such as when playing snakes and ladders and to share resources, for example, when involved in water play. Children gain self-care skills as they make choices regarding the activities they want to explore, take turns to prepare tables for snack time and help to tidy toys away after play. Children make good relationships with their peers and staff, for example, animatedly chatting away to each other at snack time about the outfits they are going to wear at the forthcoming Halloween party.

Younger children, who have not yet reached the Foundation Stage, have their own separate base room. The consistent staffing team plan and provide a programme of age appropriate activities, such as role-play, drawing and exploring dough. They complete regular written observations of the children that they use to complete assessments using the Birth to three matters framework. The assessments are designed to build a profile of the child's development and are passed onto the staff in the Foundation Stage rooms when children become eligible to commence the early years curriculum.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have undertaken training on the early years curriculum and are aware of the areas of development covered by the focused activities. They plan a variety of practical activities to support children's learning towards the early learning goals. They complete regular written observations and assessments of the children using the Swindon Record Keeping System. Information from assessment is used in the planning of activities to promote children's future learning. The consistent staffing team know the children well and are aware of their differing stages of development. They ask children indirect questions to reinforce and develop their knowledge.

Children use language with increasing confidence when talking to peers and adults. They are being introduced to Makaton and are thereby learning about alternatives methods of communication. Children are learning to recognise their names in print through practical activities, such as self-registering or finding their name cards at snack time. They gain an awareness of how to link sounds and letters and enjoy practicing their early writing skills, for example, when making lists in the role-play area. Children gain an understanding of shape, space and measure through activities including completing puzzles of differing complexity, using weighing scales whilst exploring pasta or matching objects whilst playing picture dominos.

However, they have very few opportunities to count, use number or solve simple mathematical problems as part of the daily routine.

Children thoroughly enjoy discussing significant past, present or future events in their lives. For example, they confidently tell staff news such as ' I'm going to my brother's school' or 'I haven't got armbands any more'. They do not have regular visitors to the setting to enable them to gain an awareness of the wider world but take part in outings, such as to the shops, library or Shaftesbury Avenue Park, to help them to gain an understanding of their local area. Through practical activities, including going on nature walks to collect autumn leaves or caring for the group's African land snails, children learn more about the natural world. Children enjoy using their imagination whilst involved in role-play and sing a growing repertoire of songs from memory. However, most art and craft activities are adult directed with very little input from the children. Children have very few chances to initiate or develop their own creative ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by a consistent staffing team that knows them well and is aware of their individual home circumstances. Children whose families speak English as an additional language receive appropriate support to enable them to be fully integrated within the setting. However, staff do not consistently use language that promotes equality of opportunity or anti discriminatory practice towards all the children attending the pre-school. Children access a suitable variety of toys, including dolls, small world figures and books to help them gain an awareness of diversity.

Children generally behave well, as appropriate for their age and stage of development. Any inappropriate behaviour is handled in a satisfactory manner. Staff use praise and encouragement to promote children's positive behaviour. Children develop their awareness of right and wrong whilst in the setting.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children benefit from the very positive rapport that is apparent between the parents and staff. Parents are given detailed written information about the group, its policies and procedures, prior to a child starting in the pre-school. There are daily informal opportunities for discussion with staff about significant events in the families' lives or any issues affecting children's care. However, parents are not encouraged to contribute to their child's initial or ongoing Foundation Stage assessments and they have limited planned opportunities to review children's assessments or discuss academic progress with staff.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are confident, independent and demonstrate good self-care skills. They eagerly share news about their home lives and are learning to listen to others. They develop their awareness of a range of cultures and beliefs, through practical activities, including making lanterns as part of the topic on Chinese New Year or listening to the story of Rama and Sita and making Barfi during Diwali celebrations.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and learning is promoted by a staffing team that is suitable and appropriately qualified to care for young children. All staff attend regular early years training courses to help support their professional development. Legally required documentation is carefully maintained and securely stored. This helps to ensure children's personal information is easily accessible to support their care, such as in an emergency. However, whilst the attendance of children and visitors is recorded appropriately, the daily arrival and departure times of staff is not noted. As a result, there is no accurate true record available of when staff are on the premises, caring for the children.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The manager is an experienced, qualified early years practitioner. The staffing team meet regularly together to discuss any childcare issues, review assessments and to plan the educational provision. Monitoring of the delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum is delegated to the room leaders. There is a positive link with the neighbourhood primary school. Children attend the school sports day and harvest festival, whilst reception class children are invited to the pre-school's Christmas concert. Such opportunities help children in their transition into primary education. The group has not managed to successfully implement all of the issues raised at the last inspection. However, there is a commitment to improvement, which is supported by regular visits from the group's early years advisor.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last care and education inspection, the group was given key issues and recommendations to help improve the quality of the provision.

The care report requested children have regular access to fresh drinking water and that a risk assessment is provided which is regularly reviewed to ensure the safety of children. The group was asked to ensure the registration system records staff and children's arrival and departure times. The group was also recommended to make Ofsted's details available to parents and that records included parental consent for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

The education report recommended developing staff's questioning techniques to enable children to express their ideas and feelings and extend their learning. The group was asked to provide regular, planned opportunities for children to link sounds and letters and to decide where and when children will be given opportunities to develop their calculating skills. The provision was also requested to extend children's opportunities for independence and spontaneous creative play, using a variety of different media and materials.

Children now have access to fresh drinking water and their attendance is appropriately recorded. Ofsted's details are available to parents and written parental consent has been obtained for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. Staff use suitable questioning techniques to reinforce and extend children's learning. Children have planned opportunities to develop their

awareness of sounds and letters. All of these improvements have had a positive impact on the quality of care and education offered to the children.

However, the registration system does not record staff's arrival or departure times and risk assessments do not always identify risks posed to children. There are limited opportunities for children to use calculation as part of the daily routine or for them to initiate or develop their own creative ideas during art and craft activities.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The concern was raised in January 2006 and related to National Standard 1; Suitable Person, National Standard 11; Behaviour Management and National Standard 12; Partnership with Parents, regarding staff's management of children's behaviour and the way a member of staff shared information with parents. The provider was required to investigate the concerns. The provider reported to Ofsted that the member of staff had been reprimanded. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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

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

- ensure emergency evacuation drills are regularly practiced and exposed electric points in areas accessible to children, do not pose a risk to their safety
- ensure the daily arrival and departure times of staff are recorded
- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities issues to ensure they promote equality of opportunity and anti discriminatory practice for all children

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 the partnership with parents to ensure they are invited to share with staff what they know about their child, to aid initial and ongoing Foundation Stage assessments. Increase planned opportunities for parents to discuss and review children's assessments and academic progress
- plan and provide opportunities for children to count, use number and solve simple mathematical problems as part of the daily routine. Ensure children have regular chances to initiate and develop their own ideas during planned creative activities involving art and craft, including large group projects such as wall displays.

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