

# Walton Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	203482
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 April 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Elizabeth Warren
<b>Setting Address</b>	Walton Youth Centre, Standley Road, Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex, CO14 8PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	MOB 07931 817009
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Walton Pre School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Walton Pre-School opened in 2000 and operates from a large hall and additional areas in a youth centre in Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 08.45 to 12.15 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 37 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and surrounding villages. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is well promoted at the pre-school. They learn and use basic hygiene routines to keep themselves healthy, for example, washing their hands after using the toilet and before they sit down for snack. Visual prompts help them understand what to do and a staff member is available to supervise children if required. New children have the processes explained to them and learn why it is important to wash their hands. They have a 'buddy' to help them the first few times and quickly become proficient as they gain confidence. Tissues are available for children's use and they can dispose of these hygienically.

Children requiring first aid for minor injuries are treated by trained staff and the details are recorded, to be signed off by a parent or carer. Similarly, if medication is given the details are recorded and signed off, protecting children's health and well-being. Children do not attend if unwell and exclusion periods are clearly displayed for parents. Should they become poorly whilst at pre-school they are kept comfortable until they can be collected by a parent or carer.

Children enjoy a substantial snack mid-way through the session. Menus are prepared with pictures so children can see what they are going to have. A variety of healthy choices is provided throughout the week with plenty of fresh produce including fruit and vegetables, cheese and yogurt and energy-giving foods such as bread and pasta. Whole milk is provided and children can have water to drink at any time, ensuring they do not become thirsty and can remain active.

Children really enjoy snack time; they are involved in the preparation and serving of the food, setting the tables with cutlery and plates and pouring their own drinks. Staff join in and sit with the children in small groups, promoting a relaxed and friendly, family-style mealtime. They take the opportunity to talk about healthy foods and the children's likes and dislikes, helping children understand what will keep them healthy as they grow.

Children's physical development is very well promoted as they make use of the small and large equipment provided. Indoors, a section of the hall is always dedicated to physical play so children can use the trikes and other wheeled toys to improve their movement skills and co-ordination. The outside area is used as much as possible and children enjoy free flow play. They have access to climbing and balancing equipment, including a colourful caterpillar, and there are crash mats to prevent any accidents occurring. Children become aware of the changes to their bodies when they exercise, knowing that exertion makes them hot and they need to drink more.

Small motor skills are developed as children use manipulative toys and tools for art and craft work. They enthusiastically mix the flour and water for play dough and can list the ingredients, knowing that everything needs to be combined smoothly. Sand and water play help children with pouring and filling and they use scissors and glue sticks when creating collages from cut-outs and other materials. The small world toys and home corner role play equipment all help with children's physical development and provide challenge as they grow and mature. Children can use the mouse and keyboard to complete educational programs on the computer.

The youngest children attending have plenty of choice as all equipment is at low level and easily accessible to them. Staff are able to assess when children need help or supervision but also know when to let children try and have a go for themselves, for example when learning to use scissors, or dress a doll. They learn to be independent and make choices from an early age, encouraging their development and self-esteem.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children's safety and security is given a very high priority at the pre-school. Recently new security doors have been fitted; all visitors are screened before admittance and children cannot leave the premises unseen. Children, staff and visitors are signed on and off the premises so there is a clear record of who is present at all times. Some damaged doors to cupboards in the sensory area present a potential hazard. Fire safety is well considered and children practise regular fire drills so they will know what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation. The fire safety equipment is checked and maintained to keep it in good working order, keeping children safe.

The premises have recently been partially refurbished and is made warm and welcoming for parents and children. A large notice board contains a wealth of useful information for parents to access as they deliver and collect children. Posters and children's work decorate the walls and very good use is made of laminated cards with pictorial cues for children to help them use the equipment and know what to do at changeover times.

There is sufficient furniture and equipment to support children's needs and this is maintained in good, safe condition, all easily accessible to children. The toys are stored in labelled containers. Children's welfare and safety is well considered and risk assessments are carried out to ensure the outside area is safe and suitable before each use.

Children are protected by staff's very good knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. Staff have attended training and are confident in making referrals and acting on outside professional advice to ensure children's safety and welfare. Parents are made aware of the group's responsibilities and are assured that children's welfare is paramount at all times.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting and make very good all round progress. Children under three take part in activities with reference to the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which ensures that their developmental needs are attended to. They access the full range of activities and equipment and are sensitively supported by staff to help them develop independence and self-esteem. For example, children playing in the role play area are helped to choose a suitable saucepan to cook the dinner in the play kitchen. Young children are shown how to hold scissors to help them achieve success in cutting out. Their emotional needs are met by being allowed to have comforters, at negotiated times, and they can go to staff for reassurance at any time, for example, to ask 'When is mummy coming?'

### **Nursery Education**

Children over three years have a full programme of activities and play and learning opportunities based on the Foundation Stage curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff work together to plan and provide the activities across all the areas of learning. They have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Children make very good progress through the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals.

Children's starting points are determined by staff who talk to parents about what the children can do. They make regular written observations as the children play, work and interact with

one another, and base the next steps of learning on these observations. Currently, these next steps are not written down.

The daily choice of activities includes many basic or core activities, such as mark-making with paint or pens and crayons, to support early writing development, construction and puzzles to teach children about shape and pattern and early mathematical skills, books, role play and sand or water play. Physical play is always available using trikes and other wheeled toys, helping children with their co-ordination as well as teaching them about space and movement skills, including starting and stopping! As well as these core activities, which are freely available, children take part in focused, adult-guided activities to extend and support the topic work. This may be planting and growing seeds, a cooking activity linked to a festival or seasonal celebration, or making a model to further their design and technology skills and knowledge.

The children are interested and eager to try the activities, and their natural curiosity is harnessed to offer them new experiences, building on what they can already do. This child-centred approach allows children to develop and learn at their own pace, and lets them concentrate on their own choice of activity for as long as they wish. In this way skills are refined and developed and bring a sense of achievement as children realise they are improving. It also has a positive impact on behaviour; the children are engrossed and engaged in worthwhile learning experiences so there is no time for negative behaviour. Staff manage situations calmly and sensitively, with no untoward focus on children who present challenging behaviour, maintaining the harmony for the group as a whole.

The sessions are well planned and the daily routine minimises waiting, or non-productive, time for children. They have active and quieter times, and are able to reflect on what they have done. Indoor and outdoor play is encouraged as much as possible and the doors are open when weather permits, thereby allowing children further choice.

Children interact and talk to one another as they play and work, and use speech to organise and explore real and imaginary experiences, ideas and feelings. They negotiate with others, speak clearly and show awareness of the listener, listening and responding with enjoyment and attention to stories, songs and rhymes. Children begin to link sounds with letters as part of day to day activities; they use name cards to recognise their own and their friends' names, and are made aware of initial sounds through activities to introduce them to new vocabulary in a fun way.

Children use the wide range of appealing books for pleasure and to find information. One child settles herself comfortably with her dolly on her lap, sharing a story about going to the doctor. The story sessions are well planned, lively and interactive. The blue balloon, used to illustrate the story of the same name, caused great amusement as it was let loose and careered towards the ceiling making a very rude noise!

Free mark-making activities are provided daily, from painting with large brushes to using pens and crayons to write cards, letters and lists as part of their role play or topic work. Children proudly show their names written on the back of a piece of work, or ask staff if they would like a cup of tea, ticking this off on their list.

Children's mathematical development is promoted as children use numbers in everyday contexts, for example at snack time, when there are many opportunities for counting, such as plates, cups or slices of toast. Children work out how many they need for their own table, thereby

using the emerging mathematical knowledge to solve everyday problems. They learn the concepts of weight and volume when cooking and when playing with the sand and water.

Knowledge and understanding of shape and space is developed using construction kits and puzzles to look at shape and pattern. Peg boards with activities and pattern cards for children to copy encourage children to look closely. They begin to use mathematical language as they compare position and size, describing things as big, small, in, on or under. Singing interactive counting songs introduces children to addition and subtraction as they sing about 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' or 'Five Currant Buns'. They can use the mathematical equipment such as the Compare Bears to count and calculate groups of objects.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed as they explore their environment. They see how melting ice behaves, and watch the ingredients for play dough transform as they mix and add water. Children observe the changing seasons and the weather as they enjoy a nature walk and look closely at the plants and wildlife. They plant seeds and watch them grow, learning how to care for living things

Design and making skills are developed as children use found and recyclable materials for modelling, both small and large scale. Children use various methods for joining and fastening materials together, such as tape and string. They make models to represent the houses made by the three little pigs, using straw and sticks.

Children learn about the uses of information technology and everyday technology as they competently use the computer and other programmable toys. They use a laminator to make bookmarks. They see a camera in use and see the photos of themselves. Items of play technology in the role play area allow children to try out a cooker or iron in a safe and controlled way, allowing them to talk about how these things are used in their own lives.

Children develop a sense of time as they find out about the past and present events in their own lives and those of their families and other people they know, such as during the topics about growth and change. They think about their route to pre-school and what they see on the way, comparing their experiences with others and learning about their local environment. Multicultural images and resources are in place. Children enjoy celebrating festivals, both traditional and from around the world. They learn through stories and music and by sampling foods, such as Chinese food at Chinese New Year, so are beginning to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

Children's creative development is promoted through a balance of free and guided art and craft activities. Painting is available at all times; children can independently choose to make a picture to represent their ideas, thoughts or feelings, or simply to experiment with colour and texture, sometimes collaborating and working alongside one another. Children enjoy cutting and sticking, using scraps, and modelling with recyclables and junk. Play dough and other malleable materials offer a different dimension, allow children to experience textures and colours. Children are beginning to recognise and explore how sounds can be changed and sing simple songs from memory, as well as learn new songs, for example as they prepare for a Christmas nativity production. Instruments are used to accompany the singing and explore rhythm and pitch.

Children's imaginative potential is developed as they use the role play area, well equipped with domestic props and home corner items. Boys and girls are seen to attend to dolls' needs, wrapping them up warmly for a walk to the park, and attempt cooking in the microwave. Small world play with figures, vehicles and animals help develop understanding of the world and use

imagination to create play scenarios, encouraging co-operative play as children negotiate and share the resources.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are very well known to staff, enabling them to offer care based on their particular requirements and stages of development. The key worker system is well established and is explained to parents before children attend; it serves to provide a point of contact for any concerns or issues and discussions can take place informally or by appointment. Children develop a strong sense of belonging; many wear the pre-school tee shirt, helping them feel part of the group. New children are welcomed and closely monitored to ensure they learn routines and know who to ask for help when they need it. Staff are always on hand to support and reassure a child who feels insecure.

Children have very positive attitudes to learning; they are confident to try new activities and show good concentration and perseverance in completing their self-chosen tasks. All children are included in activities and those requiring additional help have their needs met by the trained member of staff with special responsibility, working with parents and outside professionals as required. There is an understanding of the broad range of additional needs which may be presented and staff are experienced and confident in making sure children reach their potential in a supportive and nurturing environment.

Behaviour is very good. Children are settled and happy and engaged in worthwhile activities. They learn to share and take turns with equipment and for staff's attention. Strategies are used to defuse any potentially difficult situations and children are taught to express themselves in positive ways, for example, they are given responsibility to complete tasks for which they are praised, boosting their self-esteem.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are given a welcome pack with information about the group and the Foundation Stage curriculum. They have a large notice board with further information and general issues around childcare and welfare. Newsletters keep them informed of developments and events at the setting, including staff changes, forthcoming fundraising events and topics. Parents can view the developmental records at any time and there are several formal opportunities throughout the year when they can speak to their child's key worker and discuss achievements and next steps. Parents' views are sought and their suggestions acted upon when appropriate, a suggestions box is in place and periodically a questionnaire is distributed to gather parents' opinions about aspects of the running of the group. Parents or indeed grandparents who wish to stay for sessions are welcomed and encouraged to take an active part in the group, to the delight of their children or grandchildren.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have regard for the needs and feelings of others and develop warm and friendly relationships with one another and the adults they come into contact with. They learn about how others live through the topics and the celebration of festivals and cultural events.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who have undergone checks and a robust vetting procedure to ensure their suitability to be in contact with children. New staff are supported in the early

stages as they become part of the team. Staff strengths are recognised and used effectively to support the children and help them develop.

The premises are used well; all equipment and furniture, and most displays and information, has to be put out each session as the premises are shared with other users. Staff are dedicated to ensuring that children have a stimulating and colourful environment in which to play and work and vary the equipment used each day to give children as much choice as possible. Children are cared for mainly in one group, with free choice of activity for most of the session. They sit in smaller groups for snack time, and small groups are taken into the adjacent smaller room for selected activities, particularly children who are nearing school age, enabling them to practise and refine some of the skills they will need in their new setting.

All documentation and paperwork is in place to support children. Policies are very much 'live' working documents and are presented to parents when any significant changes are made. Children's details are comprehensive and include emergency contacts as well as health and medical information. These are updated as required to ensure children's welfare is protected.

Leadership and management is good. The supervisor and committee have a clear vision for the nursery education with a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children. Their very good local knowledge allows them to support children and families appropriately to facilitate children's learning and all round development.

The supervisor is a very strong role model for staff; she sets clear directions, leading to improvements in the organisation of nursery education and the outcomes for children. Staff and children are motivated to make a full contribution to the day-to-day running of the group, and staff report that they feel part of a committed team.

The educational provision is effectively managed and monitored; activities are planned by the whole staff team and evaluated to ensure they are correctly pitched, making sure all children are included. A forward-looking approach means new ideas are introduced effectively.

New staff are recruited and an induction programme is being developed to ensure they are fully aware of the scope of the duties and responsibilities contained within their job description. The professional development of all staff is promoted through a comprehensive training programme and regular appraisals which identify strengths as well as areas for development.

The manager, staff and committee are committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

Overall, children's needs are met

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection staff were asked to develop awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development to ensure consistency in all staff.

Training and advice has been sought and staff have a consistent approach to effectively managing the range of behaviours presented, whilst maintaining the individual interests of all children and creating a harmonious environment in which children can learn and develop.

## **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 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 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 identified risks are attended to in order to minimise hazards to children (this refers to the damaged cupboard doors in the sensory area).

#### **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):

- devise a system to record the next steps in children's learning, based on assessment and evaluation of their achievements, and share with parents.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)