

Walton Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY341225
Inspection date	19 March 2007
Inspector	Jean Suff
Setting Address	Walton Infant School, Mountsteven Avenue, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE4 6HX
Telephone number	01733 571001
E-mail	
Registered person	Pre-School Learning Alliance
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?

Walton Pre-School registered under its current ownership in 2006. It is directly managed by The Pre-School Learning Alliance. It is situated within Walton Primary School. The session operates each weekday morning from 09:15 hours until 11:45 hours during term time only. The pre-school is registered for 21 children between two and five, at any one time, and currently has 24 children on roll. The setting has shared access to an undercover outdoor play area and the school playground.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about personal hygiene through regular routines such as washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. They know they need to wash their hands to 'wash away germs' and dry them so they do not become sore. Staff act as good role models, wiping tables before serving snacks and after children have eaten, to help children stay healthy. Children

have adequate opportunities to learn about leading healthy lifestyles through practical experiences. For example, they participate in weekly cooking sessions where they make their own snack for that day such as pizza with cheese and ham topping. Children eat a nutritious snack of breadsticks, dips, fresh and dried fruit. They are offered a choice of milk, juice or water to keep them well-hydrated and comfortable. Children's special dietary requirements are considered when providing snacks and staff are aware of individual children's dietary needs.

Children's immediate first aid requirements are well met as all staff have an appropriate qualification, they are aware of the procedures in place to record accidents and communicate with parents when their child has an injury. Parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is obtained to allow staff to act in the event of an emergency and satisfactory procedures are in place for the storage and administration of medication.

Children are able to rest or be active according to their preferences. They learn about their bodies through discussions with staff as they talk about needing their coats on to keep warm. Children experience fresh air during short daily outdoor playtimes. They take part in weekly music and movement sessions indoors. Most children can negotiate objects and each other as they move around the setting. They are able to balance on beams and enjoy participating in action songs and group games such as lifting and dropping a large parachute. However, large physical skills are not planned for to offer suitable challenge for older and more able children to extend their skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The pre-school room is welcoming to children and parents. There are displays of children's art work and information for parents to read. Children experience a light and airy setting that is kept in good condition. All areas are warm and comfortable so providing a safe environment for children's care and play. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised by clear staff awareness of potential hazards and good supervision. For example, they ensure security of the setting by vetting all visitors and by the use of a loud buzzer on the main door from the school. Risk assessments are completed and regularly reviewed to keep children safe.

Children use a satisfactory range of safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate resources. These are organised in child-height storage units to encourage some independent access. Children are beginning to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe, for example, staff encourage them to tidy away toys and equipment and include children in evacuation practices. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have sound knowledge of child protection issues and a sufficient awareness of the setting's written procedures and guidance charts.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy their time at the setting. They are confident and keen to participate in the activities provided. Children have warm relationships with staff who show a consistently caring approach. Staff recognise the needs of younger children who are settling in and help them adjust to their new environment. The key worker system ensures staff are available to provide support to families and children. Staff exhibit an enjoyment of their work, helping children to feel valued and secure within the setting. Some staff are aware of the 'Birth

to three matters' framework, although this is not yet used to support planning for children under three.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate a basic knowledge of the way in which children learn through play and practical activities. They allow children to choose activities for themselves and spend much of their time interacting with children. However, little time is given to demonstrating or direct teaching. There is not a sufficient balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities to aid progress. Staff are flexible which ensures that children are willing and eager to learn. They ask questions that enable children to think and predict for themselves during activities and general conversation. They provide an environment that is sufficiently organised to help children become independent. Staff make regular observations of children and know the children well. However, this information is not linked to the stepping stones or used to plan for the next stages in children's learning. As a result, activities and experiences are not well enough matched to children's needs to provide challenge. Staff are patient and friendly in their dealings with children so helping them feel settled and secure. They manage children's behaviour appropriately, setting clear and consistent boundaries. Space at the pre-school is adequately organised for learning but insufficient use is made of the outside play area.

Children build positive relationships with adults and each other. They negotiate roles in their play and work co-operatively to build a balancing beam or a brick structure. They are confident in their self-care skills as they cut up their own fruit for snack and see to their own toileting needs. Most children are confident communicators as they initiate conversations with adults and express their needs and views. Staff listen to what children say, give them choices and show respect for their ideas which makes them feel valued.

Children listen to each other as they play and re-enact scenarios from home. Some children recognise their own name and more able children use a pencil effectively to form recognisable letters. However, children are not always encouraged to take pride and ownership of their work by naming it themselves. Children develop a sense of rhythm as they move in time to a song. They enjoy exploring the sounds of their own voice as they sing and identifying parts of their body as they hide them with a scarf and then find them again. Children use number names and positional language as they play with the bricks or line up to cross the zebra crossing. They learn to sort as they help to tidy up, putting like resources into different boxes. However, there are many missed opportunities to introduce counting, simple calculation and problem solving into the daily routines, planned and spontaneous activities.

Children learn to explore and investigate as they roll play dough and cover balloons with papier mache to make Easter rabbits. They construct with a purpose in mind as they choose from the varied construction toys available. Children improve their observational skills as they look at daffodils under a magnifying glass and then draw parts of the flower with carefully chosen coloured crayons. They make connections as they talk about things that happened to them at home and show friends their new 'flashing trainers'.

Although staff working with funded children are suitably qualified, they are not clear in their understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They do not fully understand how activities contribute to children's progress towards the early learning goals. Many activities offer insufficient challenge or interest to children and this affects children's learning. For example, staff do not always provide an interesting space for children to engage in role play, so that

they can develop their imagination and tell their own stories. They provide few opportunities to develop early reading skills such as listening to and joining in with stories. This limits progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Parents and children are welcomed into the pre-school by friendly staff members. Children quickly and confidently settle into their various activities. Children are developing an awareness of diversity through a few play resources such as dolls and dressing up outfits. However, opportunities for children to learn about a variety of religious festivals are limited. Consequently their knowledge and experiences within this area are not being promoted. Systems to support children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties are in place. Staff are aware of the need to work closely with parents and outside agencies and handle situations in a sensitive and professional manner.

Children behave well. Staff set clear, consistent boundaries and have expectations for children's behaviour that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. They ensure that children are busy and content. Children are involved in activities that help them to share, take turns and play co-operatively. Staff give explanations as to why they are asking children to do something, so helping them to learn the consequences of their actions. For example, they encourage children to say sorry and show kindness when they accidentally hurt each other. Positive behaviour is praised and encouraged to enhance children's self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff have positive relationships with parents who are happy with the care given to their children. Information with parents is exchanged daily on an informal basis to support the care needs of children. Dates, news and information on events is shared through a regular newsletter which encourages parents and children to bring in items that are linked to curriculum topics. The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is satisfactory. The content of the six areas of learning is on display on the parents' notice board. Parents are able to take children's developmental records home at the end of their time at the setting. However, there are as yet no systematic arrangements for parents to discuss children's progress towards the early learning goals or contribute to ongoing assessments. This prevents them from being meaningfully involved in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall children's needs are met. Children are happy, settled and have fun in the setting. The pre-school room provides adequate space for children to move around safely and independently. The setting operates a key worker system so that children receive support and care from keen and motivated staff who know the children and their families well. The staff show real concern for children's welfare which gives children a sense of security and well-being.

Staff have a range of qualifications and experience in childcare and continue to develop their knowledge and skills through regular training, for example, first aid and child protection. The pre-school is directly and effectively managed by The Pre-School Learning Alliance. Procedures are in place for ensuring staff are suitable to work with children and their competency is evaluated through appraisal systems. Comprehensive documentation supports the running of the setting and the promotion of children's health, safety, welfare and enjoyment.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Staff have regular opportunities to meet as a team to discuss planning of activities. The manager is committed to improving the quality of the children's education and has been proactive towards this. However, staff deployment is not effective in supporting children's individual learning needs. Staff who work with funded children have not had the necessary training so that they fully understand the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are not clear how activities contribute to children's progress and opportunities to extend children's learning are missed. As a result, children are not consistently challenged and this affects learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- continue to improve the systems for planning and assessing the next steps for children's play, learning and development
- ensure that assessments link into the developmentally appropriate framework to effectively identify progress (also applies to NE)

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):

- improve staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum so that they fully understand how activities help children to make progress towards the early learning goals
- improve the presentation of activities that develop language, mathematical thinking and use of imagination

- ensure a more even balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities.

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