

Early Birds Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109411
Inspection date	07 June 2007
Inspector	Alison Weaver
Setting Address	The Church Office, Belgrave Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 2EE
Telephone number	07974835978
E-mail	
Registered person	Seaford Baptist Church
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 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?

Early Birds Pre-school Group opened in 2000. It operates from a large hall and three other rooms in a church in Seaford. A maximum of 36 children may attend at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00. Separate afternoon sessions are provided on Mondays and Wednesdays from 13.00 until 15.00 if demand requires.

There are currently 49 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these 40 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 11 staff. Of these, eight staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well by staff taking the necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection. These include ensuring the areas used by the children are kept clean. The children learn to wash their hands before handling food and after using the toilet. Some staff develop children's understanding of why they need to wash their hands by talking to them about 'good bugs' and 'bad bugs'.

Sufficient staff are trained in first aid, which helps ensure that they can act in the best interest of a child in the event of an accident. Staff obtain the necessary information about children's individual health needs from parents. This helps promote children's welfare. Sick children are cared for appropriately and parents are kept informed about any health concerns.

Children are helped to enjoy many different foods and learn about the importance of eating well. They find out about what is good to eat as they do various cooking activities. They have fun making pizzas, savoury snacks, honey biscuits and flapjack. The staff make excellent use of the snack times to promote healthy eating with the children. Children are provided with a very good variety of snacks including fresh fruit salad, crunchy vegetables, smoothies and homemade soup. They often try different foods they may not eat at home. The children often help to prepare the snacks and enjoy learning how to put spreads on their toast. Snack times are enjoyable social occasions when staff and children sit together chatting. They talk about what they are eating and staff use the time well to promote incidental learning. Children have drinks at snack times and they are offered them at other times, including after physical exercise, to ensure they do not become dehydrated.

Staff plan and provide plenty of activities that effectively promote children's physical development. The children show good co-ordination as they play safely with a variety of games equipment. They have fun as they take part in movement activities and action songs, learning to use their bodies in many different ways. Children begin to understand about the effect exercise has on their bodies. They have regular opportunities to use large equipment such as a climbing frame, parachutes, tunnels and play tents. Their fine motor skills develop extremely well as they use a wide range of tools and small equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a secure and safe environment. The building is open to other users so staff ensure that other unauthorised adults do not have access to the children. The staff are deployed effectively and the children are well supervised at all times. There is a clear collection procedure which helps protect children as it ensures they only leave with an authorised person.

The environment is very colourful, attractive and welcoming. The children's work is displayed beautifully. Very good use is made of the different rooms to meet the children's needs and interests. However, during the afternoon sessions there is no cosy area for children to sit quietly and look at books. All the children enjoy playing with an extensive range of toys and equipment that are safe and in good condition. These resources are used well to challenge and stimulate the children. They are appropriate to children's age and stage of development.

Staff carry out daily visual checks to ensure that the rooms used are safe for the children. Staff also carry out a more formal yearly written risk assessment to monitor safety for children in all areas of the setting. Appropriate safety equipment is in place, including socket covers and a fire blanket. The setting carries out regular fire drills to ensure that all staff and children are aware of what to do in an emergency.

The setting has all the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Staff have a good awareness of signs and symptoms of child abuse. They are fully aware of their responsibilities to report any concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle quickly into the warm and welcoming environment. New children soon develop their confidence and begin to speak out in circle times. The younger children settle easily into the small afternoon group, which is used as effectively as a feeder into the main group. All the children enjoy their time in the setting and achieve well because staff are very caring and supportive. Staff talk to children about what they are doing and respond to their interests. They encourage and promote children's development as they play. The children thrive due to the stimulating learning environment and excellent interaction by the staff.

The staff show that they value the children's contributions by displaying their work around the rooms. The children like to look at the displays on the walls and often chat together about what they can see. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting and are very interested in the activities available. They have opportunities to take part in quiet and active play. They are well motivated, concentrating well on self-chosen activities.

Staff have recently started to make use of the Birth to three matters framework to plan appropriate activities for children under three years to help promote their development. This younger group of children benefit from the positive interaction with staff. They enjoy a wide variety of activities that stimulate their senses such as feeling corn flour with their hands and looking at the bugs in the 'herb garden'. They spend long periods of time absorbed in activities such as sand play and exploring the magnetic bricks. They sing to themselves as they play with the trains and other toys. They use their imagination well, for example, they make a 'shaver' using bricks and pretend to 'shave' their faces like their daddies. They have fun making collages and models using a wide variety of interesting materials with different textures that they can feel.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make very good progress towards all the early learning goals due to the staff's secure knowledge of how children learn. Staff interact very effectively with children to support and reinforce their learning. They use very good questioning to encourage children to think about what they are doing and express their own thoughts. Staff make good use of resources and activities to promote children's learning. They also use everyday activities and routines to promote incidental learning.

The curriculum planning is broad and balanced as it covers all areas of learning. It shows clear links to the stepping stones to ensure staff are aware of what children should learn. Some of the written plans are basic but the actual practice is excellent, with staff ensuring that they are

challenging and moving children on in their learning. Staff carry out regular observations and use these to inform children's records of progress. This enables staff to monitor what individual children are achieving and learning. The staff use the observations and records to identify the next targets for individual children. Staff adapt activities to meet the individual needs of children and those working at different rates.

Children are confident and relaxed. They are keen to join in with the activities and learn new skills. They play happily on their own and with others. They often break into laughter as they play together and share in the fun. Children begin to form friendships and show concern for others. Children respond well to adults and form good caring relationships with them. Children's independence develops well in the setting but it is not always fully promoted at every session. They offer to do jobs for the staff as they help to tidy up.

Children are very confident speakers, using an extensive vocabulary. They learn difficult new words as staff interact effectively with them. The children listen well to staff and learn to take turns when speaking in circle times. The children learn to recognise the link between sounds and letters. They enjoy the letter games where they find the correct letter after listening to the tape. They develop a love of books and stories and make good use of reference books to extend their knowledge. They have plenty of varied opportunities to practise mark making and writing their names. Many children form letters successfully.

Children count confidently and frequently choose number activities during free play. They develop a very good awareness of simple calculation, for example, as they look at the Russian dolls. Staff interact very effectively to ensure that mathematical development is also promoted with the children in everyday activities such as when they line up and at snack times. Children use mathematical language correctly, for example, as they talk about 'more' and 'less'. They explore measuring and weighing as they play in the sand and do cooking activities. Children learn to recognise shapes as they play.

Children respond excitedly to new experiences where they explore the natural world. They have fun finding bugs on hunts outside. They show curiosity as they watch the snails and bugs indoors and talk about what they see. They use magnifiers to look closely at mini-beasts and then compare them with the pictures in the reference books. They explore a wide variety of different materials and objects. They plant and grow Mung beans, flowers and herbs. They have regular access to a computer. Children learn different skills as they use a wide variety of tools and equipment such as staplers, hole punchers and scissors. They construct in many ways and explore different forms of model making. They make their own books, folding the paper and stapling the pages together. They learn about other ways of life as they explore topics on other countries and festivals. They find out about places such as Russia and have fun exploring how people live and eat in that country.

Children express themselves freely and creatively in many ways. They enthusiastically take part in an extensive range of unusual and fun creative activities. Children are encouraged and supported well as they select and use a wide variety of interesting art and craft materials. They enjoy acting out different scenarios, for example, as they pretend to be bugs. They sing along enthusiastically in music sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff value children as individuals and respect parents' wishes. They work closely with parents to help meet each child's individual needs. They ensure that they get the necessary information from parents about their child to help them settle into the group. The staff acknowledge and respect home backgrounds.

Staff ensure that children have access to a variety of resources that represent the wider community. These resources include dressing up clothes, dolls, play figures and puzzles. The resources and planned activities help children develop a positive attitude to others and learn about the world around them.

The setting has very good arrangements in place to care for children with learning needs and disabilities to ensure that they are fully included. Staff support these children well and give them the necessary care. They work closely with parents and other professionals to help these children achieve and make progress. The staff have started to use sign language to help support children with communication difficulties.

Children behave very well and respond positively to staff. They learn to play happily together, sharing and taking turns. Children's self-esteem develops as staff value children's contributions, particularly in discussion times. Staff use appropriate strategies to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. They often use role-play or stories to teach children about how they should behave. Children benefit from the meaningful praise and encouragement given by staff. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. The parents of funded children receive some general written information about the Foundation Stage, which gives them an overall picture of what children are learning. The staff display details of each week's activities including the letter of the week. These notices give a clear indication of what children will be learning. Parents also receive information of how to extend activities at home so that they can contribute to their child's learning. They receive regular written reports that show how their child is progressing in all six areas of learning. Parents meet formally with staff to look at the profiles and discuss children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child's interests and achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised and space is used very effectively for the children. Staff group children appropriately and supervise them well. Children benefit from being cared for by a high level of qualified and experienced staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

All the required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in place. However, some of the documentation lacks sufficient detail; for example, the accident record does not include the full name of the child. The staff are also unclear about how long certain records need to be retained.

A thorough recruitment procedure is in place, which ensures that staff are suitable to work with children. The ongoing development of staff is promoted through effective induction and

appraisal systems. The staff also meet regularly to discuss children's progress and general issues in the setting. These practices ensure that staff understand their role and know how to support children in their play and learning. The staff keep well informed about current childcare practices through ongoing training and good management support. The manager makes effective use of the differing skills within the staff team. They shadow each other so that they can learn and develop their own skills. All the staff are well motivated and enthusiastic.

Some of the written policies and information given to parents are out of date and do not reflect the current practices of the group. However, the operational plan is effective and staff are clear about the current procedures, which helps contribute to the smooth running of the setting. The staff team is well established and they all work very closely together. All staff are included in the planning and decision-making.

Leadership and management are good. The staff are committed to continuous improvement and development of the nursery education provision. They put very effective development plans in place where they identify areas they want to improve, such as snack times. They seek outside support and advice when needed. Teaching is monitored through self-evaluation and staff discussions. Staff regularly monitor and evaluate the curriculum and activities to ensure that the provision is helping children make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to ensure that all required documentation was in place. The specified policies have been altered but some still lack sufficient detail. The complaints policy does not have the correct address of the regulatory body. The child protection policy does not reflect the latest changes in procedures and fails to refer to the need to inform Ofsted if an allegation is made against a member of staff. The setting now keeps a record of the fire drills carried out and there is a good procedure in place for the collection of children. These help ensure children stay safe.

There were two points for consideration identified at the last nursery education inspection. The first asked the setting to ensure plans for mathematical development included enough challenges to extend more able children. The current written plans do not always reflect how children are to be extended at activities. However, the staff ensure that in practice they do challenge and extend all children.

The second point for consideration was that the setting should provide more opportunities to practise writing their names. This has been fully addressed as there are now plenty of opportunities for children to write their names. For example, they write their names on their pictures and work. They also write in role-play situations.

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):

- improve and update policies and information given to parents to reflect current practices and ensure that documentation is kept for the required time.

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):

- continue to develop opportunities for children to make their own choices and develop their independence.

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