

Belton Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254360
Inspection date	26 November 2007
Inspector	Jean Suff
Setting Address	Old School House, 21 Church Street, Belton in Rutland, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 9JU
Telephone number	01572 718744
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Registered person	The Trustees of Belton In Rutland Pre-School Playgroup
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?

Belton Pre-School was established in 1971. It is based in premises formerly used by the village school. It serves a rural community in the south west of Rutland, close to the border of Leicestershire. Children in attendance come from a wide area around the village of Belton-in-Rutland. The pre-school is managed by a voluntary management committee.

The pre-school caters for children from two years six months up to school age. There are currently 27 children on roll, including 11 funded three-year-olds and two funded four-year-olds. The pre-school is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. The pre-school is open for 38 weeks a year during school term times. Opening times are from 09:15 to 12.15.

There are five members of staff employed at the pre-school; two hold an early years qualification at Level 3, two at Level 2 and one is working towards a Level 2 qualification. The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted at the pre-school. Staff follow well-planned routines to ensure the environment is kept clean. An accessible and child-friendly washroom allows children to wash their hands and use the toilet independently. Supportive adults are close by and praise is given when children follow good hygiene practices. Children receive good care in the case of an accident at the pre-school as a fully stocked first aid box is available and all staff hold a current first aid certificate. Staff maintain accurate records for accidents and allergic reactions, signed by parents, which helps to ensure that children's health needs are met particularly in an emergency.

Snack time is a sociable occasion for children when they sit and chat together. Staff encourage children to make healthy choices about what they eat. For example, parents send fruit to the group which children help to prepare and then share. Children have a drink of milk, diluted juice or water with their snack and in addition have access to drinking water from their individual bottles to ensure they do not become thirsty whilst at the pre-school. Topics and themes led by the staff also promote healthy lifestyles effectively.

Children participate in and enjoy a variety of opportunities to be active. They are out in the fresh air every day as staff encourage children to bring clothing appropriate for the weather. Children can run, balance, pedal wheeled vehicles, explore nature and develop large muscle skills because the outside area is spacious and inviting. Children learn to effectively use tools and equipment that help to develop fine muscle skills and their hand to eye coordination. For example, they use paint brushes, glue spreaders, scissors and puzzle pieces. Staff sometimes encourage the younger children to use equipment, offering them guidance in order for them to achieve.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure old school building. Information for parents in the entrance area and children's work on display throughout the building creates a welcoming and purposeful environment. The pre-school has a wide range of resources and play equipment kept in sound order to ensure children remain safe. However, much is not readily accessible to children so limiting their choice about what they would like to use. Clear procedures are in place to ensure toys and equipment are of a suitable safety standard and appropriate to the needs of the children. Children's safety and comfort is supported by, for example, a range of child-sized wooden chairs which have been attractively painted and decorated so enhancing their appeal for children.

Effective layout of the rooms and constant supervision minimise risks to children as they are able to move around safely. The setting has a number of safety features such as a mirror in the corner of the washroom to monitor the number and safety of children in the cloakroom whilst allowing independence of self-care skills. Children are protected as tight arrangements are in place to ensure the security of the premises and vetting of any visitors prior to entry. Regular risk assessments are carried out on the premises and playground to further ensure children's safety. Children are learning about keeping themselves safe as they find the fire symbol hidden in the room, shout 'fire' and practise the emergency evacuation procedure. In addition, staff

incorporate aspects of safety into everyday play, for example, children wear seat belts when they 'drive' the tyres in the playground.

Although the pre-school has child protection procedures and some contact details for relevant local agencies, the written policy does not reflect current guidance so potentially limiting its effectiveness in safeguarding children. Staff however, have sound understanding of safeguarding issues and the procedures to follow if they have a concern so helping to protect children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children who attend the pre-school are happy and settle well. They are welcomed by staff on arrival and engage with each other at 'carpet time'. They involve themselves in a range of well-presented activities, such as construction or creative play. Younger children settle because staff are sensitive and supportive of their emotional needs. This helps them to feel secure and provides a suitable basis for them to increase their confidence. Initial observations and assessments are made to establish children's starting points and developmental needs. There is a sufficient balance of planned and child-initiated activities that encourage children to learn and progress. However, these are primarily planned for the Foundation Stage and the setting does not necessarily use the aspects and approach described in the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning and providing for children under three.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound working knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They know that young children learn through play and provide a variety of practical and immediate experiences. Long term planning covers all six areas of learning and ensures children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Although not updated frequently, assessment records are systematic and informative, allow for parent's contributions and are used to plan for the next steps in children's learning. Staff generally have high expectations of achievement and mostly ensure that adult-led activities provide appropriate challenge for children. All staff at the setting encourage children to think and demonstrate what they know, for example, by appropriate intervention or questioning to help them deduce what the doctor might do for a poorly cough. Opportunities for children to extend their learning beyond planned outcomes are limited by the availability of resources and staff deployment. Although staff use a range of strategies to actively encourage children's purposeful play and sustained focus on activities this generally only happens where staff are working directly with children. The structure of the session and accessibility of resources means children are less able to take the initiative and choose or extend activities for themselves. This limits learning. Staff manage children's behaviour very well, using positive language and clear explanations. They are attentive to the needs of children, listen to them, show them respect and help them respond to boundaries.

Children have evident motivation to learn, showing enthusiasm and high levels of concentration and sustainability at adult-focussed activities. They settle quickly and have formed solid friendships, greeting each other warmly as they arrive. They enjoy talking to and interacting with staff and each other and are very welcoming to visitors, sharing their news and confidently asking questions. Children also confidently use a variety of methods to negotiate with others and know that adults will help them to resolve any conflict fairly if they cannot manage on their own. Children show good levels of independence with personal care and help to serve

snacks and pour drinks for each other. They show a strong sense of belonging to a community, for example, by their talking about local events they have attended or are looking forward to.

Children confidently talk to staff and each other, describing events from home or engaging in role play. They enjoy listening to stories as a group and refer to non-fiction texts to further their understanding of a topic. They have opportunities to mark-make in the creative and role play areas and older children are beginning to write their own name on their work. Children use numbers in their play and recognise the date and numerals on the mobile phone in the home corner. They use numbers to count how many children are at the snack table and how many more drinks are needed. Staff use every day routines well to encourage children to count such as when they line up to come inside from the play area. Children learn about shape and size through discussion, model building with construction sets and watching paint spread on paper.

Children use their imagination in a range of situations such as the role play doctor's surgery or building pull-along toys outside. They explore their creativity in arts and crafts, making snow flake pictures from icing sugar and food colouring or using glitter glue paints. Children talk with understanding about what they do at home and who they saw at the weekend, using their knowledge of time and festivals to work out how long it will be until the Christmas Day church service. They re-tell familiar stories with miniature figures and use them to develop their own narrative. Children enjoy singing songs together and joining in with action rhymes. They have opportunities to listen to music as staff use music to create an atmosphere or as a trigger for tidying away. Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate materials such as soil, shaving foam and shredded paper. They learn about the work of others in the community as they welcome visitors to the pre-school such as the ambulance technician.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the setting with friendly greetings and they soon settle into their activities showing confidence and interest. Resources around the room, including pictures and posters on the walls which reflect diversity, support children in gaining a positive image of themselves and others. The celebration of various festivals such as Chinese New Year and Divali and participation in community events with the church such as contributing to Harvest boxes are beginning to give children a wider view of the world in which they live. Walks around the village and visits to the 'secret garden' with allotments help children to develop a sense of belonging to their local community. The pre-school has experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and has good procedures in place to support children in such an instance. Staff have a sound understanding of children's individual needs and understand where to adapt activities to ensure children are fully included in the life of the setting.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are cooperative and behave well because staff manage their behaviour in positive ways. They have regard for children's level of understanding, give clear explanations and openly use distraction to good effect so that children are aware of staff's expectations. Children know the pre-school rules and respond appropriately to gentle reminders such as 'tidy away' music. Children like to show staff their work and achievements and show pleasure when staff praise them. They respond well to being given responsibility such as becoming a monitor for the activity and as a result children's self-esteem and confidence is enhanced.

Parents are welcomed into the setting, particularly at the beginning and end of the session. Children settle well because staff are sensitive to their emotional needs and help them to feel secure which provides a sound basis for them to explore and learn. Children benefit from the ongoing relationships that staff have with parents. They receive good continuity of care because parents share general information on a regular basis with both the manager and staff. The pre-school provides a range of written information for parents including policies and practices, although contact details for the regulator are out of date. The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given information on the Foundation Stage and six areas of learning, and time is made available for parents to discuss children's progress during their time at the setting. Staff involve parents in some learning tasks such as taking 'Biscuit Bear' and his diary home for a week and writing of his exploits with the children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children play and learn in a building suitable for purpose. All adults who come into contact with children are appropriately vetted to ensure their suitability and staff have a range of childcare experience and relevant Early Years qualifications. Staff are attentive and deployed appropriately to support the supervision of children. Children and their parents build relationships with specific staff who are mainly responsible for children's welfare, assessment and planning to meet their individual needs. Well-maintained adult to child ratios provide children with one-to-one attention at times.

Activities are arranged in designated areas to allow for various types of play and involvement that encourage children to become engrossed in their chosen activity. For example, using an area designated for creative activities and role play. Younger children often need encouragement to fully utilise the space available, especially when they first start at the pre-school. Children's care, learning and play is generally well promoted because staff ensure children have sufficient time to play, be active, rest and relax.

The pre-school is supported by a management committee of parent volunteers. They assist with fundraising and support the setting in maintaining appropriate standards of care and education for children. For example, they regularly monitor the security and maintenance of the boundaries of the premises. The setting has established systems to methodically revise the pre-school's documents, policies and procedures and the majority of these have been updated to meet current requirements. However, the child protection and complaints procedures do not contain up to date information or contact numbers.

Leadership and management is good. Senior staff are focussed and have a clear vision and aim for all children to be happy, confident and make good progress through the early learning goals. The small staff team meet together regularly to share ideas and benefit from each other's skills and knowledge of the Foundation Stage so that children experience a range of play and learning opportunities. The recently appointed manager has set clear direction leading to improvements in the organisation and outcomes for children. Staff appraisals are carried out and training needs are identified appropriately. The setting values the support of other professionals, for example, the mentor teacher to help evaluate and monitor educational provision so that improvements are continually made. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was given a number of recommendations. It was asked to develop further the equal opportunities policy to ensure that it is consistent with current legislation and guidance, and that this is understood, implemented and evaluated by all staff. The pre-school was also asked to develop further the written statement on behaviour management to include anti-bullying strategies. These requirements have been met therefore children benefit from ongoing anti-discriminatory practice and equality of opportunity. The third requirement was to meet any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer including the correct procedures and recording of fire drills. These are now in place and the outcomes recorded, therefore, children's safety is enhanced.

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 by 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 the access to resources, planning and provision of activities to help younger children's development in line with the aspects and approach described in the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- ensure policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient running of the pre-school are kept up to date and include current contact details, for example, Child Protection and the Complaints Procedure.

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 structure of the learning environment to enable children to take the initiative and become increasingly self-sufficient in choosing activities and selecting resources for themselves
- develop opportunities for children to extend their learning beyond planned outcomes.

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