

Weston Point Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303494
Inspection date	20 April 2007
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Registered person	Weston Point Pre-School Committee
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?

Weston Point Pre-School opened in 1974. It operates from a classroom within Weston Point Primary School in Runcorn, Cheshire. The pre-school serves mainly the local area. There are currently 29 children on roll of whom 19 receive funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The pre-school opens five days a week from 9.00am to 11.30am and Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12.30 to 15.00 term time only.

Three full time staff work with the children. Two have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from Halton's early years consultants.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is appropriately supported and promoted within the setting. Staff employ a range of good hygiene procedures to ensure that the environment is clean and to help reduce the risk of infection. Children wash their hands independently after using the toilet and before meals and they understand that this helps to stop germs spreading and making them poorly. A range of policies clearly explains how the setting seeks to work in partnership with parents to keep children healthy and well, for example, asking parents to keep children at home when they are unwell. Staff, children and parents all work together to keep the toys and equipment clean.

Snacks are very varied and balanced and can range from toast and cereals to rice and noodles depending on the time of year and the theme children are exploring in pre-school. Children learn about the role food plays in their development through discussion with staff and through visits from health care professionals, such as the dentist. As a result children are being encouraged to develop healthy eating habits from a young age. Children are offered a drink with their mid morning snack but drinking water is not readily accessible within the room for them to help themselves to. Staff are well informed about children's individual dietary needs and these are appropriately recorded and catered for.

Children's physical development is promoted. Staff plan physical activity sessions for the children at least twice a week, with at least one of these sessions being outdoors. Within the pre-school room children love to take part in lively action songs, although space is limited for more vigorous activities. There are many opportunities for children to practise their fine motor and manipulative skills and as a result children have good dexterity. Staff also place emphasis on supporting children's emotional growth and development. In addition to boosting children's self confidence and self-esteem through encouragement and praise, staff also talk about what makes people feel sad and happy and use role play dolls to encourage children to talk about their feelings.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The setting offers a warm welcome to both parents and children. Children are greeted by name and quickly settle on the carpet for registration. The pre-school is well set out with a variety of different toys, equipment and activities, which invite children to play. Most resources are stored within easy reach, but children clearly know the range of options available to them and ask for their favourite items if they are unable to see them set out. As a result children happily select what they want to play with and make good use of the toys and equipment available to them. The school hall and playground are used to provide children with opportunities for more physical activity and exercise.

Arrangements to keep children safe and secure are very thorough. A range of risk assessments are carried out by staff at very regular intervals to identify and address any issues arising in relation to safety. Staff very effectively help children to learn about staying safe through a range of activities and experiences. Children dress up and role play road safety scenarios to help them learn how to manage crossing the road safely. Visits from the fire department have given them hands on experience at practising fire safety procedures, such as evacuating their building. In addition to this staff use simple explanations to help children to understand how

their own behaviour can help to keep them safe and well, for example, children explain that you should not eat and talk at the same time because you might choke.

Children are also protected and kept safe from potential harm through staff's clear understanding of their child protection role and responsibilities. Staff have a good understanding of the possible indicators of abuse and neglect, and observe and monitor children's well-being alongside their learning and development. They have good relationships with parents and a written child protection statement outlines their commitment to working closely with parents and other agencies to keep children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive at pre-school excited and eager to join in and play. They respond very positively to the registration period, and enthusiastically take turns in helping staff to complete the register and various other tasks. The pre-school room is well organised and equipped and children very quickly move off to choose where they want to play, and enjoy being able to make their own choices for most of the session. Staff provide a good balance between adult and child and lead activities, and as a result children participate happily in the adult lead activities knowing that they will have plenty of time to follow their own inclinations later.

Children are very cooperative and responsive, for example, all working busily together to help tidy up so that the tables can be cleared for snack time. Staff actively encourage a sense of community and harmony both through the way in which they work together, and through the way in which they promote kindness and a sense of friendship between the children. As a result children play well together and are learning to consider the needs of others alongside their own. In addition children's enthusiasm and their cooperative behaviour effectively supports their learning.

Very clear plans are in place to ensure that all children take part in a wide range of interesting activities and experiences. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and Foundation Stage guidance to inform their planning. Displays around the setting make good use of photographs to demonstrate the links between these approaches, children's activities and their development and learning. Planning for three and four year olds is detailed and thorough, reflecting staff's clear familiarity and understanding of the areas of learning and the stepping stones. However, although planning makes good use of the indoor areas to support children's development and learning, use of the outdoors is more limited. Currently planned use of the outdoor play areas takes place once each week. As a result children's enjoyment of the outdoors as a place to be active, explore and have fun is not sufficiently promoted.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff very effectively implement the Foundation Stage curriculum and provide lots of visual and written information for parents about how they do this and how it benefits children's learning. Teaching methods vary to support the diverse ways in which children learn. For example, children experience one to one teaching and participate in small and large group activities. In addition staff are skilled at extending children's learning by encouraging them to think about what they are doing and by asking interesting and open ended questions. For example, children making planes from plastic construction materials were helped to make their planes more realistic through discussion with staff about what planes look like. As a result children were very pleased with their finished creations and

proudly showed them off. Staff use their observations of children to plan activities which effectively enable children to move on to the next stage of their learning.

Children play very well together. They receive lots of encouragement and praise from staff and as a result they have very good self confidence and self-esteem, for example, children happily stand up in a large group to count the number of animals on a page, and others wait enthusiastically for their turn to show what they can do. Although younger children need some help with their self care tasks, many of the older ones manage very independently and are able to assist the younger ones. All children are keen to have a go. Children confidently use language in conversation, in imaginary play and to make requests and ensure that they are understood by others. Staff model good language skills and are skilled at increasing children's vocabulary. Children make good use of books within the setting and enjoy taking them home to share with parents. Staff encourage parents to read with their children which helps prepare both children and parents for the expectations and experiences of school. Staff skilfully use a range of approaches to help children link letters and sounds. This works well and many children know the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make. Children enjoy lots of opportunities to practise mark making and develop their pencil control and emergent writing.

Children enjoy counting and enthusiastically join in with a wide variety of counting activities. Although staff make very good use of children's everyday routines to promote and encourage children to count and sequence numbers, opportunities for children to practise using numbers for problem solving are less apparent. Children have good access to technological equipment. Younger children enjoy putting on the headphones and listening to stories or music on the tape player, whilst older children use the computer to play simple games and show good dexterity in using the mouse. Photographs indicate that staff promote children's exploration of the world around them in a wide variety of ways, for example, children enjoy planting seeds and discovering what they need to help them grow and children take part in a bug hunt, and are delighted when they find an empty snail's shell. They enjoy a wide range of activities which promote their ability to design and create using both construction materials and art supplies. Children move around the pre-school room well and negotiate objects with ease showing good spatial awareness. Accidents are few. Staff make use of the school hall to provide opportunities for children to enjoy more vigorous activities and develop their physical skills and abilities.

Staff closely monitor children's developmental progress and learning. Planned and spontaneous observations are used to assess where children are in relation to the stepping stones and what activities need to be planned to help support their further learning and development. Children's developmental profiles are well maintained and all parents commented that they are aware that they can look at these whenever they wish. Staff explained that they work closely with parents when children move into the foundation stage recognising that parents insight into children's abilities and needs is crucial to help them plan for each child's needs. As a result children's development and learning is effectively promoted within the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff work closely with parents in order to be well informed about children's needs, dispositions and abilities. This information is put to good use in helping staff to adapt their approach to meet the needs of individual children, both in relation to their care and their learning. All children have access to staff's time, attention and to the full range of the settings resources. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported by staff who work closely with parents and other agencies, to ensure that children's individual development and

learning is effectively promoted. Children learn about cultural diversity and disability both through the resources they use in their everyday play and through planned activities and experiences.

Children learn to behave well through the settings very positive approach to behaviour. Staff encourage children to show care and kindness to one another and model this in their interaction with the children and each other. As a result children are learning to respect the needs and feelings of others. Children are given warm praise and encouragement for sharing, taking turns and showing kindness to one another, and consequently they generally play well together and are learning how to operate effectively as part of a group. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff encourage parents to take an interest in what their child is doing at pre-school through an 'open door approach'. Parents are given lots of information about how the setting aims to support their child's development and learning and are encouraged to talk to staff about any issues or concerns they might have. Open afternoons, end of term reports and daily feedback, keep parents well informed about their child's developmental progress and stage of learning. Staff effectively use photographs of children doing activities alongside brief written explanations from the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage guidance to help parents understand how these approaches are used to support children's development and learning. In addition, newsletters give parents information on the topics being covered each term and suggest ideas for things parents can do at home to continue to build on children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. Staff work closely together as a team, pooling their considerable childcare experience and knowledge to provide an effective service for children and parents. All staff have completed a wide range of early years courses including training in relation to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. They make good use of training to continually review and develop the care and support for children's learning being offered within the setting. Staff are currently undertaking a quality assurance assessment, which they feel has helped them to more effectively evaluate the work they are doing with young children. As a result they have identified a number of areas where they feel they can make improvements which will further enhance the service they provide to children and parents. Although the setting has good recruitment and vetting procedures, staff acknowledge that their policy clearance checks were done many years ago, and that updating these using the current procedures would enable them to monitor ongoing suitability more effectively.

Although staff make good use of a key worker system to help new children settle into pre-school all staff are closely involved in working with the children and observing and monitoring their developmental progress. As a result there is very good continuity of care and staff are very well informed about individual children's needs, dispositions and abilities. In addition all staff are able to liaise with parents and provide feedback about the time children spend in the setting and their progress. Delegation is good and staff share responsibilities for different areas of work and have clearly designated roles and responsibilities, working well together to plan for children's care and learning.

As part of the quality assurance process staff are reviewing and updating the settings written policies and procedures. A comprehensive range of records, policies and procedures very effectively contributes to promoting the welfare, care and learning of children within the setting. Parents have good access to records and policies and staff are looking at ways of enhancing this still further to help parents to feel more involved in their child's learning. Overall, the provision meets the range of the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection in 2004 two recommendations were made. In relation to funded education staff were asked to provide more opportunities for children's scientific exploration. They have since reviewed their planning to ensure that a wide variety of activities are available to children, which enable them to explore and investigate the world around them. In addition staff were asked to continue to develop their skills and knowledge in caring for children. Since this inspection all staff continue to attend a wide variety of early years training courses and to use these experiences and the knowledge they gain to enhance the services they provide for children and their families.

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 children's access to fresh drinking water
- make better use of the outside play areas to increase the opportunities for children to be active and develop their larger physical skills and abilities.

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):

- make better use of children's everyday activities and routines to improve their basic problem solving skills.

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