

Weldon Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220054
Inspection date	07 June 2007
Inspector	Anne Archer
Setting Address	Village Hall, Bridge Street, Weldon, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 3HR
Telephone number	mob 07761 657382
E-mail	
Registered person	Weldon Pre-school
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?

Weldon Pre-school is a community group managed by parents. It opened in 1971 and operates from two rooms and associated facilities in the village hall in Weldon near Corby in Northamptonshire. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during school term times from 09:00 to 12:00. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 30 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village, surrounding villages and the nearby town of Corby. The pre-school employs a manager and three staff. The manager holds a level 3 qualification in Childcare and Education and two staff hold appropriate level 2 qualifications. The manager is working towards a level 4 qualification and the remaining member of staff is working towards a level 2 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is exceptionally well promoted. They learn about and adopt, simple personal hygiene routines such as washing and drying their hands after going to the toilet and using wet wipes on their hands before eating snack. Staff have made and displayed picture cards to remind the children of the routines. Staff adhere to thorough cleaning and hygiene routines ensuring that the premises remain safe throughout the session. Parents support the staff by not bringing children to pre-school while they are suffering from infectious illnesses. This sustained level of hygiene helps to prevent the spread of infection. Staff have attended training in food handling to ensure children's health when snacks are prepared and presented.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded because staff attend paediatric first aid training as and when necessary, to enable them to maintain a current certificate and they are confident to administer treatment in the event of an accident. Accidents are recorded clearly and a parental signature is sought the same day. There are clear procedures for when a child becomes unwell during a session and parents give their written consent for staff to seek medical advice or treatment in the event of an emergency. Written consent is also sought before medication is administered and accurate records are maintained.

Children develop physical skills as they take part in daily indoor and outdoor activities including use of a large climbing frame with balancing, climbing wall and slide attachments. Children also play parachute games, ride on trikes and cars and take part in a range of activities to develop their co-ordination and spatial awareness. Children also get fresh air as they take advantage of the free-flow activities that are set up outside each day.

Children are able to help themselves to a snack of fresh and dried fruits, and fresh vegetables throughout the session. They also pour their own drinks of milk or water whenever they feel thirsty. Staff talk to children about the importance of healthy eating and have recently helped the children to plant a range of soft fruits and vegetables in the pre-school garden including strawberries, cucumbers and tomatoes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where risks are identified and action is taken to minimise them. Staff are aware of children's developing abilities and so ensure that appropriate measures are in place to avoid dangerous situations. For example, a safety barrier prevents children having access to the kitchen. This enables children to move around the playroom and outdoor play area safely and independently. Children use a wide range of equipment that is suitable and safe because the manager and staff ensure that the furniture, equipment and toys are appropriate for their purpose and the children's stage of development. They are kept clean, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

Children's safety is competently maintained because the manager and staff take thorough steps to promote safety within the pre-school. Staff to child ratios are maintained and termly risk assessments of the premises and equipment are carried out by the manager. Staff also complete weekly and daily checks to make sure the rented premises are safe for the children and themselves. Children's security is actively supported because there is a strict code of conduct

for arriving and departing parents and visitors. All visitors must provide identification and sign the visitors book and a password is used if anyone other than the child's parents or carer collects them. The emergency escape plan is displayed on the premises and practised termly to ensure all children become familiar with the routine. Lost and uncollected child procedures are in place and would be implemented immediately concerns were raised. The manager and her staff have a very good understanding of child protection issues. However, the pre-school child protection procedure does not take account of current local recording and referral guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well at the pre-school. Children and parents or carers are warmly welcomed by staff. Children gain confidence through routines and the relationships they build with staff and other children. Children develop their independence as they express their ideas during play using a range of resources which capture their interest. For instance, a child initiated a game of hunting for insects in the jungle, other children fetched torches to help see them better.

Children under three follow the same curriculum as older children who are funded for nursery education, although assessments of their development are made using the Birth to three matters framework instead of the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance. Staff provide appropriate support to enable younger children to take part in all their chosen activities.

Nursery Education

Children are happy, enjoy coming to pre-school and show a positive attitude to learning. They are confident and play well on their own and with others. Children behave well and are starting to accept responsibility for their actions. Children are involved, motivated and engaged in a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities both indoors and outside. They are keen to offer their ideas and respond well to new activities when they are introduced to them by staff.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are confident learners and access activities independently. Activities take account of children's interests and learning needs and are linked to the six areas of learning. Staff know from regular observations they make of children at play and from discussions with each other, what children need to learn next and plans and activities are adjusted and added to accordingly.

Children have opportunities to use their imagination as they participate in role play often based on first hand experiences. For instance, a child was observed reading the pictures in a story book to a small group of children who then began to act out the story of the 'Three Little Pigs'. They particularly enjoyed huffing and puffing and trying to blow the house down. Another child painted a picture and called it 'beach on a hot day'. Children are able to follow instructions on picture cards. For example, at snack time the first card reminds them to clean their hands. Children have opportunities to practise writing their name with support from staff and they learn to write for a purpose as there are writing materials in the role play area to enable them to make notes, write down appointments and so on. They enjoy looking at books alone, in small groups and in a whole group situation. They particularly enjoyed joining in during the story 'The Jungle Art Book' by shouting 'izzy, wizzy let's get busy' at the turn of each page.

Children's mathematical learning is developed through practical activities such as weighing ingredients on scales, watching objects float or sink in water and pouring their own drinks.

They make patterns with pegs and are able to talk through what they have made or copied. For example, a child was able to explain how he had repeated a line of two blue, two red and two green pegs. Children also learn about number as they play dominoes, count teddies and build towers with blocks or tin cans.

Children develop knowledge and understanding of the world when they participate in activities relating to the growth of themselves and other living things. For instance, when looking at mollusc and insects through magnifiers, a child was excited by the hairs she could see on a beetle's tummy. Through art and craft activities, children learn about practices within their own cultures and other cultures such as when making and dancing with dragon masks at Chinese New Year and painting pebbles to give as paperweight gifts for Father's Day. Children operate remote control toys and audio equipment and are learning to use the mouse on the pre-school's recently acquired computer. Overall, children make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident in their relationships with staff because they are valued and respected as individuals. This promotes a sense of well-being and aids their emotional development. Staff work closely with parents and carers to meet individual children's needs to ensure they are fully included. Children learn about the diversity of the world in which we live through planned activities for Chinese New Year and Easter, for instance, and from visits from people within the community such as the local police constable. The pre-school has collected a range of resources which reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability but the children are not encouraged to use these as an integral part of their play.

Children behave well and are polite as they respond to the praise and clear, consistent guidelines set by staff. Older children show some understanding of rules, while all children enjoy the security of pre-school routines. Staff deal with unwanted behaviour consistently, taking account of individual children's level of understanding and maturity. Children learn the importance of sharing and turn taking such as at snack time and when playing on the climbing frame. Some older children are developing friendship groups and enjoy eating snack together. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's care, welfare and development are promoted through the positive working relationships staff have developed with parents. Parents' views about their child's needs and interests are sought through the registration system before the child joins the pre-school and staff use this information to settle the child. Most parents support this and appreciate the settling-in visits. Parents and children are supported by a key worker who is there to liaise, share information and ensure the child a smooth passage through pre-school. New parents receive an information pack and when children become eligible for funded nursery education their parents receive comprehensive information about how the pre-school provide this through the Foundation Stage curriculum. The manager takes the concerns of parents very seriously and has a comprehensive procedure for dealing with their complaints. A complaints record is maintained.

Partnership with parents is good. The manager or a member of staff completes a weekly home-link diary for each child detailing what the child has been doing. Parents receive a termly newsletter which provides details of the new topic and includes ideas for parents to extend their child's learning at home. Key workers regularly speak to parents about their child's progress

and they write an annual report for them to keep. There are, however, no real opportunities for parents to share information about their child's milestones or home development and for this information to be used when planning the next steps in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The pre-school manager ensures that the effective organisation of the pre-school provides children with good care and nursery education. She takes responsibility for staff recruitment, induction, appraisal and staff training, and personal development is encouraged. However, there is currently no system in place for the parent committee, as the registered person, to appraise the performance of the manager. Whilst all staff either have or are working towards an early years qualification, there is currently no one qualified to take over in the absence of the manager.

Day to day practices within the pre-school protect children and effectively promote all outcomes for children. Space and resources are on the whole well-organised and children are able to make choices and develop their ideas as they play. Staff support children well during activities while children under three, particularly, receive caring support and encouragement as they begin to develop basic skills. Children's care and welfare is further supported by the comprehensive documentation and record keeping systems that have been established and maintained predominately by the manager.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager is pro-active in ensuring that the practice of all the staff contributes positively to children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the life of the pre-school. She has clear aims and is able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-school and take action to improve and develop the provision with the support of the staff group. However, the parent committee, as registered person, do not currently have a system in place to oversee or support this commitment. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school were asked to develop children's positive attitudes towards healthy eating through the continued provision of nutritious snacks. Children are provided with a choice of fresh and dried fruits, and sliced fresh vegetables which they access freely throughout the session. Water and milk are available for children to pour themselves. A gardening club has been set up for children to plant and grow fruit and vegetables to develop their understanding of healthy eating. The pre-school have achieved a healthy eating award from their Borough Council.

The pre-school were also asked to develop their range of toys and resources to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. All planned activities are accessible and available to all children attending the pre-school sessions. A range of resources which reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability has been assembled and are displayed on a side table. However, these resources are not in general use within the setting and children currently see them as something to be looked at rather than to play and interact with.

Also at the last inspection not all parents had given their written permission for the pre-school staff to obtain advice or treatment for their children in an emergency. These are now all in place.

At the last nursery education inspection the pre-school were asked to improve children's learning in relation to cultures and beliefs, mathematical problem solving, the use of books for reference, using their emergent writing skills for a purpose and to provide more challenge on physical apparatus and equipment. All these areas of children's learning are now well supported.

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:

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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 the pre-school's child protection procedure takes account of current Local Safeguarding Children Board reporting and referral procedures
- continue to develop the use of resources which reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability in everyday activities
- devise an action plan, including time scales, stating how the pre-school intends to meet the standard to have a suitably qualified named deputy to take charge in the absence of the manager.

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 opportunities for parents to have input into the assessment and planning for the next steps in their children's learning by regularly sharing what they know about their child
- develop appraisal systems for the manager and staff to ensure their training and development continues to support the educational needs of the children.

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