

# Red Balloon Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	301816
<b>Inspection date</b>	01 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Marie Lefevre
<b>Setting Address</b>	Osborne Road, Tweedmouth, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 2HS
<b>Telephone number</b>	
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Red Balloon Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

The Red Balloon Pre-School group has been operating for over 12 years and was registered to the current premises in November 1999. The setting provides places for a maximum of 24 children at a time. There are currently 22 children on the roll. The children are aged from two to five years. The group offers care for all children within the appropriate age range, however, most of the placements are from the local community.

The children are accommodated in a mobile classroom in the grounds of Tweedmouth West First School, which is located close to the centre of Berwick town. There are facilities for the provision of refreshments. The toilets are in the main school building. The school reception class and the school hall are also used. The enclosed playground is available for outdoor activities.

Child care sessions are held during term time only and are available from Monday to Friday 08.55 until 11.30 and also Monday and Friday 13.00 to 15.00 for the younger children. The group is participating in the Foundation Stage of Learning. Of the 15 funded children 14 are three years old and one is four years old.

Overall responsibility for the pre-school group lies with the management committee of parents of the children attending. There are five regular staff members, including the leader and deputy, and one back up staff member. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced. Students are welcomed into the group; they are appropriately cleared and supervised as necessary. The group also has the support of the school reception teacher and from a Local Authority early years advisor.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is protected as they have a variety of opportunities to develop their understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle in their daily routines and activities. They are encouraged to take responsibility in relation to personal cleanliness and wash their hands appropriately before handling food and after messy play or going to the toilet. There are effective procedures in place, during regular visits to use the school toilets, as children use liquid soap and paper towels which helps to prevent cross infection. However, children wash their hands in communal water and share cloth towels in the playroom prior to snack time which does not minimise the spread of germs. Children gain awareness of keeping their play areas tidy, they are happy to help clear small playthings away and respond enthusiastically to requests from staff. They also clear away their things after snack time and take turns as monitors to do tasks in the setting.

Children gain awareness of keeping their bodies healthy in ongoing discussions with staff and from the good example demonstrated by them. They learn about dental health, how germs are spread, wearing appropriate clothing for the weather and they also find out about how their bodies react to strenuous activities during planned physical activities in the hall. Staff are keen to ensure that children benefit from being cared for in a clean and healthy environment. Children's health requirements are highlighted in the detailed recording systems and policies in relation to their needs. The records are well maintained to ensure that parents and staff members are kept informed about any health issues. Staff are aware of how accident and medication records need to be kept. Staff members have completed appropriate first aid training. There is a well stocked first aid kit which is checked and replenished when necessary. Staff are aware of the need to check expiry dates on sterile dressings.

Children benefit from the healthy eating policy in the pre-school group and in the school. They bring lunch boxes which are in line with current thinking about desirable nutrition for children. There is a sign with suggestions for appropriate items to put in the boxes and parents comply with this. Staff ensure that any special dietary needs are adhered to; they work closely with parents and obtain any necessary information about the children. Children have drinks of milk or water with their food and additional drinks on demand. Juice is not allowed following guidance about dental health. Children also learn about how food arrives on the table as they participate in simple cookery tasks. They decorate biscuits, have food tasting activities with different types of healthy fruit and vegetables or prepare and taste soup they heard about a child enjoying in a story book.

Children develop their physical and emotional well-being as they participate in stimulating activities and projects which exercise their bodies as well as develop their thinking skills. They are confident as they use the wide range of large and small play equipment. Children benefit from being outdoors in the fresh air as they use the well equipped grounds in the school for

planned activities or just running around and having fun. In addition, children do a range of physical activities in the playroom and in the school hall as they enthusiastically join in movement, songs and rhymes which are educationally and physically beneficial. Children also develop emotionally as they build positive relationships and socialise with other children and adults, for example, as they join reception class children and staff in joint outdoor play.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children access the designated childcare areas with effective, close, age appropriate supervision and support from the staff team. They are encouraged to be aware of safety, both inside and outside the setting, in daily routines and activities. The premises are very comfortable, welcoming and very well organised for children to use safely. Staff ensure the premises are hazard free and secure so that children are protected. Many safety measures have been taken, for example, there are excellent secure entry systems to the Red Balloon building, to the school and to the school grounds. Socket covers are in place and the heaters are securely guarded in the playroom. Children learn about keeping safe in practical ways, for example, being careful when using equipment in the setting. They are closely supervised in the playroom and in the school grounds when enjoying lots of energetic activities. Children learn about road safety and being safe in traffic during outings and in planned activities in the setting.

Staff take many steps to ensure that children do not gain access to hazardous areas or materials. Formal risk assessments are undertaken in the setting each session to make sure the premises and grounds are kept safe and hazard free. Fire exit signs and appropriate fire fighting equipment are in place. Fire drills are undertaken on a regular basis in conjunction with the school and additional ones by the group; a detailed record is kept highlighting how the drill was conducted and problem areas. Staff are vigilant and take steps to ensure that play resources, equipment and furniture are maintained in a safe and clean condition for the children attending; all items are checked frequently. Staff ensure that the toys and activities comply with safety standards and are appropriate for the age and stage of development of each child.

Children are well protected as there is carefully planned and maintained documentation in relation to child safety in the setting. Recording systems are used in conjunction with written policies and procedures, including child protection, to ensure consistency of care for each child. Children are cared for by adults who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. Although staff have had no concerns to date in relation to child protection issues arising in the setting, they have a clear understanding of what to be aware of, who to contact and what to record.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children thrive and progress well. Their development is well supported by staff who have a wealth of varied experience in childcare. All children are enabled to participate in the many stimulating activities and projects that introduce new learning opportunities as well as develop their existing skills. Children explore and use their imaginations in many enjoyable and educational ways as they are sensitively guided and encouraged by the staff members. They settle well and benefit from the staff's affectionate and calm approach to their care and learning as they enjoy a wide range of activities in keeping with their age and stage of development.

Staff have a clear awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework which is reflected in the actual care of all the children who attend. Children build positive relationships with staff who respond skilfully to the differing age range of the children attending and their individual needs. There is creative planning in place for the two year olds attending as well as for the funded three and four year olds. This planning is used well in the setting. Play resources are used skilfully to provide many learning and life experiences. There are planned and incidental education opportunities occurring throughout each session for all children. Staff closely monitor the children as they participate in activities and this informs future planning and practice.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children build confidence in relating to their peers and adults as they are encouraged to take a very active role in the group while they develop their growing sense of independence. Equipment and playthings are organised to allow for flexibility and spontaneity, which enables each child to choose what they want to do and offer their own ideas. Children are confident in their use of the play areas and resources which allows them to develop in fun and exciting ways.

Creative development features highly in the setting as children engage in lots of music and movement activities. They enjoy creating lovely artwork relating to their visit to the local fire station; participating in games of pretend writing and posting letters; or completing puzzles to identify animals and their young. They become familiar with the spoken word in many ways and listen attentively to guidance from adults. Children practice formative mark making using a variety of tools and media. They enjoy story time and many take a very active role in discussions. They are able to choose and borrow a book at the end of each session to take home to read with their families.

Children learn about numbers and simple mathematical concepts in many activities. There are many opportunities to develop their number recognition and counting skills using a range of resources. They learn to identify shapes and patterns as well as gain an awareness of concepts relating to dimension. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the natural world as they learn about animals and growing things, for example, while participating in the planting of seeds to tend, collecting and examining conkers or talking about caterpillars, cocoons and butterflies.

Staff are skilled at using clear and simple language and guidance which enables the children to learn and progress effectively. They have a clear understanding of how children gain independence. They generally help children consolidate what they have learnt and extend their awareness. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to increase their awareness of modern technology. The computer table is a little high for some of the children to use the mouse and keyboard comfortably. Although children have many learning experiences, they are not always encouraged to consolidate and extend these, for example, in snack time interaction.

Staff ensure that the setting is well organised with resources which allow the children to have effective learning experiences as well as lots of fun. There is a balanced range of activities and designated play areas reinforce children's understanding and knowledge. Staff prepare very well for the sessions and ensure that all necessary materials and equipment are in place both for the planned activities and additional free-play. Staff are sensitive to the differing needs of each child. There is a close partnership between staff, parents and the school to ensure that each child really benefits from their placement in this setting.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff's positive attitude towards equal opportunities and respecting individual and differing needs. There is a comfortable community spirit in the group and within the school. There are opportunities to gain a greater awareness of the local community during outings. Children are developing their understanding of familiar celebrations as they prepare for Christmas by participating in activities about the Nativity as well as making Christmas decorations. They learn about less familiar celebrations from around the world and are building an awareness of different cultures. They participate in creative activities, and taste foods in relation to the Chinese new year and learn that Chinese people generally use chopsticks to eat their food. There are varied resources in the setting which reflect differing backgrounds. Stereotyping is discouraged and all children have the opportunity to participate in age appropriate activities according to their ages and stages of development.

Children learn about sharing and valuing others from the very good role models provided by the staff. Staff gently and sensitively guide, praise and encourage all children in their daily routines and activities which helps them to develop their self-esteem, confidence and sense of belonging. Children are happy and relaxed in the group and they respond well to the clear direction from the staff team members. They make choices freely in their play and daily routines and are confident as they select playthings and participate fully. All children are clearly valued by the staff, who have a sound knowledge of the children to ensure there is consistency and continuity so that each child can thrive and progress effectively.

The partnership with parents, carers and staff members is good. Parents participate in the exchange of information necessary for their child's care and education. They are kept well informed about daily issues and are aware of planning and topics for activities. There are regular newsletters and very attractive and informative packs of information which include policies, areas of learning and a wealth of other information about the provision. Many lovely examples of the children's work are displayed in the setting and children take lots of their art and other craft projects home to show what they have achieved. Parent comments indicate that they are really positive about how their children are progressing and are very happy with their progress in the setting.

The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good which ensures that smooth, consistent practice is in place for the benefit of all the children and their parents and carers. Staff are focussed, caring and professional in their approach to their work in the daily care and education of the children attending. This is reflected in the setting; in the well organised child care areas, in the many safety measures taken and in the range of good quality resources, activities and equipment provided which help children learn and develop effectively. Clearly defined and sensitive daily routines enable children to settle well and feel secure.

Informative files, notice boards and many other means are available to enlighten staff and parents. Staff files contain a wide range of policies and procedures, such as child protection, behaviour management, complaints and equal opportunities; these are used to inform practice and protect the children. However, the files have become unwieldy, some policies lack clarity

and the files are not stored for easy access. There are detailed recording systems in place including individual child records. Staff continue to update and develop these records for the benefit of children attending, their parents and for the staff team. There are clear procedures to record child, staff and visitor attendance.

Children clearly benefit from the care provided and from the staff's positive attitude towards their own training and personal development. Various staff members have completed a range of relevant training relating to the health, welfare, safety and educational needs of the children. They continue to look at further development to enhance their existing good practice.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were two recommendations made at the last inspection in relation to care. These were to ensure separate recording systems were in place for recording any pre-school incidents and the repairs to the premises. Also to ensure fire drills are undertaken in the pre-school in addition to those organised by school. Both recommendations have been met by the group having separate recording books for incidents and building repairs. Additional fire drills are undertaken and these are recorded for the benefit of the children attending.

There was one recommendations made at the last inspection in relation to education. This was to ensure the appropriate use of upper and lower case letters are used in the setting. This has been met so that children benefit from using appropriate case letters in line with current guidance.

### **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 the 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):

- ensure policies and procedures are easily accessible, clearly reflect the standards and are structured for ease of use.

## **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):

- ensure there are sufficient opportunities for children to access the computer and other modern technology
- ensure that there are opportunities for children to consolidate their learning in practical ways in routines and 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)