

# Walkern Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	149665
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Lindsay Hare
<b>Setting Address</b>	C/O Walkern Primary School, Walkern, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG2 7NS
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Walkern 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?

Walkern Pre school opened in 1991 and operates from a mobile classroom situated in the grounds of Walkern Primary School in Walkern, Hertfordshire.

A maximum of 22 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The playgroup is open during school term time on each weekday morning from 09:05 until 11:45 and afternoons from 12:30 until 15:00. All the children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school currently supports one child with special educational needs and one child with English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven staff. Four members of staff, including the managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene through well-organised routines and activities. They wash their hands before eating snack, after using the toilet and after stroking the animals that visit the group. Children take part in familiar routines, helping to tidy up when the music is played and give out the bowls and cups at snack time. Children are protected from infection because the practitioners are well informed about children's health and medical needs and follow an appropriate sickness policy. Parents are kept informed of any cases of infectious diseases in the group. All the necessary documentation regarding written consents, policies and procedures are in place and children are cared for in a warm, clean environment where staff follow suitable hygiene routines to prevent the spread of infection. The majority of staff hold current first aid certificates and the first aid box is regularly checked and replenished. This means that staff can act quickly and in the child's best interests if there is an accident.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They are able to help themselves to their own drinking water and beakers throughout the session. They enjoy a variety of healthy and nutritious snacks at the group. Specific dietary requirements are respected by staff, who ensure all foods comply with children's individual dietary needs so that children remain healthy. Children begin to learn about the benefits of healthy food through discussions with staff at snack time and ideas and suggestions for healthy snacks are also requested from parents.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. There are daily opportunities to enjoy physical play both indoors and outside which help them to develop control of their bodies. For example, they use their whole bodies to make large circles in the hall and practise balancing along beams when using the large apparatus. They negotiate space wheeling prams around the classroom and pedalling trikes outside. Children play hopscotch with varying degrees of control and move along the playground lines as they play 'follow my leader'. They step in and out of tyres and enjoy regular walks around the village. Children cut up jelly using scissors and use tweezers to pick up pasta and thread bead necklaces. There are opportunities for children to be active or rest according to their needs.

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

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given a high priority. They move around freely to play and access resources. Safety precautions are in place to ensure that hazards are minimised, for example, guards on the heaters and a contact alarm fitted to the internal door to alert staff when it is opened. Daily checks are carried out to ensure all areas are safe and secure and staff are organised to make sure children are supervised at all times. The accident book is reviewed regularly to identify potential hazards.

Children use a varied range of safe, developmentally-appropriate resources which are cleaned and checked frequently. They learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe because staff skilfully explain safe practices, such as why they need to walk not run indoors. Pictorial signs around the room illustrating 'don't throw sand' and 'do not run inside' help to reinforce these messages. Children understand why they must leave the building in the event of a fire as they participate in regular fire drills which are recorded. Visitors to the group such as the

police officer and topic work help children learn about keeping safe. For example, the group had a road safety week, where children were able to practise crossing roads using props such as traffic lights and zebra crossings. Staff encourage children to learn and recall their name, age, address and telephone number in case they get lost.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded. They are well protected from abuse and neglect. Existing injuries that have happened outside of the pre-school are recorded as well as any concerns that arise within the setting. All staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues and are fully aware of the policies and procedures through frequent staff meetings, training and induction.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in a supportive and caring environment where there are positive relationships between children and staff. They enjoy their time at the pre-school and participate in a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities.

All children acquire new knowledge and skills because staff show an interest in what they do, talk and listen to them and ask questions to make them think. For example, children think about how they might get from one place to another using different vehicles and guess what vehicle is in the bag from clues given by staff. This is done as an introduction to their topic on transport. Through effective interaction with staff they begin to learn words and meaning through stories, rhymes, songs and show and tell. Children listen to the sounds around them and learn about the seasons as they go on walks around the local area. They become confident using different tools as they model with play dough and plant pansies. Children use puppets to tell a story and enjoy playing with the diggers in the sand. They enthusiastically play 'follow my leader' outside, pretending to be different forms of transport. Staff meet all children's needs well because they have a good understanding of children's different stages of development.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well, supported by staff that have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. Plans cover the six areas of learning and link to the early learning goals and stepping stones and there is a good observation and assessment system in place. However, the plans do not always show how children will be challenged in specific activities and staff do not always expect the most of them, sometimes giving children the answers instead of giving them the opportunity to think for themselves. Although the adult-led activities are planned with a clear learning objective, it is not always clear how everyday routine activities provide learning opportunities for children. There are effective systems in place to support children with a disability or learning difficulty.

Children become involved in their play, as they use puppets to act out the story of the 'three little pigs' and make camps with torches and sleeping bags in the 'night time' role play area. Children enjoy singing favourite songs and action rhymes and make music with pots and pans outside. They respond to what they see, smell and touch as they explore sand, water, cooked spaghetti and peppermint-scented play dough. Children practise their mark-making skills as they use the writing area and attempt to write their name in shaving foam. Most of the children listen attentively at story time and enjoy looking at books on their own as well as choosing one to take home. Children develop simple counting and calculation skills as they participate in number songs and stories, such as '10 in the bed' and count the number of children at registration. Children weigh out ingredients and enjoy making bread rolls for all the children to share.

Children investigate honeycomb and explore bugs with a magnifying glass. They use the mouse to position images on the computer screen. Children build and construct their own vehicles and make transport pictures using different shapes. Children develop a sense of place through regular walks to the local area and are finding out about the wider world through topic work, visitors to the group and as they celebrate other festivals. Children's hand and eye co-ordination and fine motor skills are developed as they use a range of craft materials, mark-making tools and puzzles.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities and resources that promote a positive view of the wider world and increase children's awareness of diversity. Children work harmoniously together as they learn to take turns, using tools such as an alarm clock to time their turns and a wipe board to list children who want a turn. Children are accepting of this method as fair and therefore learn to share. They behave well and are learning right from wrong, this is due to positive role models and staff's ability to manage behaviour effectively. For example, children are praised for saying 'please' and 'thank you' and their achievements are acknowledged and valued. Children develop respect for others because staff help children to understand the consequences of their actions and how their behaviour may impact on others. Children are developing a sense of belonging through their positive relationships with staff. They encourage children to be independent by helping to tidy up when the music is played and finding their name cards when they come in. Children are beginning to develop care and concern for others and their belongings in their roles as snack and book monitor. They benefit from appropriate support by staff who know the children and their care routines well.

The quality of the partnership with parents is good. All children benefit from the staff's open and positive relationship with the parents. This starts initially with the settling-in procedure, which ensures children feel valued and included. Parents receive good quality information about the provision through the prospectus, notice board and regular newsletters. They are not informed about the curriculum planning or Foundation Stage, although the newsletters list the topics the group will be covering. Procedures are in place so that initially parents can share what they know about their child in the form of a tick sheet covering four of the areas of learning. Parents are invited to attend open days to share their child's progress and achievements. Staff are always available to talk with parents and exchange information on a daily basis either verbally or through the communication books. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning by coming in to help and suggesting ideas for future topics. Parents can request to see their child's assessment records at any time and are given a scrapbook of examples of their child's work and a report when their child leaves the group. Staff welcome feedback from parents via a questionnaire on the service the provision offers. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from thorough recruitment, vetting and induction procedures which ensure they are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Children are well protected from the risk of harm because they are never left alone with persons who are not vetted and there are effective procedures in place to ensure that only an authorised person is able to collect a child. Comprehensive policies and procedures

are in place to allow the efficient running of the group and safeguard children's welfare. However, some of the policies contain incorrect details and need updating to ensure that parents are provided with the correct information. The attendance register does not clearly indicate times of arrival and this need to be done to ensure that staff are aware of which children are present at any one time. Children enjoy whole group times such as snack and show and tell, when they join in an experience together. Throughout the session they benefit from a range of both planned activities and free choice and the organisation of the resources enables them to make choices and select their play independently. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

The quality of leadership and management is good. All staff attend regular meetings and are encouraged to feedback ideas and suggestions. Staff plan the curriculum and evaluate activities to ensure that they cover the early learning goals and stepping stones of the Curriculum guidance foundation stage as well as 'Birth to three matters'. Staff have had an introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The group has close links with Walkern primary school as it is on the same site and this helps children become familiar with the staff and new environment when they start at the school. Staff have regular appraisals and are able to request specific training to meet their needs. Children benefit from an organised setting because all staff work effectively together. They have developed positive working relationships and are committed to providing an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

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

At the last inspection the group agreed to include permission from parents to seek emergency advice or treatment on their written records. This written consent is in place and a statement has been added to the child protection policy relating to the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. Some action has been taken into showing how everyday activities are linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum and Early Learning Goals but this could be developed further. Information about the Foundation Stage curriculum including learning objectives for topics is not provided for parents and therefore is raised as a recommendation again.

### **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**

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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 documentation are reviewed more regularly to ensure they contain correct information. This relates to the complaints procedure and attendance register.

### **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):

- extend partnership with parents by providing information about the Foundation Stage curriculum including the learning objectives for themes and topics
- encourage children to think for themselves and develop the planning to show how individual children are challenged and how everyday activities are linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum and stepping stones.

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