



The Beeches Pre-School (Annexe)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY299557
Inspection date	26 July 2005
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Warren
Setting Address	St. John Ambulance, Greenstead Road, Colchester, Essex, CO1 2SL
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Elaine Joy Beecham
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

The Beeches Pre-School (Annexe) opened in 2005. It operates from a playroom within a St. John Ambulance Hall in Colchester, Essex. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 15:30 all year. The children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children aged 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local community and

surrounding areas. The pre-school is able to support children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Seven of the staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health and healthy development is promoted well. Children enjoy regular physical exercise of varied types, including free play with small equipment, use of wheeled toys, lively music and movement sessions and the 'brain gym' sequences between activities. A climbing frame is made available on occasions. Large free movement is possible in the large hall, which is used whenever available for circle games etc. They use small equipment such as construction toys and mark making equipment to develop fine motor skills. A variety of messy and manipulative play is included, this is varied daily and includes clay, dough, sand and water, and cutting and sticking.

Children have a snack of fresh fruit and a choice of drink twice a day; drinking water is available at all times. They are fully involved at snack times, choosing what they would like and helping to pour drinks and serve the snacks. At lunchtime children have a packed lunch brought from home; these are stored in a cool cupboard and parents are advised to use icepacks in the lunchboxes in warm weather.

Children are protected from infection by well-developed hygiene routines such as handwashing, and policies which remind parents not to send children with infectious illnesses.

Children are protected from the harmful effects of the sun by the use of sunhats when playing outside; parents are advised to apply a long-acting suncream before sending children to pre-school.

Children needing a sleep are able to rest quietly or snooze on a bean bag in a quiet corner. Children who are able are encouraged to use the toilet independently; staff work with parents in regard to potty training for the younger children.

Children receive first aid when needed; all staff are trained and the first aid boxes are kept well supplied with all necessary items. Accidents are recorded and a parental signature obtained.

Children needing medication are carefully monitored and details checked before a dose is given.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and cheerful environment. There are limited opportunities to display children's work, as the provider does not have sole use of the premises. Hanging displays show a large, colourful, communal artwork related to a topic about the sea.

Children are able to access equipment as it is all presented at floor level. Outside, messy play includes sand and water, painting and chalking; children freely use these facilities, putting on aprons as needed and a safety helmet when riding a bike. Children benefit from use of a secondary large hall for physical play and music and movement.

Children have child-sized furniture; tablecloths and aprons are used at lunchtime to provide a homely atmosphere and encourage positive behaviour and independence.

Children are kept safe and secure by the door entry system which is monitored by staff. CCTV cameras are in place and offer a very good overview of all areas of the provision, keeping children safe and protected. Children can play safely in the outside area, protected by a strong and secure fence. A daily risk assessment ensures that the environment is safe and hazard free; all maintenance is attended to promptly and any toys requiring repair are removed and made safe. Children are kept safe on outings by well thought out procedures including high ratios of adults to children.

Children's safety is enhanced by staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. Parents are made aware of the group's responsibilities when they have an introductory talk with the provider.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Younger children work to a programme of activities which are based on ideas from the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and integrated into the foundation stage work that the older children do, as appropriate. Their progress is recorded and clearly shows their achievements and development. Children's abilities and preferred learning styles are known to staff and these are taken into account as staff work with the children individually or in small and large groups.

Nursery Education

Children are interested and motivated to take part in all activities. They can talk about what they are doing and relate well to the adults and other children. For example, when playing in the outside areas, they talk about their imaginary journeys and their needs such as petrol for their cars.

Children achieve high standards of mathematics, reading and writing through the use of carefully structured schemes, which incorporate Montessori equipment and principles. All staff are trained and competent in delivering this form of teaching and

clear about what they want children to achieve.

Children take initiative and choose their own activities from a wide selection set out by staff each day. They play indoors or outside, free-flowing between the two. Small world and role play, with supporting props and costumes encourages imaginative play, sometimes sustained and complex. Children show good concentration and perseverance, completing their tasks whether self chosen or with guidance from staff. Children are kind and considerate of one another's feelings and form strong friendship groups. They have an awareness of their own and wider world cultures and beliefs through topic work and seasonal celebrations. Children enjoy listening to music and creating movement sequences and dances, for example Chinese ribbon dances and Indian dance, with costumes!

Children achieve well in all areas; challenges are effectively built-in to activities to ensure children are working to their potential. Very good use of time and resources ensures that staff are well deployed and spend most of their time working directly with children.

Children's level of competence and development is assessed at the start of their attendance and their progress carefully recorded by use of observations and written records which are collected to form a profile which is shared with parents.

Quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children benefit from a lively, fast pace to the sessions which incorporate a wide range of teaching styles. They remain interested and enthusiastic and staff show sensitivity and skill in keeping children involved and participating, without any undue pressure. There are opportunities for quiet reflection and relaxation too, making a balanced day.

Children enjoy a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities based around the topic themes; staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, as well as the Montessori methods. They include aspects of both approaches throughout the day to help children work towards, and in some cases exceed, the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children have opportunities to develop and progress at their own pace. Staff have a good understanding of each child's stage of development and their individual learning styles. All children are included and encouraged to participate in all activities.

Children requiring additional help are well supported; two staff have full training in special educational needs and outside professionals are called upon as needed.

Children's behaviour is exemplary; they have a good understanding of routines and what is expected of them and they respond well to staff, for example when asked to help tidy up, or when changing between activities. Children are happy and secure in the setting and develop the confidence needed to try new activities.

Children are encouraged to be responsible in their personal relationships, by being kind and thoughtful, and when out and about; they sing the anti-litter song as they open their lunch boxes, reminding them to put their rubbish in the bin!

Children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is fostered well.

They are encouraged to be independent and to help one another. They learn about their own and other cultures through the topics and daily activities. They consider the consequences of their actions and how people might feel. Children form warm and friendly relationships with one another and the adults around them.

The partnership with parents is good.

Children benefit from a very strong emphasis on a positive and effective partnership with parents. Parents speak positively and warmly about the pre-school; they feel well informed and find staff approachable and friendly. Information about staff and about activities is available to parents so they can help children at home. Further information is available in the prospectus and newsletters which go home regularly. Children each have a home/school link book which is used to exchange information so that staff are aware of home events and parents can see what children have been doing. Children take some work home to share with parents each session.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who have undergone appropriate vetting and checks. There are clear procedures for employment and induction of staff. A key worker system operates although all staff make observations and contribute to children's records. Children are grouped appropriately and cared for by a good ratio of staff to children. Students are welcome and play a full part in sessions, they are fully briefed in what is expected of them.

All parts of the premises are used effectively to provide a stimulating and well set out environment for children. As well as the main playroom the provider has negotiated to have use of a second large hall which is used for physical play and music and movement. There are plans to further develop the outside area with a purpose-built chalet for role play and which will double as storage for outside toys.

All records, policies and procedures are in place to support the children's welfare, care and education needs. Parents are given some policies and shown where they can access all further policies.

Records are not stored on the premises but are available when the group is in session.

Leadership and management is outstanding.

The leader has a clear vision with a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children. Staff are motivated and enthusiastic, they bring ideas

and influence the practice in a positive way, broadening and enriching the children's experiences. Staff feel valued and work hard as a team; they are committed to providing a high standard of care and education.

Monitoring and evaluation is ongoing and staff's professional development is addressed through a regular appraisal, a process in which staff are fully involved and their views valued.

The manager has a firm belief in staff training as a way to raise standards and provide the best standard of care and education for children. Staff keep up to date with trends and developments in the field and pass this on via their teaching and care of the children.

There is a good understanding of strengths as well as areas for development; the provider addresses issues promptly and effectively within the constraints of the premises, for example using hanging displays and notice boards, which are removable.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children attending.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable as this is the first inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints since the last 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):

- improve the book corner to make it inviting and stimulating for all children.

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):

- continue to develop the provision to provide a rich, informative and stimulating environment for children and parents, for example, the outside area, labelling round the room and displays of children's work and information for parents.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk