

Redbourn Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY287400
Inspection date	30 November 2007
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	Methodist Church Hall, North Common, Redbourn, AL3 7BU
Telephone number	07814 634808
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Redbourn Preschool
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?

Redbourn Pre School opened in 1987. It operates from the basement room in the Methodist Church Hall in Redbourn. It is open on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 09:15 until 12:15 during term time. A lunch club is available between 12:15 and 13:15 one day a week.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. Currently there are 24 children on roll, of whom, 12 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four staff and, of these, two members of staff, including the manager, hold relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because there are appropriate medical procedures in place. Children are protected from infection as parents are given information about excluding their children when ill. In the event of an accident children are well taken care of as staff hold up to date qualifications in first aid and have good access to equipment. They are attentive to matters of hygiene and encourage children to develop an awareness of good hygiene practice themselves. For example, children use tissues independently to wipe their noses and know to wash their hands before choosing snacks. These procedures contribute to keeping children healthy.

Children are learning about healthy eating through being offered a variety of healthy foods at snack time. These include a daily selection of fresh fruit, or vegetables, and children are encouraged to be independent as they pour their own drinks. Fresh water is available throughout the session so that children do not become dehydrated. Children taste different foods in organised activities, for example, pumpkin soup and porridge. Staff are all aware of any special dietary needs amongst children and consequently these needs are met appropriately.

Children have very good opportunities for regular physical activity outdoors in the spacious garden. They enjoy running around the large grassy area and playing games in the fresh air. There is a wide range of resources to interest children, for example, wheeled vehicles, role play sets, bats and balls. Staff encourage children to develop physical skills as they join with them in play, for instance, throwing balls for children to hit or swinging a rope for skipping. These activities help children to keep fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. The large room is well lit and spacious with a variety of resources easily accessible to children in low-level storage units. The areas are set up so that children can move freely and safely around the different activities. The condition of resources and equipment is checked regularly by staff to ensure that they are safe for children to use. Children are well supervised when moving around the building in order to gain access to toilets and the garden. A bell entry system is in place on the main entry door, although this door is left open and unmanned during the early part of the session. The door leading in to the play room is not locked but fitted with a bell to alert staff when it is opened. However, this has been switched off due to the loud noise emitted. As a result there is a potential risk to the security of children whilst on the premises.

Children's safety is promoted through a system of annual risk assessments on the premises and on special activities, such as outings. Safety checks are made daily by staff and any potential risks identified. Indoors there are various safety measures in place, such as the careful storage of furniture and appropriate fire precautions. The garden has been made secure through the addition of a lock to the side gate and an extra gate at the bottom of the ramp. However, some identified risks, such as overhanging brambles, are not always minimised as soon as possible to prevent injury to children.

Children keep safe on outings in the village as good ratios are maintained with the help of parents. They enjoy walks in the village and activities on the common. They are reminded of

how to keep themselves safe during play activities and they learn about road safety. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. There is a procedure in place for recording any concerns and staff know where to seek advice if necessary. Therefore children are safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy at the pre-school. On arrival they show much interest in the resources on offer and become involved in a variety of self-chosen play activities. For example, children enjoy playing with toy animals, play dough and construction equipment. They are confident and talk readily with visitors. Staff encourage them to try out new activities. They promote children's learning through offering support, for instance, helping with jigsaws and reading books. Children are very cooperative when asked to carry out a particular task, such as cutting around a given shape, and they concentrate well. Their self-esteem is boosted through much praise.

Staff make use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning activities for young children. They encourage children to develop communication skills through talking with them as they lead activities. Children enjoy good opportunities for role play using a range of resources. They have a good choice of activities and at times become quite absorbed in their play, for example, selecting books to look at, bricks to build with or pens for drawing. They are generally well supported in their development and learning, although staff do not always stimulate children's learning effectively through free play and exploration, for example, in imaginative and creative situations. Consequently children are not enabled to build on their own natural curiosity as learners within a range of learning experiences.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan a range of activities around various themes which cover the six learning areas of the Foundation Stage. The key daily activities are planned with a particular learning focus in mind, although staff are not always aware of the focus and so do not use it effectively to challenge children in their learning. Staff make very good use of group times to offer a worthwhile learning experience for children. They talk with children about the current theme, ask questions about stories and enthuse children as they join in rhymes and songs. Staff speak and explain very clearly to children so that children know exactly what is expected of them. They observe children during activities and their written notes are then transferred to children's developmental records. These provide a clear record of children's progress and are used to guide future planning.

Children enjoy taking part in the planned activities and often spend long periods of time completing tasks. This helps them to develop a good attitude towards learning. They particularly enjoy the end-of-session story time and often choose books independently to look at during the session. They have opportunities to explore mark-making in role play and draw pictures. In conversation with staff they are beginning to use language to express themselves and find out about letters of the alphabet. However, they are not always challenged to extend their language and literacy skills when taking part in activities.

Children are developing a good understanding of mathematical concepts. They are learning to count and become aware of simple calculation when joining in number rhymes. They especially enjoy rolling a large dice and counting the spots each time it settles. They compare shapes in

creative activities and learn to use mathematical language, such as big and long. Children's mathematical skills are extended during some organised activities, for example, in board games and pattern making, although staff do not always take the opportunity to challenge children similarly in other activities.

Children are able to explore creatively using different materials, for example, when printing pictures or making collages around an Autumn theme. They have fun exploring sounds and music and learning new songs. They find out about the local environment and different animals, showing much interest in imaginative games which help them learn about topics such as hibernation. In Spring and Summer they learn how to grow plants and flowers in the garden. When using tools for play dough, or threading pictures, they extend their manipulative skills. In physical activities children increase their control and co-ordination as they move in different ways and negotiate space.

Overall children are progressing well in all areas of learning although, at times, they lack extra challenge in the areas of language, literacy and numeracy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included in the setting. They develop close relationships with members of staff and enjoy chatting with them as they play. Staff show interest in what they have to say and this helps children to feel valued. They enjoy gathering together as a group at circle times and develop a sense of belonging. Staff are aware of children's individual needs and offer them good support. They are always on hand to give individual attention if necessary or offer extra resources for children involved in play activities. Children are developing personal independence and enjoy a variety of choice.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by staff. They have procedures in place for providing appropriate support and liaise closely with parents and other professionals. Children learn about diversity in society through taking part in activities planned around cultural and religious events, such as Chinese New Year. They enjoy tasting Chinese and Indian food and use a selection of resources which reflect different cultures. In this way they learn to respect others in a wider society.

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

Children's behaviour is good. They relate well to each other and mix together happily as a group. They are aware of their boundaries and respond positively to instructions from staff, often taking initiative themselves to tidy up. Staff act as good role models themselves, having a consistent and calm approach towards children. Consequently, children learn to behave responsibly. Staff work closely with parents and carers, providing them with clear information about the pre-school's procedures and routines. Parents receive details of forthcoming events in newsletters and extra notice boards keep them up to date on a day to day basis.

The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is good. There is detailed information about the Foundation Stage of learning available to parents. Staff are available at any time to discuss children's progress. When children leave they take home attractive scrapbooks containing examples of their work, photographs and also their assessment records. These provide a useful picture for parents of their children's learning and development at the pre-school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. There is a set of detailed written policies in place which are available to parents. All information on children is kept in a secure place and the attendance register is well maintained. The planning for the educational programme is generally up to date and the related assessment records are easily accessible. This documentation provides a good framework for children's care and education.

The pre-school has procedures in place for the induction of new staff, and for regular appraisals, so that staff are encouraged to pursue professional development. There are good opportunities for in-house training. Staff have also attended courses in the 'Birth to three matters' framework and aspects of children's learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children benefit from their acquired knowledge and skills. Staff make good use of the available play space to provide a variety of activities to interest children. They follow a daily routine which offers children opportunities for both individual play and group times. They use the outdoor garden area to good effect all year round so that children can enjoy learning experiences both indoors and outdoors.

Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The leader continually monitors the provision in liaison with staff and suggests new ways of working. She encourages staff to work together as a team and to gain experience by taking on various responsibilities. However, staff are not always deployed in such a way that they can interact with children effectively in a variety of situations. If directing an activity they are only able to engage with a few children and others involved in free play sometimes miss out. Since taking on the leadership role, the leader has put much effort into working on the areas of improvement raised at the previous inspection. She has developed the supporting planning and assessment systems with staff to provide a base from which they can offer a good standard of nursery education. This has contributed to a marked improvement in the overall provision.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the pre-school was asked to: develop staff's knowledge of child protection issues; maintain a record of visitors and a fire practice log; extend the behaviour management policy; review the system for recording accidents, and the hygiene procedures around hand washing. Staff have attended training in 'child protection' and all the necessary paperwork regarding visitors, fire practices and behaviour management are in place. Accidents are now recorded confidentially and children dry their hands in a hygienic manner after washing. This response has contributed to an improvement in the outcomes for children.

At the previous education inspection the pre-school was asked to ensure that: the provision of nursery education is effectively evaluated and monitored; planning is clearly focused on the stepping stones of learning; children have regular opportunities for practical mathematics, creativity, ICT and writing, and are encouraged to share and persevere. Staff have developed their written planning and evaluate their practice regularly. They have extended opportunities for children to take part in practical mathematics activities and to access writing and creative materials, and ICT equipment. They encourage children to share fairly and persevere at tasks. This has led to an improvement in the provision of nursery education overall.

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.

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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 that children are secure whilst on the premises and that any identified risks to their safety are minimised
- enable children to build on their natural curiosity as learners in a variety of free play situations.

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 that staff are aware of the focus of each planned activity and use it to challenge children in their learning
- review the deployment of staff so that they are able to interact more effectively with children in free play 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