

Pelham Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127815
Inspection date	03 October 2007
Inspector	Kerry Freshwater
Setting Address	Stocking Pelham Village Hall, Stocking Pelham, Nr Buntingford, Hertfordshire, SG9 0LL
Telephone number	01279 777939
E-mail	
Registered person	Pelham 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?

Pelham Pre-school has been open for over 20 years. The group operates from Stocking Pelham village hall and is situated in the village of Stocking Pelham, near Buntingford, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 21 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery is open from 9:15 to 12:45 Monday to Thursday and 9:15 to 11:45 on Fridays for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 16 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six staff. All 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 benefit from a clean, hygienic environment where regular cleaning routines are in place to prevent the spread of infection. For example daily and weekly cleaning is carried out and policies are in place to protect children. Staff attend training where possible to ensure children can be given appropriate care. Effective procedures and practices are in place to promote children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Staff obtain all necessary information and consents from parents relating to children's health and diet to ensure appropriate care can be given. Staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications. Children are excluded if they are unwell or suffering from a contagious illness and parents are requested to keep staff informed so that others can be monitored and protected from infection.

Children are learning the importance of good health and hygiene as they follow daily routines, which include washing their hands before food and cookery activities. They are reminded to shield their mouths when coughing and dispose of dirty tissues correctly. They chat about hygiene informally over snack and during cookery activities. Children learn about healthy living as they talk about healthy foods and the need for regular drinks and exercise. They are able to refer to the poster displayed to encourage five portions of fruit and vegetables per day. Children enjoy healthy snack foods, such as fruit and vegetables and are encouraged to bring healthy foods in their packed lunches. Staff are aware of the risks of allergies, encouraging children to eat their own foods and reminding parents not to provide any foods containing nuts.

Children enjoy a broad variety of daily activities which enable them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. They confidently climb on the apparatus, ride bikes and tractors and walk on skittles. Children enjoy bouncing on the trampoline and digging in the soil. Indoors children complete puzzles, create peg board pictures, manipulate play dough and use scissors with increasing control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures, for example, daily, termly and weekly risk assessments are carried out to the indoor and outdoor areas, staff ensure that the kitchen door is kept closed and hot drinks remain in the kitchen. The premises are secure and a door alarm has been fixed in place to inform staff if the door is opened. Fire safety equipment is in place and fire drills are carried out every half term. Drills are recorded appropriately, however the organisation of the fire records do not enable staff to review and reflect on the practice easily. This means that staff may not be fully informed of effective procedures to follow in emergency situations. Children could potentially scratch or injure themselves on the brambles in the outside play area. Children quickly learn to keep themselves safe through activities, discussion and gentle guidance. They know how to play safely indoors and out, learning about safe ways to cross the road through a road safety visitor. They are reminded to be careful as they ride around on bikes, learning that they need to slow down so that they do not have any accidents. Children play the 'stop and go' game as they learn about the sequence of traffic lights and begin to understand the jobs of the emergency services through topic work.

Children have easy and safe access to a wide range of quality resources which are stimulating and suitable for their stage of development. They are enthusiastic in their play and enjoy the

range of equipment available. Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. Some staff members have attended both basic and advanced child protection training and other courses have been booked for additional staff. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and a detailed policy is in place should any concerns arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in high quality activities throughout the session. They are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other. They choose independently and are gaining in confidence, asking questions and chatting with staff. They play happily together and are learning to take turns and respond to others as they participate in activities together. Children's achievements are greatly improved by staff's awareness of their development. They become confident communicators as they share ideas in their play, for instance as they play games, build with various construction materials, competently complete puzzles together and enjoy their pretend play in the home corner. Singing and musical activities improve their communication skills. Children enjoy learning new songs linked with themes and play instruments together. Children make connections in their learning as they freely explore the textures of paint, sand, pasta, rice and water. They experiment with floating and sinking and make models with the sand. Regular use of a wide range of creative materials, including paint, drawing materials, dough and cookery ingredients encourages children to express their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. They paint, print, construct a train using various size boxes and create beautiful poppies and cornflowers for Harvest. Children acquire new experiences and knowledge on outings. They visit local churches, Tesco's bakery and the fire station. Children develop their understanding of the natural environment through interesting excursions and activities. For example, they enjoy nature trails, visit Pelham field centre to learn about different creatures, look at wild flowers and explore the water that they scoop out from the pond.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing extremely well, supported by the staff team's strong commitment to their early learning. Staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage which enables them to support children's learning. Planning systems are detailed and all areas of learning are well covered. Ongoing observations are used to plan the next steps for children's learning. Activities are evaluated to enable staff to adapt activities to meet the needs of all children and extend them appropriately. Children's achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones and included in future planning to ensure all children are given the support and guidance that they need.

Children are engaged and motivated by a wide range of stimulating, practical activities related to their needs. They access a variety of good quality resources, which supports their learning across the Foundation Stage. Children are enthusiastic, keen to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. Their independence skills are promoted as they use the toilet, wash their hands and pour their own drinks independently. They learn to share and take turns as they play games, such as, the domino game. They confidently contribute their ideas and talk about what they have brought from home at 'show and tell' and happily discuss their home experiences. Children listen to stories with interest and participate well in group discussions. They enjoy participating in activities linked with the stories that they have heard. For example, making cocoons, creating butterfly pictures and a wall display to demonstrate the foods eaten by the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Children use marks readily to represent their ideas as they paint, however, there are not enough opportunities for children to practise forming

letters through independent use of mark making resources. This limits the opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills. Children are highly imaginative. They enjoy role play games using dressing-up clothes, dolls and other equipment to change the area into different settings, including a life boat, igloo, bear hibernation area, tent, camp site, the dentist and travel agency. They also devise their own pretend play as they imagine that the climbing frame is a dog kennel. Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them as they learn about other people and surroundings. They visit a local church to celebrate the harvest festivals, visit a steam train, learn about the role of the fire fighters and life boat workers. Children develop their understanding of the local and natural environment as they go for walks around the outside area, look for mini-beasts and learn about the life cycles of frogs and butterflies. They make hedgehog shaped bread as they learn about hibernation. Children develop their creative skills as they look at colours and carry out a range of colour related activities. They create a large Elmer the elephant wall display using different coloured paper, they experiment with different colours as they mix paints, and drive plastic cars through the different colours to see what colours are made. Children use potatoes to print with black and white to make penguins, they sew with green thread to create grass and learn about traffic lights sequencing as the colour message is reinforced. They sing 'I can sing a rainbow', sort objects by colour and print and paint freely. Children are inquisitive and enjoy exploring different textures such as sand, water and play dough.

Children work well together and enjoy each other's company. They involve themselves in self-initiated play in the home corner. They respond well to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. They become confident with number as they count enthusiastically from one to 10, they count to selected numbers as they jump in the garden and participate in simple addition and subtraction as they take different amounts of pairs or cars away from the main group. Children learn about weights and measures as they carry out cooking activities, they discuss volume as they measure full and half full cups of ingredients. They count, match and begin to recognise the 'same' number. Children recognise and match different shapes as they participate in computer activities, moving and naming the different shapes as they go along. Children gain opportunities to develop their physical skills through a wide range of activities and use a variety of equipment. They participate in jumping and stretching games in the garden, they enjoy obstacle courses learning to move around backwards, sideways, walk, run, hop, jump and land. They confidently sew onto card to make lightning pictures, cut with scissors as they cut out cornflowers and stripes for their zebra pictures and complete puzzles with various levels of difficulty. This develops their confidence and abilities to co-ordinate their bodies.

Staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help them achieve their full potential. They use appropriate systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all warmly welcomed into the setting and are highly valued as individuals. They develop a strong sense of belonging and learn about their own and other's needs, through group work and interaction from the staff. Purposeful resources reflect the world and local community and give children a clear understanding about different cultures and the lives of those around us. They begin to appreciate the customs and cultures of others as they learn about different festivals and celebrations. For example, they make a large Chinese dragon

display, taste prawn crackers and eat noodles with chopsticks for Chinese New Year. Children create hand prints and made diya pots for Diwali. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is very good. They play very well together and clearly enjoy each other's company. They are encouraged to take turns and share resources with their friends. They use 'please' and 'thank you' readily and respond politely when their names are called at registration. Staff manage children well and have high expectations for their behaviour. They provide good role models, by showing the children respect, talking calmly and quietly to them at all times and this is reflected in the calm atmosphere generated within the sessions. Children are therefore developing good social skills and clearly understand what is required of them.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff form good relationships with parents and ensure that they work together to meet children's individual needs. New parents receive an informative prospectus, which tells them about the staff, policies, sessional information and detailed information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents are encouraged to share some information about their children, however there is insufficient information obtained to enable staff to clearly identify children's starting points as they begin their time at pre-school. This means that challenge for children may not always be sufficient. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their children's learning, they are informed what children are doing and are encouraged to share their knowledge, skills and ideas with the group. Staff ensure that regular discussions with parents keep them fully informed of their children's progress. However, children's starting points cannot be clearly identified as insufficient information is obtained from parents prior to children commencing the pre-school. Staff meet with parents at individual consultations and also informally at the end of the session, to discuss children's progress and development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Recruitment and vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for by staff with a strong knowledge and understanding of child development. The majority of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and staff attend training to update and enhance their skills. They are committed to continually improving the care and education that they provide. Consequently, children's development is enhanced. Staff form a strong, efficient and well-organised team, who work well together and have a high regard for the well-being of all children. They are aware of their roles and responsibilities, which ensures that sessions run efficiently and smoothly. The available space is very well organised, to allow children independence and to maximise their play opportunities. Staff re-organise activities during the session, to stimulate and maintain children's interest. Children's care, learning and play is therefore well supported.

All of the necessary documentation for the safe and efficient management of the provision is in place and record keeping systems are very well used to meet children's needs. In addition, the groups policies and procedures work well in practice, to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Children's arrival and departure times are recorded appropriately which means that staff are fully aware of the numbers of children they are accountable for. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is good. There is a good, clear leadership from the manager, who is available at every session to interact with children, support staff and meet with parents.

The manager oversees the planning and regular staff meetings to allow staff the chance to identify and discuss any issues they may have, concerning the curriculum or children's learning. Children have access to appropriate play and learning opportunities, which meet their needs and help them to progress towards the early learning goals. Staff appraisals are in the process of being introduced. This enables staff to reflect on their practice and to assess both their own and the setting's strengths and weaknesses.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to record children's arrival and departure times accurately and update the lost and uncollected child policies. They were also asked to meet any recommendations made by the fire safety officer with regard to the main fire exit.

The daily register is now updated with children's arrival and departure times. Policies have been updated and an alarm has been installed to the toilet door to ensure the fire officer's recommendations are addressed.

Nursery Education

The group were asked to increase opportunities for children to select their own resources and attempt writing and to improve their opportunities to express their own creativity. Also to access training for all staff relating to the Foundation Stage, ensure that assessments are used to enable staff to identify and plan for children's next steps and ensure that more able children are challenged. Resources are available to enable children to freely access a range of writing tools however, these are not well used during the session and the group have agreed to relocate to make more readily available to children.

Staff have improved their knowledge by attending various training courses, assessment systems have been improved and more detailed child observations are carried out.

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:

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):

- improve the procedure for recording fire drills to ensure that the information can be accessed easily and reviewed prior to the next drill being carried out
- ensure that the garden area is safe and clear from brambles
- review the provision of mark making equipment to ensure the resources can be located easily and used more effectively during the session

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 the information obtained from parents to ensure that staff can identify children's starting points more easily.

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