

Elsworth Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221776
Inspection date	06 February 2008
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe

Setting Address	Elsworth Primary School, Broad End, Elsworth, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB23 4JD
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Telephone number	07951 532738
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E-mail	
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Registered person	Elsworth Pre-School
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Full day care
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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?

Elsworth Pre-School first opened in 1976. It is operated as a registered charity run by a voluntary committee. It is located in a mobile building in the grounds of Elsworth Church of England Primary School.

There are currently 28 children from two to four years of age on roll. This includes 26 children who are eligible for nursery education funding. Children are normally accepted in the term in which they are three-years-old and attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:05 until 11:45, Monday to Friday with an optional lunch club available on some days until 14:00.

There are five part-time members of staff working with the children. All have appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children competently serve themselves at snack time, selecting from a wide variety of fresh fruits which are attractively presented to encourage them to try new tastes. Children thoroughly enjoy the social aspect as they discuss their choices with their peers and sit round the table together. Food and water are available throughout the session so children can continue their activities and eat and drink according to their individual needs. Their independence is promoted exceptionally well as they help clear away and wash up used cups and plates once they have finished. Children demonstrate a very good understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene as they wash their hands independently after using the toilet and before eating.

Clear and detailed information is gathered from parents and carers about medical needs and allergies to ensure children are safe and well cared for. Very effective systems are in place for the recording of accidents and medication and these are shared with parents, so they are fully informed about their children's health and well-being. All practitioners hold current first aid certificates so children can receive a high standard of care in the event of minor accidents.

Children participate in an excellent range of fun activities that helps them develop their physical skills. They move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments and relish fresh air and exercise regardless of the weather. Appropriate clothing keeps them warm and cosy on cold winter days and they show their independence very well as they put on outdoor shoes and do up their coats. Wheeled toys, such as bikes, trikes and scooters help children develop their coordination and they learn to manoeuvre expertly around obstacles. Balls and hoops develop throwing and rolling, whilst inventive games, for instance, the 'colour game' mean children stay active and learn their colours at the same time. Resources including play dough help children develop the small muscle control that contributes to their pre-writing abilities along with tools such as scissors, brushes, pencils and cutters.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children access equipment and activities independently to follow their own interests throughout the session. The environment is well prepared for children's arrival with an exceptionally wide range of activities, which promotes children's enthusiasm and excitement. Resources have been carefully selected to support children's play appropriately and are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure safety and hygiene are maintained. An extremely wide selection is freely accessible to the children who help themselves with confidence and enthusiasm. Children's safety is enhanced by excellent security procedures that prevent them from leaving the premises unaccompanied and protect them from unauthorised adults. Practitioners are constantly vigilant in their supervision of children to ensure their safety.

Children and staff regularly practise the emergency escape plan, which means they all know what to do in an emergency and are familiar with the routine. Daily risk assessments are implemented rigorously so children play in a safe and secure environment. A wide range of appropriate written policies and procedures are in place that further promote children's safety including procedures for outings and what to do if a child is lost. Children are protected and kept safe from harm as practitioners understand their role in child protection. Regular training

means they all know how to implement the comprehensive procedures, which follow guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school; they arrive eager to play, separate easily from their parents and carers and settle readily into their activities. They play happily together and are developing positive relationships with one another, which contribute to their sense of belonging. Children confidently offer their comments and ideas, which practitioners treat with respect and this develops their self-esteem. Children benefit from the warm interaction with practitioners and they have formed close relationships with them, which helps the children to settle well and feel secure in their care.

Children benefit from a rich learning environment where they make decisions about what they want to do. The outdoor area is available throughout the session so children move around freely, playing indoors and out as they wish. Staff deploy themselves well, ensuring children are supported in their play. Children enjoy an excellent range of well-planned activities and confidently select additional resources to support their play and learning from low-level storage. This enables them to explore their own interests and develop their ideas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from practitioners' sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and their ability to plan and provide activities that contribute to children's progress. Key workers monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals so they can build on what children already know. This helps them plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. Information is collected from parents and carers so what children can do at home is included in the assessments. This ensures children have their development needs met very well and as a result children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children speak confidently and clearly in groups, sharing their knowledge with others and talking about what they know. Children's early writing skills are developing well as they use marks readily to represent their ideas. They understand that print carries meaning and they attempt to write for different purposes. For example, they make marks on their art and craft work and show adults how they represent their name. Children express their imagination in role play as they re-enact familiar scenarios, such as using a mobile phone to have a conversation with their mummy at home, or with another adult in pre-school. Although children have many opportunities to express their imaginations in art and crafts, some of the material displayed shows adult-directed work, using pre-cut shapes and templates; this inhibits children's creativity and gives them mixed messages about what adults value.

Children's behaviour is good and they take turns readily sharing their resources and games with others. They are developing good listening skills as they competently follow simple instructions to carry out small tasks, such as tidying away the toys at the end of the session. Children are very independent and the range of stimulating activities enables them to take an active part in their own learning. They demonstrate pride in their work and excitedly share it with others announcing 'I did sticking pictures', or 'I built a model'. In addition, children readily praise each other's efforts saying 'well done'. Children use mathematical language to describe capacity and they competently use a programmable toy that helps them count and identify numbers. They

problem solve well, finding out how to manoeuvre resources safely and finding out which resource boxes fit on the shelf.

Children have good opportunities to develop their technology skills as they competently use the computer and a range of appropriate programmes. They explore their local environment to find out about bugs and mini-beasts. They learn about growth, change and the seasons as they plant bulbs and seeds and observe what happens next. Children have their own digital camera, which they use with enthusiasm to record their achievements. Photographs are available on the computer or printed out to be displayed, which enhances children's self-esteem as well as providing a delightful record of their time in pre-school. A variety of visitors help children learn about the wider world, such as the veterinary surgeon, the local 'Molly dancers' and the 'snake man'.

Children clearly love singing and making music, they know all the words to '10 green bottles' and happily speculate about how many might be left once one has fallen. They enjoy playing musical instruments, mark time with claves or bells and welcome the opportunity to show their parents and carers what they know as they join together at the end of the morning to sing well-known nursery rhymes and songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. Parents receive information about the setting's activities so that they know about their children's day. Children's records are available at any time and parents meet regularly with practitioners, which means they are well informed about how children are progressing. In addition, regular newsletters tell parents about topics, themes and events so they have an opportunity to contribute. Practitioners have recently begun to provide parents with an 'activities at home' sheet so parents and carers can take an active part in children's learning at pre-school if they wish to do so.

Children's behaviour is good. They interact confidently with adults and their peers, learning to consider the needs of others and to work together co-operatively. Practitioners set clear boundaries, which help children learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour, for example, learning to negotiate their own sharing. All children have many opportunities to learn about themselves and each other as, for instance, they examine their faces in the mirror to compare eye and hair colour. Children have opportunities to learn about the wider world and have access to a satisfactory range of resources that show positive images of diversity. Practitioners use parents' knowledge of their own cultures and backgrounds to help children understand about diversity, for example, by inviting contributions to festivals such as Chinese New Year or Independence Day; this makes learning relevant for children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from good settling-in procedures that are based around their individual needs and therefore help to support children in the transition between home and the setting. Parents receive information about the setting through notice boards and newsletters and have daily opportunities to discuss their child informally with key workers. This helps children develop confidence and ensures their individual needs continue to be met. All documentation is in place to gather information effectively from parents and carers, including necessary consents, such as permission to go on outings or consent to seek emergency care. Policies and procedures are shared with parents so that they know about the expectation of children's care and learning.

Appropriate systems are in place to welcome children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Key workers work with parents and other professionals to support children, as a result those who have additional needs play a full and active role in the life of the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a welcoming and attractive environment where they can move around safely and independently. They are happy and content because practitioners have established warm and caring relationships with them. Practitioners work well together as a team, and enthusiastically create a learning environment that stimulates and interests all children. Policies, records and procedures are clear and comprehensive, underpinning the good practice and therefore promoting positive outcomes for children.

Effective recruitment procedures ensure that practitioners have experience and the necessary qualifications to carry out their role and all practitioners are rigorously vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The induction procedure ensures that all members of the team are secure in their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. Volunteers who work in the setting have clear guidance that helps keep children safe, such as not taking children to the toilet. Practitioners demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of how children learn and attend any necessary training, such as first aid, child protection and qualifications training in order to promote children's health, safety and welfare.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. The leader monitors the quality of the nursery education, which ensures that children continue to benefit from good quality provision. All practitioners demonstrate a real commitment to continuous improvement and have embraced significant changes in practice with dedication and enthusiasm, such as extending the free-flow play sessions and introducing the snack bar. They strive constantly to improve and work together to decide on areas for improvement. This is reflected in their detailed self-evaluation, which is constantly updated using information from parents, committee and practitioners to show what they have achieved. Practitioners ensure that all parents have regular opportunities to discuss how their child is progressing through parents' meetings and good written information. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to develop staff knowledge of child protection and ensure the policy for lost and uncollected children is complete. Since then staff have all attended training on child protection, including a recent update on safeguarding children. Policies and procedures have been updated to reflect guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The policy on lost and uncollected children has been appropriately revised since the last inspection. Both improvements contribute to children's safety.

For the nursery education inspection the setting was asked to continue to increase parents' opportunities to contribute to children's records. The leader and key workers continue to develop ways to enable parents to contribute to the assessments of children's learning. Parents and carers are invited to comment both verbally and in writing on their children's achievements so practitioners can plan effectively for children's next steps.

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the nursery education section below.

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 children's opportunities to initiate their own creative experiences, where emphasis is on the process and not the end product (also applies to care).

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