

St. Bertelines Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303483
Inspection date	25 January 2008
Inspector	Sylvia Cornock
Setting Address	St. Bertelines Primary School, Norton Lane, Norton, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 6QN
Telephone number	01928 719847
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Registered person	The Governing Body of St. Bertelines Primary 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Berteline's Pre-school is managed by the governing body of the Primary School. It opened in 1988 and operates from a classroom and has the use of other areas within the school. It is situated in Norton, Runcorn. A maximum of 14 children aged from three to five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 and 13.00 to 15.30 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 38 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these, 36 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are currently no children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, three staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member is currently undertaking a relevant child care qualification.

The setting receives support from a local authority teacher and the Foundation Stage teacher within the school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very healthy and hygienic environment. Staff employ thorough routines and procedures to ensure all areas are clean and hygienically maintained at all times, ensuring children are kept healthy. Children understand the need to wash their hands after certain activities, for example, visiting the toilet or after craft activities, which is evidenced as they ask to, and undertake these tasks without prompting. Children learn about keeping themselves healthy as they engage in physical activities and the impact this has on their bodies. A detailed sick child policy and procedure ensures parents and carers are kept fully aware of the group's responsibilities and that children are cared for sensitively and free from infection. Robust documentation is kept in respect of accidents and medication administered, with all staff holding a recognised first aid certificate, ensuring any accidents are dealt with competently.

Highly effective hygiene routines and procedures are employed by adults when preparing snacks. Children learn the importance of healthy eating and have the opportunity to make their own healthy snack on occasions, such as, making soup to accompany the story 'Stone soup', using a variety of vegetables. They talk about what food is healthy as they enjoy their snacks of cereals or fruit, which is provided daily. Children independently access drinking water regularly throughout the session which is freely available, further promoting children's very good health and overall development.

Children's physical development is extremely well provided for. They have daily access to an extensive range of physical play activities. The superb indoor and outdoor play space enables children to express themselves and their physical skills exceedingly well. Staff make excellent use of the school hall to provide a vast range of indoor physical activities which further develop children's physical capabilities. Children competently climb, balance, travel over, under and through when using the outdoor and indoor equipment and as they skilfully change speed and direction during music and movement time. Children develop confidence when using the variety of equipment offered. Staff are able to skilfully balance the supervision of children and equipment with the need to allow children to take risks and develop skills such as climbing and using balancing equipment. Children develop competent small physical skills through access to an extensive range of equipment and activities. They competently use scissors, a computer keyboard and mouse, a variety of craft materials when being creative, writing materials and join together pieces when using the wide variety of construction equipment and jigsaws with dexterity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a dynamic and welcoming, secure indoor and outdoor environment. They are eager to attend and relish their time in the vibrant and safe setting. Children are cared for in a highly innovative planned and organised environment which is conducive to their very good learning and development. The playroom is well set out and prepared prior to the children's arrival, offering them access to excellent activities and opportunities which are supported by an extensive range of resources and equipment. A parent's notice board with detailed

information, colourful posters and children's work displayed creates a welcoming atmosphere. Children benefit from a good use of the available space within the pre-school and room and other areas used indoors which is arranged effectively to provide them with good levels of challenge, appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Children have access to an extensive range of toys and equipment on a daily basis and which is continually built upon. This wide range of resources supports an excellent programme of themes and activities. Equipment is of a very high standard and checked regularly for safety and hygiene, ensuring children are safe at all times. Children are independent as they make choices and self select toys and equipment from those on offer.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are extremely vigilant and assess possible risks to reduce potential hazards. Staff have an excellent understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits, and how to involve children effectively in organising their environment. This allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm. Regular evacuations of the premises are practised to ensure children know the procedure to follow in an emergency.

Children are cared for within a safe environment as staff employ rigorous safety policies and procedures ensuring children's safety at all times. Staff are extremely diligent in their care of children and the provision of a safe environment through the use of suitable safety equipment, high staff ratios and supervision. Staff hold regular meetings to raise or discuss any issues or concerns. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussion with staff, for example, about the importance of not running indoors or using toys and equipment safely.

Children's welfare is given a high priority because staff have a first class understanding and awareness of the procedures to be followed regarding child protection. Staff are very clear about their role within this area and there is an identified member of staff with responsibility for child protection issues. This staff member along with several other staff has undertaken child protection training. Children are safe at all times as a result of comprehensive and detailed written policies and procedures which are known to staff. These policies and procedures are accessible to staff, parents and carers at all times. Staff very clearly understand their responsibility in maintaining a safe environment for all children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children arrive excited and ready to participate in the excellent activities and experiences which await them. Children's ability to relate to others is quite striking; not only do they relate well to adults, but they have developed very good relationships with each other. This is evident as they communicate well with each other, share and take turns. Children enjoy reading for pleasure with enthusiasm in the comfortable book area, where books are of superb quality and quantity captivating their interest. They are happy and contented and are extremely confident and self-assured.

Those who are new to the pre-school are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs. The children make excellent progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children benefit greatly from the planning of activities that are specifically geared to enable them to become fully involved and engrossed in an exciting range of highly innovative activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Children are captivated and greatly inspired by an extensive range of stimulating, relevant activities related to their needs. They access a very broad range of high quality resources, which supports children across all areas of learning. Staff consistently make excellent use of their time and resources to support children's learning. Teaching highly motivates the children who are eager to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences.

The setting has developed a highly comprehensive and robust system to track both the delivery and receipt of the curriculum. Assessments of children's achievements is rigorous and securely linked to the stepping stones, resulting in children who make very rapid progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning, given their capability and starting points. Staff immediately find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. A flexible approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff are perceptive of children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and developing language skills.

Children experience a language rich environment where they develop very good speaking and listening skills. Children know how books 'work' and enjoy reading in the excellent well stocked book area. They successfully recognise letters of the alphabet and volunteer to share their knowledge with their friends when looking at the alphabet posters. Children's concentration when listening to the story is outstanding as they get grossly involved and show a great sense of interest. Note pads and pencils are freely used in role play, helping children understand that words and print have meaning. Children demonstrate a thorough understanding of number and shape recognition. When using the computer children listen to instruction and confidently select the correct number or picture and place on required article. They confidently count the number of children and adults present and recite which is the higher number. They use and recognise numbers through a range of purposeful songs, stories and activities. They have a very good understanding of counting in French and listen to instruction when they are individually asked to 'sit down' in French.

Many good opportunities to make music are enjoyed by children. They enjoy experimenting with sound, and use the musical instruments with great enthusiasm; they dance, march and do actions as they listen with interest to the instruction on the tape. They have a growing appreciation of different types of music as they enjoy listening to a local orchestra who visits the school. This gives them another dimension to the art of music.

Children enjoy meeting people from the community as they visit the library and select books to take home. They show interest as people who visit them at pre-school talk to them about their lives; these include the police, fire person, dentist and theatre group. These experiences help children understand diversity, people who help us and who provides entertainment for the community.

Children are inquisitive, fascinated by how things work, such as how certain objects float and others sink and how butter melts when warm and used in baking sessions. They show skill and concentration as they use a wide variety of art and craft materials to contribute to the excellent wall displays, giving them the opportunity to revisit their artistic designs. Children explore a wealth of natural items from leaves and trees, to examining the hedgerows for insects as they

take walks in the local woods. They plant flowers and seeds and tend to them enabling them to observe growth. Children's sense of discovery is exceptionally well supported.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's equality of opportunity is given a very high priority and is very well addressed. All children are included in all the activities provided, their individual needs and circumstances are well known and provided for by staff. All children are welcomed and play a full part in the setting because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children have access to a rich and varied range of resources, play opportunities and activities which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. They have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, visitors to the setting and outings to local places of interest. Staff work very effectively with parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure that children who have learning difficulties and disabilities are appropriately cared for and given support to enable them to participate fully in all activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Their very good behaviour is a direct result of highly effective staff interaction and involvement with children in their activities. Children receive lots of positive praise and encouragement for their efforts, attempts and achievements, aiding the development of their self confidence and self-esteem. Staff are excellent role models, showing respect and consideration for children, each other, parents and carers. Children are extremely polite, well mannered and show care and concern for each another. A very positive behaviour management strategy encourages children to be polite, have respect for oneself and others and the environment.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children's well-being and development is significantly enhanced by the excellent partnership with parents and carers. Parents and carers have access to and receive plenty of very good information about the setting and what it has to offer in terms of care and education. They also have access to detailed information on themes, along with access to long, medium and short term plans and information on the educational provision. Staff make excellent use of the entrance area making this welcome to children, their parents and carers. Staff report excellent support from parents and carers as they support their children in reading their library books which they take home to share with their parents and carers. Those parents and carers spoken to were very positive and supportive of the provision and what it offers their children. This highly effective communication between parents, carers and staff helps to promote children's learning and progress towards the early learning goals along with their overall development and well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Children's care is significantly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation and the outstanding leadership and management of the setting. The manager's clear sighted educational vision is founded in an in-depth understanding of the needs of young children. The commitment and overall ethos of the setting promotes an inclusive environment in which every child matters. Regular staff meetings and the inclusion in all aspects of the school ensure an excellent transition for all children. The very good staff training effectively contributes towards the professional

development of the staff. There are high staffing levels in place, which contributes significantly to children's care and development. Comprehensive staff induction and staff information folders are available to all new and existing staff.

All legally required policies and procedures are individual to the setting, robust and fully support the expert practice of knowledgeable and highly skilled staff. The premises are well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is organised to provide children with realistic and challenging play opportunities. Parents are valued and the excellent systems in place to share information contribute to the children's confidence and well-being.

All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and education. The high quality of the provision means that children thrive and make very rapid progress.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last child care inspection the provider was asked to ensure children wash their hands before snack time and that drinking water is available at all times. All children wash their hands in the wash hand basin in the pre-school room and staff ensure that drinking water is freely available for children to help themselves. They were also asked to ensure that children's time of arrival and departure is recorded and Ofsted's full details are included in the complaints procedure. Staff ensure that if a child arrives late or departs early this information is recorded in the daily register and the policy document contains Ofsted's details. These measures enhance children's health and safety.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to consider encouraging the children to access books freely and provide children with mark-making material in the role-play area. The book area is freely available for children to select a book of their choice and staff ensure there are a variety of mark-making materials freely available throughout the various learning areas for children to access. They were also asked to ensure that parent's contribution of their child's assessment is recorded and that children's files are freely accessible. Parents are proactive in contributing to their child's assessment, with the staff recording this information on the child's individual profiles which are easily accessible and available. The introduction of these measures support children's learning and progress and contribute to their development.

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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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