

# Beck Community Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	317474
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Andrea, Marie Paulson
<b>Setting Address</b>	Beck Community Centre, Esthwaite Avenue, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7NZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 734 897
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<b>Registered person</b>	Beck Community Pre-School Group
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Beck Community Pre-School Group opened in 1996. It operates from two rooms in Beck Community Centre in Kendal and serves the local neighbourhood in south Kendal.

There are currently 38 children from two to four years on roll including eight funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are no children with learning difficulties or disabilities, or who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens each week during school term-time on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 09.15 until 11.45.

Three staff and two parent helpers work with the children throughout the week. All staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification level 3.

The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff work closely with parents to promote children's health well by sharing and recording individual health and dietary needs. Children enjoy varied nutritious snacks which include apples, melon, toast and a choice of water or milk. Staff ensure that children have enough to eat so that they are well nourished. Children help themselves to individual bottles during the session and staff take care to remind children in case they are thirsty. Snack times are organised with children in large groups who wait a substantial amount of time to all receive their food. The interaction between children and staff is limited so that some children become restless.

Children rest and are active according to how they feel throughout the session. They learn how to keep themselves healthy as they follow effective hygiene practices, such as washing their hands ready for snack time. Children know to put tissues in the bin and learn about good hygiene when play areas are kept clean as they tidy up and tables are wiped. They are familiar with the toilet routine and are encouraged to be independent, with support when needed. However, the privacy of all children is not maintained at all times.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities both indoors and outside. They develop good movement skills as they run, climb and balance with the outdoor equipment. Children ride on bikes and play with balls and hoops so that they learn to negotiate space well. They have much freedom of movement indoors between the adjoining play areas and move around to music tapes and action songs. Their fine movement skills and coordination are developed well as they use crayons, scissors, paintbrushes, jigsaws and work out how to stick small pieces of material within the 'bear' outline. Children develop new skills as they try to walk on stilts and practise ball skills.

Children learn to keep themselves warm by wearing coats when outside. However, there is limited encouragement to dress themselves in order to promote growing independence. Children's good health is supported through regular staff training, so that each child receives individual care. The required records and parental consents help to ensure that children receive appropriate care.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The pre-school provides a bright, warm environment in which children are well settled. The premises are well maintained and checked regularly to ensure good safety levels. Staff have a good level of awareness and are responsible for daily checks of the rooms before children arrive, which is of particular value as the premises are multi-use. A safe routine for the collection of children is very effective where staff ensure that children leave only with authorised adults. The premises are secure both indoors and outside.

Resources in the playroom are arranged in a way that enables children to access them very easily and move around safely and confidently. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they sit properly, take care not to step on fingers during circle time and know that wet weather can make the ground 'slippy'. The emergency evacuation is practised regularly so that children are familiar with the procedure. Staff are vigilant as they make sure the porridge is not too hot to eat safely. The outdoor area is fully enclosed and has safety surfacing.

Regular training ensures that staff have current skills in first aid. The required records are maintained and parental consents obtained to further keep children safe.

Staff have good knowledge of child protection issues and procedures, backed up by thorough policies covering all aspects. Children are therefore well safeguarded.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children choose freely from a range of interesting resources which is easily accessible to them and is effective in developing their independence, confidence and self-esteem. They are eager to join in with activities and their ideas and work receive positive responses from staff, so they feel valued. Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and actively participate in the many activities available, such as outdoor play, role play, craft and making music.

Children develop good relationships as they play with each other and with staff, who show a high level of interest in them as individuals. They concentrate well and feel a sense of achievement as they finish bear pictures, develop cutting out skills and work the computer mouse with increasing skill. Staff use their knowledge and observations well so that the needs of each child are met.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff plan activities which are linked to all the areas of learning. They work closely to share observations which are used to assess children's learning so that each child progresses towards the early learning goals. Children access all the play areas throughout the session. Staff know the children well as individuals and interact closely with them to offer support when needed and to encourage their participation. Activities are evaluated to assess their effectiveness in promoting learning outcomes. Each child has individual progress records which are maintained through a key worker system. Staff meet regularly to share observations and plan for individual support where needed.

Staff often use effective questioning to promote children's thought processes, for instance, as they are asked to describe how different materials feel, such as 'soft' or 'furry'. Children explore shells and are asked to describe the shape, colour, texture and sounds they can hear, reminding them of the seashore. Staff have some good ideas for stimulating activities but learning outcomes are, at times, limited by the way they are implemented. Examples include insufficient opportunity to explore the memory tray and limited visual aids used to reinforce colour recognition. Children are allowed to go at their own pace and finish activities, which gives them a sense of achievement.

Children have many opportunities to develop communication skills as they play together, discuss the weather and share resources. There is much conversation between adults and children to promote their vocabulary and self-expression well. Children are encouraged to discuss feelings with 'sad bear' and a display of 'happy faces' to reinforce communication skills. They have ready access to books and look at them in small groups and by themselves. Children enjoy nursery rhymes and action songs so are becoming familiar with word patterns. They are beginning to recognise their names through self-registration and on their work. However, there are limited opportunities to recognise familiar words, such as through labelling, and to explore letters and sounds regularly. Children listen well as staff engage their interest through expressive story telling, and are encouraged to re-tell the story to reinforce their ability to recall.

Children have several spontaneous opportunities to practise counting, such as the number of children when lining up and during action songs. They learn to link counting with the number symbols through activities and resources on the number table. However, there are fewer opportunities to develop calculating skills, such as basic adding and subtracting. Children learn to recognise shapes through activities, but opportunities to reinforce learning by identifying shapes in their environment are not regular enough. Children learn about different volumes and weights as they use varied containers in the sand tray. They use mathematical language as they compare the sizes of the bears as part of the topic. Children explore patterns and lines as they play with the foam.

Children have several opportunities to learn about living things, including nature walks and exploring the shells. They explore the weather theme when they observe and share ideas, which are then linked to creative activities and a weather chart. Children's information technology skills are well promoted as they become increasingly skilful in using the computer mouse and following programs. They learn to play the music discs, use shop tills and activate sounds by stepping on the mat. Children have many opportunities to use tools and to build models through craft activities and construction equipment. They become familiar with the world around them through strong community links, including visits from a nurse and dental hygienist.

Children move around confidently and with increasing control during physical play indoors and outdoors. They enjoy music through action songs, music tapes and by making sounds with musical instruments. Children sometimes dance spontaneously to the music. They enjoy a reasonable range of interesting resources and textured materials to enhance their creative experiences and stimulate their imagination.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children learn about the wider world through related resources and topics, such as Chinese New Year, when they take part in activities. They learn about their own community as they go on outings to the park farm and have visits from local people who help in the community. Children follow this up with making scrapbooks which include photographs of the visits.

All children have the same access to all the resources so that each child fully participates. Staff have the skills and commitment to ensure that children with learning difficulties and disabilities take an active part. Children are well behaved and learn to respond positively to consistent ground rules and appropriate explanations which reinforce good behaviour. They feel valued and build a high level of trust with staff who act as good role models. Staff remain calm, friendly and affectionate with children. They respond sensitively to situations so that children are not anxious, for instance, over spilt water.

Children learn responsible behaviour as they tidy up after themselves and take the pre-school cuddly toy home to look after it. They show initiative as they choose activities. Children develop self-esteem as they know they are valued through much praise. They are proud to show their drawings and the 'hello' song is sung to each individual child. Children enjoy each other's company and work well together as they carry a floor mat to put it away. They are, therefore, learning to make positive relationships.

Children respond well to effective behaviour management techniques as staff clap in rhythm to attract attention and children know to line up before going outside. They take turns at the computer and with outdoor trikes and show initiative as they choose resources and activities.

Children are encouraged to develop good manners as they sing the 'thank you' song at snack times.

Partnership with parents and carers are good. Staff and parents work closely as part of a good working relationship in the care of children. Individual details and consents are discussed and then recorded. Parents are welcomed into the pre-school where they talk informally with staff about the activities of the day, any significant events and their progress. Strong links include parents on the committee and as parent helpers in the group, who make a significant contribution to the running of the provision.

The sharing of information about children's progress in nursery education is not regular enough to sufficiently promote continuity of children's learning between home and the pre-school. The verbal information given also does not ensure that those parents unable to be there are regularly informed.

Useful information about the pre-school is displayed. The policies and procedures are accessible and comprehensive. Parents are positive about the care provided and speak of the commitment of the staff and how the children enjoy their time at the pre-school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff members are all professionally qualified and experienced in childcare which is a strength of the provision. They are supported well through a clear management structure and committee, which is actively involved in organising the provision effectively and in the recruitment of staff. Children are settled and confident as staff work closely to maintain familiar routines and ensure that sessions run smoothly. Staff are well motivated in preparing for sessions, including setting out and putting resources away at each session. They are committed to improvement as illustrated by the training completed; the manager and deputy are also studying for the foundation stage degree.

The sessions are generally well organised, with staff deployed in order to supervise children throughout the play areas. There are short spells of time, however, when the staffing ratio to supervise children is not maintained. The large room is organised into various play areas which the children can easily access. Children choose from role play, active play, table top activities, craft, sensory play and quiet play. The quiet area is next to the more active play, though, which limits the benefit for children. The continuous provision allows for some freedom of movement between indoors and outdoors, when appropriate. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The manager is qualified and experienced, with sound knowledge of the learning areas. She is clear about planning activities to cover all the areas of learning so that children's overall development is promoted. Staff work closely to implement the planning of nursery education, so achieving a generally satisfactory balance. Sound systems are in place to assess children's individual progress throughout their time at the provision, so supporting their satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. The manager meets regularly with staff who are all knowledgeable, skilled and committed to each child's development. Appraisals and training needs of staff are monitored to promote their professional development.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the previous inspection recommendations were made to extend resources to promote different cultures, to keep records confidential, to make water available and to make safe the stacked chairs and the electricity cupboard.

Since the last inspection, resources have been extended to sufficiently promote children's awareness of the wider world and children's details are kept in individual files so that confidentiality is maintained. Each child is able to help themselves to their individual bottles to make sure that they can have a drink at any time, and some chairs are now stacked to maximum of four while others are inaccessible behind a partition. Also, the electricity cupboard is locked so that children's safety is further protected.

### **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 satisfactory.

### **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):

- review snack times to create a more social occasion with more interaction and opportunity to encourage growing independence
- review the toileting procedure to ensure more privacy for all children
- encourage children's growing independence in dressing themselves
- ensure that staff are deployed to meet the staffing ratio for supervising children at all times
- review the provision of the quiet area to make it more conducive to quiet, undisturbed play and rest.

#### **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 regular sharing of children's progress and activities to further promote continuity of children's learning between home and pre-school
- further develop the implementation of learning opportunities to increase the level of interest and stimulation of activities
- provide more opportunities for children to recognise familiar words and explore letters and their sounds
- provide more opportunities for developing calculating skills such as simple addition and subtraction, and to recognise shapes in the environment.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)