

# Beacon Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100209
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Suzanne Joyce Stedman / Anne Daly
<b>Setting Address</b>	Beacontree Heath Methodist Church, The Broadway, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 1DZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 595 4611
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<b>Registered person</b>	Beacon Pre-School Playgroup
<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?

Beacon Pre-school Playgroup is committee run and has been established for over 25 years. It operates from three rooms within a church hall in Beacontree Heath, Essex. A maximum of 42 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children from two years six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the local and wider community. The setting supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs nine members of staff. Of these, six staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean and hygienic environment where staff follow good health and hygiene procedures to reduce the risk of cross-infection. All the required documentation to promote the children's good health is in place, such as the recording of allergies and medical conditions. Appropriate measures are taken when children become ill at nursery and there is a sickness exclusion policy to ensure that all children are protected from infection. Children learn about their own personal care and hygiene through well-planned topics and everyday practical experiences. They are aware that they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before having a snack to stop germs spreading.

Children are able to help themselves to a rolling snack bar with healthy snacks, such as apple, carrot, banana, milk or water promoting independence. Posters promoting healthy eating include vitamin A,B,C & D iron, zinc, calcium and magnesium, and are displayed in the snack area. The children are encouraged to try different foods. For example, at a food tasting exercise children record their preferences, building a picture of what food they most and least like.

Children's physical development is good. They have free access to the outside play area and come and go as they wish. There is also a foyer that is used for music and movement and they visit the local shops and post office. They enjoy action rhymes such as 'Head and shoulders knees and toes' and 'Monkeys jumping on the bed'. They notice the effects exercise has on their bodies. For example, that it makes them need a drink of water. Children are learning that exercise is fun which promotes a positive attitude to exercise.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly greeted when they arrive and quickly settle to their play. The environment is made attractive by the numerous pictures, posters and displays put out each day by the staff. Space is used well with partitioned areas for different types of play which enables children to engage in a wide range of activities. For example, the home area and free outside play area allows children to choose more physical play while others sit uninterrupted working at table top and floor play. Cosy cushions in the book area provide comfortable areas where children can rest and play quietly.

Children are able to play freely without risk of harm because effective risk assessments are in place and potential hazards are minimised, however, formal risk assessments are not currently carried out for outings. Staff monitor the security of the premises effectively to ensure children are not able to leave unescorted and unauthorised persons do not have access to the children. Children use a wide range of well-maintained toys and resources, and furniture and equipment is in good order. Overall, the range of resources and play materials are good.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe effectively. For example, they learn where it is and is not appropriate to run inside and wear reflective jackets on outings to the local shops. Children practise fire drills which are recorded. Children talk about other safety issues such as 'stranger danger' and enjoy visits from the police services. As a result, children have good opportunities to learn about safety.

Staff regularly discuss and update their knowledge regarding child protection issues, they use the local policy and they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding the children they care for. Consequently, children are fully protected from non-accidental harm.

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

The provision is good.

Children have a very busy and happy time at the pre-school and their all-round development is promoted well through the good range of well-planned activities and experiences. Staff make constructive observations of what the children already know and can do and use this information to plan activities to enable the children to take their next steps. Staff know the children well and there are good, trusting relationships between them.

Children's confidence is promoted as they work alongside caring and supportive staff. They concentrate well on activities because they are varied and interesting. For example, children enjoy making prints using Wellington boots and decorating chicks and Easter bunnies. The effective use of the home corner further promotes children's independence and decision making skills, and the book corner to relax and enjoy looking at books individually and listening to stories in small groups.

The younger children's developing language skills are extended through purposeful interaction with staff. Children discover the meaning of new words when staff introduce them to a wider vocabulary in everyday situations. All children enjoy singing rhymes, participating in action rhymes and listening to stories which further promotes their language development. Children's early mathematical skills are developed as they sort, order and classify their play materials.

Children have excellent use of the outside area with free access regardless of weather; they enjoy puddle splashing and using their umbrellas in damp weather. They are growing herbs and flowers in tubs and this further develops their learning and freedom of choice in activities on a larger scale.

Children enjoy their imaginative play and devise their own games and scenarios as they play in the home corner and with the small world equipment. A small group of children huddle around the doll's house, putting the dolls in different rooms in the houses and creating stories about what the dolls are doing. Children prepare and cook meals using play food, such as fajitas, spaghetti bolognese, rice bowls and sushi.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress towards the early learning goals. Most staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. Some staff are still developing their knowledge with effective support of more experienced staff and through external training. The written planning systems provide good support for all staff so that they are clear on what learning intentions can be derived from the adult planned activities and how these can be adapted to individual children's needs, however, they currently lack challenge for the more able children.

Children are taught in a variety of ways, such as large and small group work and one to one teaching. Key persons have a detailed knowledge of the children in their groups but all staff are able to respond effectively to all children. Staff support children well in planned and child-led

activities to further promote the children's understanding. The level of constructive communication is good and staff use open ended questions to make children think and to work out things themselves. Staff are interested in what the children say and do and they use positive methods to promote the children's good behaviour.

The indoor and outdoor learning environment is organised well with varied and well-planned, prepared and presented activities which promote the children's learning, decision making and independence skills. The outdoor play area is used freely and staff use spontaneous opportunities to extend the children's learning when outside.

Staff make regular observations of the children at play and these contribute to their good record of progress. These records are kept consistently to provide a clear picture of what the child is able to do in each area of their learning. Effective short term planning ensures the planned activities and experiences are relevant to the children's current level of understanding, however, further development with input from parents would enhance the planning.

Children enjoy what they do and sustain interest in a range of activities, which promote their understanding and learning. Children are motivated and concentrate well. They are confident speakers and express their ideas and views clearly. More able children easily recognise the sounds of letters and can name them. Children learn to recognise their names as they self-register at the beginning of the session with their first and surname, these name cards are also used at the free flow snack time and at the end of the session. Some of the more able children are beginning to form letters correctly and write their own name, and names of family and friends. Children enjoy sitting in small groups either with staff or by themselves looking at books. Children learn about the rhythm of words as they participate in singing and action rhymes, such as 'Head and shoulders knees and toes'.

Children are developing a good understanding of mathematical ideas and concepts. They recognise numbers and count in their everyday play. Children begin to recognise and name numerals as they talk about them and draw around them to help them feel the shape and how it is formed. Children explore capacity and quantity as they play in the sand and water trays, filling different sized containers and working out if they are full or empty. They compare size and different shapes when they work on topics. Children learn about simple addition and subtraction as they calculate how many more plates are needed at snack time and sing number rhymes, such as 'Ten Monkeys jumping on the bed'.

Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first-hand experiences. For example, they go to the local shops to purchase their snack and visit the local post office, developing their sense of the local community. They learn about time when they discuss the weather and talk about the days of the week and the changing seasons of the year. Children share their news from home, telling their friends and staff about their experiences and special events.

Children have good opportunities to use tools and simple equipment to increase their fine motor skills through the range of everyday activities they take part in. For example, cutting and rolling when playing with play dough. Children are developing some understanding of technology.

Children have opportunities to express their individual creativity through a range of art and construction activities. For example, they enjoy making prints with Wellington boots. Children have good opportunities to explore their senses as they taste different fruits and vegetables,

such as apples, banana, raspberries and carrots at snack time. They enjoy conversation about how the fruit and vegetables grow; more able children knew that apples and bananas grow on trees, carrots grow in the ground and raspberries grow on bushes.

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

The provision is good.

All children settle quickly into the pre-school life because there are excellent procedures to support them. The staff are extremely warm and caring. This helps children take the difficult step of separating from their families. Children develop a strong sense of belonging to the pre-school. They see their photographs displayed and look at these frequently, talking about themselves and their friends at pre-school. Children help to make the displays by selecting pictures, suggesting words and captions. This shows children that staff value their contributions and ideas. Children's individuality is also respected as they find their own names when they arrive. While staff encourage children to join in whole group sessions, staff show they respect the individual children's choices by letting them sit out and engage in their own play.

Children play and learn in an environment where staff promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children particularly well. Children develop an understanding of people's similarities and differences because they see positive images around them and play with toys and resources which reflect diversity. For example, they have daily access to puzzles, books, play figures, and posters and pictures displayed around the hall depicting differences of all kinds. Children are beginning to appreciate that there is a bigger world outside of their town and that other people have different customs and beliefs. They celebrate a range of festivals, such as Easter, Christmas, Diwali, St Patrick's Day and Chinese New year.

Good strategies are in place to promote the welfare and development of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties. There are named members of staff who co-ordinate the sharing of information to enable all staff to meet the individual needs of the children and plan for their ongoing progress. Practical steps are in place to support children's understanding of nursery expectations and routines.

Children's good behaviour is encouraged very effectively because they play and learn in a calm and well-organised environment created by the staff. Children are given lots of praise and encouragement for the things they do and achieve, which promotes their self-esteem and promotes positive attitudes to future challenges. Staff are good role models for behaviour because they treat adults and children with respect. Children are encouraged to think about how their behaviour affects themselves and others, which promotes their understanding of the consequences of their actions and decisions they make. Staff plan many activities and use everyday experiences to help children talk about their feelings, which helps children verbalise why they may feel sad, happy or excited. Children are learning right from wrong and treat each other and their environment with respect. They form good friendships and play amicably together. Children are polite, helpful and share their own experiences with each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's welfare is well promoted because staff work in partnership with parents to meet the needs of the children. There are systems in place to ensure that information is shared between staff, parents and carers. Children's needs are well met from their first day at pre-school because parents provide staff with information about their child's needs and routines at initial visits. Notice boards and tables ensure parents and carers have access to policies, procedures and

new information. Curriculum planning is displayed in the pre-school so that parents and carers know what their children are working towards and parents are made aware of the child's key worker. All parents spoken to during the inspection and those who completed questionnaires were very complimentary of the pre-school and the staff.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early years education is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the provision, including the educational programme; they are informed about children's progress and achievements verbally. Children benefit from these good relationships because they see their parents working closely with the staff. Parents are informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and how this promotes their child's learning in the pre-school nursery, however, some parents would like to have more involvement in this area. There are some systems in place to enable parents to contribute to their children's educational progress and to support their children's learning at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children are protected and their welfare is promoted because there are appropriate systems in place to ensure adults working with the children are suitable to do so. Recruitment and induction procedures are in place and ensure that all staff are aware of working practices in the pre-school. There is an ongoing system for staff appraisal which includes their future professional development plans. These measures promote staff and pre-school development and ultimately promote positive outcomes for all children.

The manager has many years experience working at the group and has attended numerous additional training courses to update her skills and knowledge. There is a management team who motivate and support the team of staff. The team are very confident in their working practices and work together well to organise the busy daily routines efficiently. Staff have a commitment to ongoing training to develop their knowledge and skills. They are proactive in implementing changes in the group where they see benefits for the children's care, learning and play. Children receive lots of individual care and attention because of the high staff to child ratios.

The operational plan outlines the aims of the group and how these will promote the children's safety, care and learning. Regular staff meetings ensure all staff have the opportunity to contribute to the pre-school working practices. The written policies and procedures underpin the working procedures. All the required documentation is maintained well to ensure the efficient day to day management of the provision, however, adjustments to the recording of complaints is to be reviewed.

Leadership and management of the funded nursery education is satisfactory. All staff are positive in their approach and work hard to achieve constant improvement and good results with the children. They are committed to the improvement of care and education for all children. The management team and staff regularly review the working practices in the pre-school and evaluate the impact on the children. This helps them identify areas for improvement which can be included in the development plan.

Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the group agreed to: develop opportunities for children to be able to access toys and equipment independently; develop practical ways to display children's work and posters around the hall; ensure hygiene procedures are in place when children wash their hands in the bathroom; ensure the operational plan includes how staff are deployed, management of staff and training; ensure the temperature of the hall is at an appropriate level; include in the Child Protection Policy procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff; record all complaints and concerns that are raised by parents, and continue to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of anti-discriminatory practice.

All the above recommendations have been addressed and implemented, therefore the children are cared for in a comfortable child-friendly setting where good hygiene practices are in place and staff policies and procedures enhance their care and protection.

## **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):

- formalise risk assessments for outings
- ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times this refers to complaints log.

### **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):

- review the planning cycle to ensure activities are adapted to challenge and support children to achieve their next steps of learning
- develop opportunities for parents and carers to participate in their children's records of assessment by making comments and sharing observations of their children's achievements at home.



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)