

Weston Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY364048
Inspection date	08 May 2008
Inspector	Janice Linsdell
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Registered person	Susan Robinson
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?

Weston Pre-school first opened in 1991, but re-registered in 2007 following a change of ownership. It is a privately owned and operates from designated rooms within Weston primary school in Runcorn. Children have use of the pre-school room, out of school club room, school hall and outdoor play area. A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It opens each weekday during term time from 09.00 to 11.30. Afternoon sessions are sometimes provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12.15 to 14.45.

There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll, of whom, 30 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The pre-school employs five members of staff including the manager. All staff hold appropriate qualifications in early years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff consistently implement good hygiene practices to keep the premises and equipment clean and tidy. Daily routines, hand washing signs and gentle reminders from staff help children to develop a good understanding of hygiene procedures. Posters are displayed to highlight childhood infections and exclusion periods, and the illness policy protects children from sickness and cross infection. Children learn to help themselves to tissues from the wall dispensers to keep their noses clean, but they are not provided with resources to wipe their hands and faces after eating food. Most of the staff are trained in first aid, which means children's accidents are dealt with effectively.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills in the outdoor courtyard, where various activities are provided, such as planting, drawing, sand and sound. The large climbing frame and slide enables children to challenge their strength, balance and coordination. Children enjoy playing skittles with staff and galloping around as they pretend to be horses. They show good coordination as they carefully climb up the ladder or balance on walking stilts.

Children are invited to have their snack at a time that suits them, which means snack time is relaxed, enjoyable and very well organised. Children's choice and independence is well promoted as they skilfully use the serving spoons to help themselves pasta, tuna or ham. They pour their own drinks of water or milk and enjoy eating yoghurt for desert. They also clear away dishes and put discarded items in the bin. At the end of the session, fresh fruit is available for children to enjoy on the way home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are spacious and well organised to promote a safe, inviting and stimulating environment for children. The main entrance is secure and an alarm system alerts staff to anyone opening the door leading into the main school. The courtyard is enclosed and laid with a safety surface to help keep children safe during outdoor play. Children are able to move around freely between the two playrooms as they take part in the wide variety of activities and access some good quality resources that are clean, safe and stored appropriately.

Staff implement good safety procedures as children arrive and depart. They supervise the children closely and carry out safety checks on all areas and equipment on a daily basis. Children have lots of fun playing and splashing in the water tray, but this sometimes causes the floor to become wet and slippery. Staff regularly mop the floor to keep it clean but not dry, and this poses a slip hazard.

Children learn to keep themselves safe because staff remind them about safety rules, such as not to run indoors in case they bump and hurt each other. They take part in fire drills and know they must wear hats during outdoor play to protect them from the sun. Children's welfare is well safeguarded because staff are vigilant and ensure children are collected by appropriate adults. They understand their role in protecting children from harm and have access to relevant information to help them deal with any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff show a genuine interest in the children and support their play and learning very well. There are some good systems in place to help children settle quickly into the pre-school. For example, staff complete the 'new starter information sheet' with parents to gain an understanding of children's needs. Also, pictures and photographs of the children are creatively displayed on the wall to help them become familiar with the daily routine and important times of the day, such as snack time. The two playrooms are used well to divide the children into age related groups. This enables staff to pitch activities, stories and circle time discussions appropriately according to the children's abilities.

Children are eager to involve themselves in the extensive range of play opportunities on offer. They enjoy looking at themselves in the mirror and using craft materials to re-create their image on the paper plate. They free-paint on the easel and manipulate the play dough to match shapes on the card. Children play imaginatively as they dress up as a pirate or a princess, and laugh as they have fun playing with the garage. Photographic evidence shows children enjoying organised trips to places of interest, for example, handling small animals at the farm or walking amongst the leaves in the forest.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are qualified and demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They organise the environment very well and offer a good variety of experiences to promote all areas of learning. The information sheets displayed in different areas remind staff how to promote and extend children's learning, and effective aids, such as puppets are used well to capture children's attention during circle time. Staff meet on a weekly basis to discuss observations of the children and plan activities that will help move them on in their learning, but there is little written evidence of how staff evaluate and plan the children's next steps. The stepping stones summary sheet enables staff to quickly identify any gaps in children's learning. Assessment records are used to record children's progress, but there are some inconsistencies in ensuring these are updated on a regular basis.

Children are making good progress across the six areas of learning. They are beginning to develop confidence and social skills, and the wooden face masks are used well to help children understand and express their feelings. Children are making positive relationships with their peers. They remind one another about the rules of the pre-school and they will let staff know when others are 'not being very nice'. Children are developing good communication skills as they speak confidently during circle time and listen to stories read by staff. They bring items from home that are linked to the 'letter of the week' and have opportunities to practice early writing skills both indoors and outside. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of mathematics as they play number games and sing songs using simple calculation. They learn to match various objects to the corresponding number on the 'learn to count' board and use pouring and measuring equipment during water play.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing well. They learn how to care for the flowers they plant in the pots and use the magnifying glasses to search for insects in the courtyard. They enjoy examining the tadpoles in the tank and learning about the lifecycle of frogs. A visit from the 'zoo lab' enables them to learn about different animals and the computer promotes their understanding of technology. Children develop fine motor skills when using small tools, such as hammers and pins. They have weekly opportunities to use large play

equipment in the school hall, where they can balance on beams and complete obstacle courses. Children express themselves creatively using various media, such as paint, shaving foam and cornflower. They play with musical instruments and use their imagination well as they dress up as construction workers and pretend to fix the playhouse roof.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff obtain relevant information about the children so that they can meet their individual needs and support them well. All children are welcome and included, and staff work closely with parents and others if any of the children need additional support. Children are developing a good understanding of diversity through planned activities, cultural celebrations and playing with various resources that help to raise their awareness of the wider world. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff are good role models in promoting positive behaviour because they treat children with respect and listen carefully to what they have to say. They consistently acknowledge children's efforts and provide positive comments to help children feel good about themselves. As a result, children learn to be polite, helpful and well behaved.

Partnership with parents and carers is good, and open and friendly relationships are evident between parents and staff. Parents receive a detailed information pack about the pre-school and how it operates, and the well presented wall displays inform parents about the six areas of learning. Staff provide a brief summary about the children's progress on an annual basis and there are some systems in place to encourage parental involvement in the children's learning. Parents express very positive comments about the staff and their care of the children, but some parents would like more feedback about their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All staff are suitably qualified, experienced and attend additional training to benefit the children's care. Effective systems are in place to ensure staff are suitable to care for the children. Some of the staff have worked in the pre-school for several years, which provides consistency for children and parents. Staff have clear roles within the group and work well together as a team so that outcomes for children are positively promoted. All required policies, procedures and records to support good practice and promote the children's health, safety and welfare are in place and well maintained.

Leadership and management is good. The manager works well with the staff to deliver an effective curriculum that promotes children's learning and development. She encourages ongoing training for staff and works directly with them to build confidence and develop practice. The team meet on a weekly basis to discuss the educational programme and the action plan in place identifies some areas for improvement. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- provide facilities for children to wipe their hands after eating their snack
- monitor the flooring around the water play area to prevent the risk of slipping.

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):

- formalise procedures for evaluating activities and planning for children's next steps in their learning, and make sure children's assessment records are updated on a more consistent basis
- continue to develop systems to seek and act upon parents views, and consider how they can become actively involved in their children's learning in meaningful ways.

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