



Belmont Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 127012
Inspection date 04 May 2006
Inspector Mary Van De Peer

Setting Address Scout Hut, Belmont Close, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 9DY

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Registered person Patricia Ann Burrill

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 satisfactory. 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?

Belmont Pre-School first opened in 1977 and operates from two rooms in a scout hut. It is situated in the village of Barming, near Maidstone, Kent. A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The Pre-School is open term time only, Monday to Friday 09.10 - 12.10 daily and 13.00 - 15.00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 51 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 38

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school can support of children with special educational needs, and also those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 10 staff. Including the provider, 7 hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff are working towards a qualification. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and also received support from the Local Authority.

The pre-school attained the Kent Kite Mark Accreditation in 2005.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through organised activities and routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snacks. The children are protected from infection because staff are competent in first aid and sick children do not attend. However, some hygiene practises need further reviewing. The required record-keeping procedures are in place. Most of the staff hold first aid certificates which are regularly updated.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy a cafeteria style snack and drink arrangement. They confidently choose when they want a drink and help themselves to either healthy fruit snacks or biscuits. All children are able to help themselves to a drink of water throughout the session. This helps ensure none remain thirsty. The staff take account of the wishes of parents. Children enjoy a good range of energetic physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They develop self confidence in their physical skills as they use an appropriate range of indoor and outdoor toys and equipment. Children are beginning to learn to listen to their bodies and are able to rest and be active according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The children play and move around freely within an organised, supervised environment. The staff carry out daily written risk assessments on the premises and the outdoor area prior to the children entering the building. Appropriate safety equipment is in place such as covers in electrical sockets. However, a full risk assessment is not always carried out on the kitchen area. Resources and equipment the children use are appropriate to their ages, safe, checked regularly for hygiene and cleaned when necessary. An emergency evacuation plan is displayed and the children practise it on a regular half term basis. The drills are assessed and recorded. Children are able to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

Children are protected by the group's selection of policies regarding child protection. Staff have a system in place to help ensure children are only collected by known and

appropriate adults. Emergency contact persons are recorded. There is a lost and uncollected child policy in place. Although a register is kept, it doesn't record arrival and departure times of children and adults. Staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. This helps ensure staff are able to recognise when a child is in danger and can act in the child's best interest.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children enjoy their time at each session. Children smile, laugh and interact well with staff. The environment provides children with opportunities to play together with suitable resources and activities. Their work is displayed, along with other colourful child-friendly posters. This helps to make the atmosphere homely, friendly and welcoming. Children settle well each morning.

There are many appropriate toys and equipment for the children to play with. They cover the appropriate areas of development, such as puzzles, imaginary play and construction. There is also a quiet area where the children can relax and read books. Local walks mean children are learning about nature. For most of the session, children are able to choose resources from what is made available. However, adult directed activities are introduced toward the end, providing children with less choice. There is a lack of accessible storage for children. This means that their independence is not consistently promoted. Good attention is given to children under three years. They are able to play with simpler, more suitable resources which help to challenge them and increase their skills and self esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff understand children's needs and provide a sufficient range of activities and experiences. They have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, a reasonable range of teaching methods and an adequate understanding of how young children learn and progress. The level of challenge is sufficient to interest most children in the activities and enable them to make satisfactory progress. Assessments and the use of information gained from it are satisfactory. Development records on individual children show how staff are observing children's skills and progress as well as identifying their next steps.

The activities and experiences satisfactorily cover the areas of learning and mostly meet the needs of individual children. However, teaching is not particularly innovative and has some minor weakness; for example, planned, adult-directed activities do not provide further challenge for the older children such as pre-cut shapes for the sticking activity. Staff talk to the children constantly and involve them in day to day discussion but opportunities to make children think are missed, as staff do not always use open ended questioning effectively. Staff provide a secure environment which reflects the background of the children and where they live. Staff are making satisfactory use of their time and resources to support children's learning. They are confident and friendly and show care and concern for others. They use conventions such as 'please' and 'thank you', for example, as they socialise at snack time. Children show

a sense of belonging as they play and learn together.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about equal opportunities and people with special needs through the extensive range of activities they participate in, for example, visits from different people giving talks about their own lives. Children also have access to a range of books and some toys showing positive images of equality. Children are beginning to understand that all people are different. The individual needs of all children who attend are well met. The setting has effective arrangements to care for children with special educational needs although none currently attend. Children behave well. They begin to understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and the age appropriate methods staff use to manage behaviour including explanation, distraction and time out. Staff encourage children to resolve their own differences which helps them learn to take turns and share. Their clear guidance is helping children begin to recognise the needs of others.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents of children receiving funding for nursery education feel they receive concise information about their children's progress, for example, through regular updates about their children's achievements. Curriculum plans are made available and they clearly relate to the early learning goals. The group displays information about the pre-school, including the Foundation Stage, for parents, on a notice board in the reception area. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The group displays their registration certificate. The provider ensures that the staff are suitable to work with the children through a reasonably robust recruitment and vetting procedure. Staff are regularly monitored and supervised. The group's organisational plan is constantly adjusted and reviewed to meet the needs of the children and staff for example, taking into account the Birth to three matters framework and 'unlocking outdoors' training information. The manager and deputy hold appropriate childcare qualifications and other members of staff are currently on training. A current paediatric first aid course certificate is held by more than one member of staff per session. Children's and staff's individual records are stored confidentially in a lockable filing cabinet. All Children Act Regulations are met. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. The manager has lots of experience, enthusiasm and commitment, which in turn motivates staff. She is continually looking for effective ways to develop and improve the pre-school in the areas of partnership with parents, staff appraisals and the foundation stage planning which subsequently improves the learning experiences for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider has followed the previous recommendations from the last inspection, to improve the setting.

Recommendation under care, states that there is a procedure in place for staff to follow should there be any allegations made against them. Although the manager of the setting has agreed outlines for a procedure, it has not yet been included in the full child protection policy. This means that children's welfare is not fully protected.

Recommendation under care, states that staff consult their local Environmental Health Department, for advice on the use of washing up bowls used by the children to clean their hands. The advice received from the local Environmental Health Department is unclear so staff continue to use the bowls for children to wash their hands in. The manager is now considering alternative methods so that children are not at increased risk from cross-infection.

Recommendation under care, states that children are not always provided with clear guidance and instructions throughout the organisation of the daily routine. The staff are now giving children clear messages in the play sessions. Children respond well.

Recommendation under care, states that confidentiality is maintained in the accident and incident recording books. These documents have now been updated and are confidentially maintained. However, accidents are now recorded on separate sheets which are not in a book format. Nonetheless, personal information about the children is now available for parents to view and sign, which helps with continuity of care.

Recommendation under care, states that staff look at ensuring the needs of all the children are met during whole group activities. Staff now endeavour to provide care and education for all age ranges of children attending. They make sure that there are suitable resources available. Planning includes the curriculum and Birth to three matters framework.

Recommendation under Nursery Education, states that staff look at improving children's choices in their play. Staff are now beginning to provide a range of suitable and appropriate toys and equipment to help improve children's learning through play. However, there are still missed opportunities to provide further choices and challenges in children's play throughout the session. Staff continue to review and improve this area for children.

Recommendation under Nursery Education, states that staff consider improving children's access to natural and living things. The staff have taken photographs, in the last 12 months, of children on local nature walks in all seasons. The children are enjoying picking up leaves and collecting little insects to look at on their return to the pre-school building. There are also several resources, for example building blocks, made from wood. Children are learning more about the natural world.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- ensure arrival and departure times of children and staff are recorded appropriately
- provide all children with more choices in play and resources

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):

- ensure older, more able children are being appropriately challenged
- ensure children's independence is consistently promoted and encouraged

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