

Walkern Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	149665
Inspection date	24/03/2010
Inspector	Gillian Walley
Setting address	C/O Walkern Primary School, Walkern, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG2 7NS
Telephone number	01438 861285
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Walkern Pre-school opened in 1991 and operates from a mobile classroom situated in the grounds of Walkern Primary School in Walkern, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 22 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The playgroup is open during school term time on each weekday morning from 8:55am until 11:45am and afternoons from 12:30pm until 3:00pm. All the children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some of whom receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school is able to support children with special educational needs and children who are learning English as an additional language. The pre-school employs five staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. One of the joint managers is working towards an Early Years degree. The pre-school works in close partnership with the adjoining primary school.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting is inclusive and able to make excellent provision so that all children including those who find learning more difficult are able to make outstanding progress and develop excellent attitudes to learning. The joint managers and their staff team review their procedures and the opportunities they provide for the children frequently and identify what can be improved. Consequently, the pre-school has an exemplary capacity to improve further.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- improving the outdoor provision by providing the children with opportunities to learn about how plants grow.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The joint managers provide outstanding leadership because they work very well together and share responsibilities. The staff team are very experienced and update their skills regularly, for example, in first aid, food hygiene, inclusion and in supporting children with speech delay. They have made many improvements since the last inspection report, for example, policies are now reviewed regularly and parents are now extremely informed about what their children are learning and what progress the children are making because parents' evenings are held regularly, information is displayed on the notice board about the topics the children are learning about and parents can see their children's learning journals at any time.

The managers take the highest care to ensure that the children are safe at all times and all staff are very vigilant. Doors are locked and visitors sign in. Before the start of sessions staff check the premises completely to make sure there is no risk of an accident. Before taking children off site, for example, to the village or to a nearby farm, the staff carry out a thorough risk assessment and take appropriate steps to keep the children safe. If a child is unwell or has an accident two members of staff complete a record and parents are asked to sign it so that they are fully informed. Parents are asked to give their permission before any medication is given to children. The staff can easily see details of children's allergies. The children practise fire drills occasionally, because their session times may not coincide with the primary school sessions, but the managers practise walking the children outside in a line regularly so that the children would know what to do in an emergency.

The pre-school staff have excellent relationships with parents who have every confidence in them to take the best care of their children and to support them well in the early stages of their education. They cannot think of anything which the staff could do to improve the pre-school. They find the staff extremely approachable and can easily talk to them at any time. They can see detailed information about every aspect of their child's learning and development and they like open days when they can come in and see how the pre-school runs, for example, Dad's Saturdays have been very popular, and sports day and the nativity play happen at weekends so that the whole family can easily attend. Parents like the huge range of activities available and feel their children make outstanding progress, for example, in their enthusiasm for starting to write. They are very involved in the children's learning, for example, they can comment about what the children are doing at home in the daily home-school book and the children's key workers can develop this learning, and they can read about what the children have been doing that day and ask them questions. This is especially helpful in assisting children to overcome their shyness. Parents appreciate the love of reading which their children develop through bringing a different library book home each day. The managers carry out questionnaires because they value parents' views, for example about the foods children eat at snack time.

The pre-school has excellent links with the primary school and the children get to know the school well before they transfer because they make visits, share play times and use the hall for Physical Education (PE) lessons. The staff also work very closely with the reception teachers at other local schools. They benefit greatly from the support from the local authority and they have strong links with other agencies so that they can provide the best help for children who find learning difficult, and for their parents, so that these children make outstanding progress.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The children make excellent progress because the staff care for them to a very high degree and encourage them to develop new skills. They reward them for their exemplary behaviour and helpfulness; they speak positively to them and are

outstanding role models. Consequently, children are polite and considerate towards one another, and they develop very good attitudes to learning. They play extremely well together and share their toys considerately, they listen carefully and they are confident to talk to visitors about their learning. They develop high self-esteem because adults encourage them to solve problems and display their paintings and collages on the classroom walls. Children choose what they want to play with from a very wide range of high quality resources which are easy to find and are well labelled. Neither the classroom nor the outdoor area are spacious but the staff make outstanding use of available space and also use the school field and woodland area very well to provide children with exciting activities. The children develop an outstanding understanding of the world around them, for example, they learned about light and darkness by making shadow puppets, and they explored sound by making and playing their own instruments, although they do not have the opportunity to learn about plants outdoors. The children are encouraged to continue their learning at home, and to involve their families, for example, they were making treasure boxes for a treasure hunt in the holidays which would consolidate their understanding of colours and textures. The children are strongly encouraged to take responsibility, for example, as monitors, and to become more independent, for example, by pouring their own drinks, choosing when to have their snacks, finding their own boots and by clearing away after snack time. They develop many new skills, for example, using scissors for creative tasks, and outdoors they make great progress in their physical development by playing on slides and a trampoline, climbing and riding on vehicles. They make words using magnetic letters and they develop their imagination by dressing up in excellent role play areas indoors and outside. The children learn about the importance of healthy eating at snack times, and they understand how to avoid the risk of infection because they wash their hands before they eat and after playing outdoors. They learn about a wide range of cultures and the ways different people celebrate festivals by tasting foods, looking at pictures and having visitors to talk to them. The children understand the importance of helping other people, for example they collect money for a local hospice. The adults observe the children's learning extremely closely and record this so that they can easily see precisely what steps each child needs to take next to make even more progress. They plan activities which meet the children's needs well, incorporating what most interests them. The staff monitor progress closely to identify areas where some children do less well and then adapt activities, for example they provide boys with excellent opportunities to write about what inspires them and they use puppets to encourage children to retell familiar stories. The adults question the children very well and this encourages them to explain what they understand and what more they can find out.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

