



## **Elgin Pre-School**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135034
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 February 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Helen Maria Steven
<b>Setting Address</b>	Elgin Community Centre, Harrow Road, London, W9 3RS
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Committee of Elgin Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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 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?

The Elgin pre-school is a community playgroup which is situated in the London Borough of Westminster.

The setting is open Monday to Friday school terms only. Sessions run from 09:30 to 12:00, 12:45 to 15:15 and 09:30 to 15:15.

Children have access to two rooms and adjacent children's toilets on the first floor above a community centre. There is a paved securely fenced play area near the setting which is used daily for outdoor play.

There are currently 22 children on roll of which 15 receive nursery education funding. The group support children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

There are 3 members of staff working directly with the children, of which at least 50% are qualified. There is also a full time volunteer and a parent rota in place. Student placements are offered. The group receive support from the Preschool Learning Alliance (PLSA), the Local Authority and have good links with other local agencies.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is generally promoted well as practitioners implement effective hygiene procedures to minimise the risk of cross infection across the setting, for example with good nappy changing practices. However the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA), policy guidance on health and safety adopted by the setting, is not matched by practice when, for example, the children dry their hands on a shared towel. Staff hold relevant first aid training and have systems to record administration of medicines and accidents, however some records lack required detail, for example information on how the accidents occur.

Children learn about healthy eating through topics and discussions at snack times. They are able to make choices from a selection of fruits and crackers at snack times. Water is offered at snack and meal times, but is not freely available for the children to access when they identify they are thirsty at other times during the day. Parents provide children's lunches and practitioners encourage them to bring healthy options, although it is not insisted upon. Food is set out attractively on plates and the table is laid with a cloth to look inviting. Practitioners set out the food and some of it is reheated, however not all staff hold food hygiene certificates and no guidance is given as to how to reheat the food adequately to ensure that children's health is not compromised. The new PSLA policy with regard to food has not yet been passed by the committee and contains information that is not relevant to this provision.

Children enjoy fresh air and physical activities each day as the practitioners take the children outside to the community garden and set up a climbing or balancing activity indoors. Children skilfully throw, catch, bounce and kick a variety of balls of different sizes and colours. They negotiate space as they manoeuvre cars around the pathways of the garden, overtaking and stopping to avoid crashes. Physical and outdoor activities are not included in the plans and children attending the afternoon session miss the opportunity to play with balls.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children move freely and safely around the inside of the environment, which is warm and welcoming. Staff are proactive in dealing with the problem of vandalism and set about renewing children's labels, replacing notices and discussing their concerns with the property owner to prevent further assaults on the group's property, to maintain the welcoming environment for the children.

Risk assessments are in place, but a hazard was overlooked in the garden area on the day of inspection. The supervisor has now included this in the risk assessment to ensure the safety of the children.

Children develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe as staff discuss safety considerations prior to using the stairs and give children appropriate explanations as to how to maintain safety. When children are talking about spinning around, a practitioner suggests that it is better to spin around outside as the lack of space indoors makes it more likely they will bump into things and hurt themselves.

Fire drills are carried out regularly and alternate between morning and afternoon to ensure all children develop confidence in following the procedures. The lack of detail in the recording does not assist the practitioners in improving their evacuation procedure.

There is an organised range of suitable and safe equipment. Resources stored in low-level displays are easy for the children to access. The books are not always freely accessible as they are stored in a moveable trolley that is sometimes kept in the office.

Children are adequately protected because practitioners have a basic understanding of their role with regard to child protection issues and know how to implement local procedures. However, the supervisor identifies the ongoing training needs of the staff team to ensure their knowledge is updated.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well into the session and are confident in the routine. They enjoy their activities and interact well with practitioners and their peers, building positive relationships with them. Children play well independently and with their peers as well as enjoying opportunities to work more directly with practitioners through activities, such as cookery.

Independence is not always promoted well. Children are unable to use the skills they develop in play in real life situations, for example at snack and lunch times, the drinks of water are pre-poured and fruit is prepared for them by adults.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children's attitude to learning is positive and they play an active role in this as they make their own choices in play. They concentrate well and persist in their chosen activities, negotiating well with each other. For example, two children decide to 'repair' a cupboard door in the role-play area, they use sticky tape and scissors and help each other find various ways to problem solve.

Children enjoy opportunities to share books and listen to stories in small groups. Practitioners make themselves available to extend children's learning by using questions and props to enhance the stories and impromptu songs. Children with special needs are able to communicate their needs by using specially designed cards that offer symbols to represent songs for example a star shape is 'twinkle, twinkle little star'. Children begin to recognise their names and those of their friends and are encouraged to identify the letters. Children do not have use of the name cards to assist with their name writing and to encourage mark making for a purpose for example, labelling their paintings. There are limited opportunities for children to write in other areas of the nursery, for instance there are no diaries, calendars or notepads in the role-play area.

Children use mathematics in everyday activities, for example at snack time they are asked to take two pieces of fruit. Activities such as printing with shapes and numbers and songs that encourage calculating enable the children to progress in maths. Regular cooking activities give the children practical experience of weighing and measuring, although the recipes chosen conflict with the healthy eating project.

Children's creativity is enhanced by regular opportunities to explore rhythm and respond to music; however, these activities are not included in the plans and learning intentions are not identified. Practitioners provide daily opportunities for children to explore different media and materials. Children create constructions, collages, paintings and drawings that are displayed around the provision.

Children have limited opportunity to explore and investigate nature or technology, as there is a lack of resources in this area. They have planted hyacinth bulbs, and most adults are drawn to their smell, however the staff have displayed them out of the view of children and therefore deny them the opportunity to examine the plants.

Children's individual progress is observed, although information gained from these assessments is not currently used effectively to plan children's next stage of development. Practitioners are reviewing their planning and have sought guidance in developing this.

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

The provision is good.

Children display good levels of confidence. They are caring towards one another and praise the achievements of others for example when they are able to spell their name they get a clap. Activities such as creating self-portraits enable children to value themselves and develop their self-esteem.

Children learn about a variety of different cultures, for example practitioners organised activities to celebrate Chinese New Year to enable the children to gain knowledge of peoples different customs and traditions. Children's understanding was enriched by a group trip to Chinatown to bring the nursery activities to life and to consolidate their learning. This positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Children's behaviour overall is very good; they know what is expected of them and are clear about what is right and wrong. They are given praise and rewards when they display good behaviour, which encourages them to continue. The supervisor states that the two 'time out' chairs displayed in the playroom are not in use. The use of the chairs is not included in the behaviour management policy and would in fact contravene the behaviour management policy that aims not to single out children.

Practitioners know children's individual needs and those with special needs are well supported in the setting, as staff are proactive in developing links with outside agencies. Children benefit from a friendly relationship between practitioners and parents. Parents are invited to play an active role in the pre-school for example by helping out in the sessions and outings, taking an active role on the committee or supporting fundraising events.

Staff work in in partnership with parents to ensure that children's individual needs are met. There is an appropriate settling in procedure and staff ensure that there is a regular flow of information with parents to ensure continuity of care. There is an active parents rota, which also includes grandparents, giving the children the opportunity to foster relationships with different generations. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Most parents are given an initial Pre-School Learning Alliance leaflet regarding the areas of learning covered by the foundation stage curriculum. Regular newsletters have been introduced to inform parents of topics and events, but they do not link to the learning outcomes. Parents receive feedback on their children's personal and social development, but there is limited information given regarding children's next steps in learning to enable parents to support their children's development at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the pre-school and the deployment of staff is generally good, ensuring all children are secure and happily engaged in activities. Practitioners work well as a team and children's learning is promoted through satisfactory leadership and management of nursery education. As a result, the needs of the range of children who attend are met.

The supervisor, through regular team meetings, supports practitioners. They plan the curriculum together and discuss how activities went, however systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and the impact on children's individual progress is not yet fully developed.

The new committee have not submitted the required paperwork to ensure that the regulator is aware of who holds responsibility for the provision. Registers are kept to record staff and children's attendance, however these do not contain required information regarding the times of attendance. They are confusing to the reader, for example, a number of children who attend all day appear twice, but no indication of full or part-time is given for some of the children. The record offers no evidence that the group maintain appropriate ratios throughout the lunch period and does not indicate which staff are accountable during these times, as practitioners do not sign in and out at lunch times. A new visitors' book was used on the day of inspection, but did not include visiting siblings.

The outing's record is not effective, it contains a list of first names and does not indicate who are the adults and does not include parent helpers. It does not reflect which adult is accountable for which child and subsequently does not provide evidence of adult: child ratios being met in line with the groups outing procedure.

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

Since the last inspection the staff have replenished the supply of books including positive images of culture, race, gender, religion and disability, although they are not always accessible.

The children's progress folders have been updated to focus on birth to three matters framework, however this is a new initiative and has not been fully implemented.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

A concern was raised on 03 October 2005 relating to National Standard 7, children's health. Ofsted requested that the provider investigated the concern and provide Ofsted with a report. The provider's report indicated that some staff had breached the Pre- School smoking policy on one occasion and appropriate action has been taken to ensure that it does not happen again. Ofsted was satisfied that the provider responded appropriately and took no further action on this matter. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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 that the provision's health and safety policy is matched by practice so that children are able to dry their hands with individual towels to prevent cross infection.
- ensure that children's food is reheated and served by a staff member holding a food hygiene certificate and provide guidance on safe food reheating practices to ensure that children's health is promoted.
- ensure that children's and staff 's daily attendance includes times of arrival and departure, all visitors are logged and the outings register indicates who is responsible for each child.
- ensure that the regulator is notified of changes to the committee of the preschool and evidence is made available regarding the qualification of the supervisor

### 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 the effective use of assessment and planning to identify children's next steps and offer sufficient challenge.
- provide resources and opportunities for children to investigate everyday objects and technology to find out how things work and to stimulate interest in the natural world

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