



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 220054

DfES Number: 524660

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	27/04/2004
Inspector Name	Christina Downey

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Weldon Pre-School
Setting Address	Village Hall Bridge Street, Weldon Corby Northamptonshire NN17 3HR

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Weldon Playgroup 1027891
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Weldon Playgroup
Address	Village Hall Bridge Street, Weldon Corby Northamptonshire NN17 3HR

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Weldon Pre-school has been running since 1971. It operates from the spacious premises of Weldon village hall and now has its own outdoor play area. It is a registered Charity and a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance, and is run by a parents' committee. There are four members of staff. The supervisor holds the Diploma in Pre-school Practice, the deputy is working towards an NVQ Level 3 in Childcare and Education and one other member of staff is working towards a level 2 qualification.

The pre-school is open from 09.00 to 11.30 each weekday in school term time. Children may attend from the age of two years and six months until they are five for up to five sessions a week. There are currently 31 children on roll; of these nine are three-year-olds and nine are four-year-olds in receipt of funding. They are representative of a range of social and cultural backgrounds, and mostly come from the village of Weldon itself. There are no children currently attending who have special educational needs or who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The pre-school works closely with the Northamptonshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership advisory team.

How good is the Day Care?

Weldon Pre-school provides good quality care for children.

The environment is warm and welcoming and attractively presented. The staff are well organised and work closely as a team. The high ratios and relaxed approach enable the children to feel safe and secure. Space and activities are organised effectively to promote children's development. Children are able to extend their play and develop their confidence by moving freely between indoor and outdoor activities and choosing their own resources. Staff give good attention to meeting children's individual needs and including them equally in all activities. Their differences are acknowledged and valued, but children have too little scope to take part in activities, which promote anti-discriminatory attitudes. Staff act as good role models and successfully promote children's good behaviour.

Procedures are in place throughout to ensure children's safety and well being. Staff conduct regular risk assessments to make sure the premises and equipment are safe. Supervision is good, particularly during children's arrival and departure. Documentation is well organised and underpins the good practice. All accident and medication records are in place, although not all parents have yet given permission for any necessary emergency medical treatment. Children are successfully encouraged in their understanding of the need for hygiene routines. Their independence is also promoted at the running snack bar and they have constant access to fresh drinking water. However, positive attitudes towards healthy eating are not consistently well developed through the provision of nutritious snacks. The strong staff team maintains good relationships with children and parents. Good verbal and written communication ensures that parents are kept informed of the progress their child is making. Staff and committee members work well together and successfully maintain high standards.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the pre-school has improved safety by conducting regular risk assessments and ensuring children's times of arrival and departure are accurately recorded. Children also have free access to fresh drinking water.

What is being done well?

- The staff work very well together as a team. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and a good commitment to further training and development. Between them, they provide a stimulating and caring environment for children.
- Very good attention is given to ensuring children are cared for safely. High adult:child ratios are consistently maintained and the children are carefully supervised at all times, including during outdoor play and on outings.
- Considerable effort is put into providing a wide range of interesting and attractive activities and resources every day, even though everything has to be packed away at the end of each session. Children's work is displayed on the walls, along with varied posters, and much useful information is provided for parents on the notice boards in the entrance hall. Home link books are written up weekly and give parents a good insight into their child's activities and progress.

What needs to be improved?

- Procedures to ensure that all parents give written permission for seeking any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment.
- Attention given to providing nutritious snacks and promoting positive attitudes towards healthy eating habits.
- The range of activities and resources which promote anti-discriminatory practice.

Outcome of the inspection
Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION
<i>All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.</i>
<i>As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.</i>

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection	
Std	Recommendation
7	Request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.
8	Continue to ensure all snacks provided are nutritious.
9	Ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Weldon Pre-school provides a welcoming, caring and well-organised learning environment where children feel happy and secure and make generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff are gaining a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. Planning is effective in providing a wide range of interesting and worthwhile activities each day, although it is not always sufficiently closely linked to the stepping stones rather than the actual learning goals. Staff observe the children in their key group closely and generally know what they are expected to learn from the activities provided; all children are included equally. However, observations are not always used effectively to ensure children's interests and future learning needs are incorporated into planned activities. This can result in limited levels of challenge for older children. Staff have very positive relationships with all the children. They successfully encourage them to take part in new experiences and manage behaviour well. Sessions are organised very well and provide children with good opportunities to choose their own activities and resources.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff development is given strong emphasis. The whole team is involved in observation and assessment of children, and each member of staff takes responsibility for different aspects of the provision. Teamwork is good and there is a high level of commitment to training and improvement.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Weekly records of each child's activities are shared effectively with parents and they are generally well informed about their progress. They receive some useful suggestions about extending children's learning at home, but are not all clear about the aims of the Foundation Stage. Many are closely involved in running the group and are very supportive of it.

What is being done well?

- Many different, stimulating natural objects, materials and living things are provided for the children to explore. They use the garden around the outdoor play area to dig for worms and find other mini-beasts, successfully learning to handle them carefully. Children observe the changes that occur as worms mix up layers of sand and soil in the homemade wormery. They go on walks in the local area and use collections of items such as pebbles, sticks, leaves and flowers to make models to their own design.
- A wide range of interesting activities is provided each day and the children are able to choose between them freely. Children are able to extend their play and develop their confidence by moving freely between the indoor and outdoor play areas.

- Children are able to be active throughout each session. They have sufficient time to persevere and consolidate their learning and use a wide range of small apparatus and equipment with increasing skill. They develop a good awareness of body space as they fit themselves into boxes, tubs and tunnels, and find out about different ways of moving as they run, jump, chase and dance.

What needs to be improved?

- the links between activity planning, the stepping stones and children's interests
- children's awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others
- the level of challenge for older children, particularly in respect of mathematical problem solving and their use of large apparatus and equipment
- opportunities for children to use their emergent writing to convey meaning, use books for reference purposes and to express their own ideas creatively.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the pre-school has made generally good progress and provided many more opportunities for children to begin to develop their early writing skills. They have daily access to a range of writing implements and materials in the workshop area and begin to use them with interest. However, the focus is sometimes too formal, emphasising skills such as letter formation before children are secure in their pencil control and related small muscle skills. Many more interesting practical activities are planned to promote children's mathematical learning. Younger children now have a more secure grasp of concepts such as number, size and shape but the amount of challenge for older children, particularly in relation to early calculation is more limited.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children settle happily into the group and feel safe and secure. Relationships are good. Children play happily together; they learn about the feelings of others and how to treat living things sensitively. Children select activities and resources independently and have a positive approach to new experiences. Their behaviour is good. They talk about and celebrate events in their own lives but have too little scope to develop awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children talk with interest about their daily activities and learn new words linked to topics such as 'Mini- beasts'. They use the attractive range of writing materials competently but not always in a way that promotes their understanding of the purpose of writing. Good use is made of puppets, and children listen to and re-tell stories successfully. Children enjoy looking at and sharing story books, but have more limited access to reference books.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy counting and are familiar with a good range of number songs and rhymes. They begin to use number names accurately in their play and recognise some numerals. Older children begin to calculate by sharing and adding but have less scope to solve problems in their own way. All children successfully describe and compare length, weight, shape and size during practical activities. They fit boxes into shopping bags and cut and join paper to wrap parcels of different sizes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children make very good use of the garden to study the natural world at first hand. They look for mini-beasts and investigate features of soil, stones and plants. Children learn how to operate various items of simple equipment and use a good range of materials to make models to their own design. They talk with interest about past events and features of their local environment but have a limited awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have free access to the outdoor play and develop and consolidate skills using varied small equipment such as stepping-stones, balls and bikes. They move with confidence and imagination, learn to change speed and direction whilst taking part in some interesting circle games. They have a good sense of space but older children have more limited scope to challenge themselves on large apparatus. Regular use of construction sets and small resources develops their manipulative skills well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children take part in some good quality role-play in well-resourced scenarios such as the 'shop'. They play imaginatively with small-world resources, create and re-tell stories using puppets, and listen and dance to a variety of music. They explore colour whilst painting freely and respond to a good range of sensory experiences. However, many activities have a pre-determined end product and children are not always able to express their own creative ideas.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- establish clear links in the planning between activities provided, the stepping stones for learning and children's individual interests
- improve the level of challenge for older or more able children in respect of mathematical problem solving and use of large equipment and apparatus
- continue to develop opportunities for children to express their own ideas in their creative work and use their own emergent writing style to convey meaning during their play
- continue to improve children's awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.