



Egerton Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305049
Inspection date	18 October 2006
Inspector	Jane Shaw
Setting Address	Egerton Primary School, Bexton Road, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 0EE
Telephone number	01565 652340
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Registered person	Egerton Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Egerton Pre-school is organised and managed by a voluntary committee of parents and carers. The pre-school first opened in 1992 and operates from purpose-built premises built in 2000, within the grounds of Egerton Primary School in Knutsford, Cheshire.

A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday from 09.00 to 11.45 and 12.40 to 15.10, and Tuesday to Friday from 09.00 to 15.10, term time only. The children have access to the whole of the pre-school building, toilets and hand washing facilities, plus school hall and music room. A kitchen is available on site for the preparation of snacks and drinks. The children have access to two outdoor play spaces and the school hall for physical play activities.

There are currently 51 children aged from two to under five years on roll, of these, 37 children receive funding for nursery education. Children who attend are mainly from the immediate location and surrounding areas. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The pre-school employs 10 staff, nine of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. As the pre-school is in receipt of funding for nursery education, they have access to an advisory teacher and other staff from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within a healthy environment because staff have effective routines and procedures in place to ensure children's good health is observed at all times. Staff ensure all areas used by the children are clean and appropriate for use, and that toys are checked regularly for safety and hygiene. This ensures that children's health is addressed during their play.

Children are beginning to understand the need to keep themselves healthy as they are encouraged to wash their hands after certain tasks, such as visiting the toilet, or before snack. Some children are able to carry out these tasks independently, for example, as they automatically wash their hands after completing a craft activity. Staff also give gentle reminders and support when required. A written sick child policy and procedure which parents and carers have access to, ensures they are aware of the pre-school's responsibilities in providing an environment which is as free from infection as is possible. Some staff members hold food hygiene qualifications ensuring children's health is addressed during food preparation.

Children enjoy healthy snacks and drinks mid-morning and afternoon, for example, snacks include a variety of fruit, toast and spreads, breadsticks and a choice of milk or water. Drinking water is available during sessions through the provision of jugs and cups during warmer months and a water fountain in bathroom area at other times, however, children do not use this regularly after outdoor or physical play to have a drink. Children learn the importance of healthy eating through the provision of healthy snacks, discussion and themes. As part of their theme of Autumn, children look at the variety of vegetables grown at this time of year. They participate in the chopping of these vegetables prior to staff making soup, which the children then have at snack time. Any children staying for the 'lunch club' bring packed lunches from home, these are appropriately stored until required. Staff give parents and carers information on providing their children with healthy lunch boxes. Snack and lunchtimes are organised with appropriate furniture and crockery, however, plates are not always used. Snack and lunchtimes are also socially interactive times and offer children the opportunity to sit with friends and make new ones.

Children's physical development is well promoted. Children have daily access to a variety of physical activities, both in and outdoor. Children participate in large group music and movement and other activities when using the school hall or music room, and have access to two separate

outdoor play spaces. Staff try to ensure that children have outdoor time during the morning and afternoon session. Children also have opportunities to take part in activities away from the setting, such as nature walks within the local area.

Staff have implemented the 'Birth to three matters' framework well. Staff plan activities in line with this framework alongside the 'Foundation Stage Curriculum', using the same themes but adapting activities for the different age ranges. Staff make observations of children's progress in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework sharing these records regularly with parents and carers. These observations are used to plan future activities for children as a group and as individuals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very well planned and organised environment, which contributes to their learning, development and enjoyment. Staff make very good use of the available space to offer children access to a wide range of activities and opportunities. The rooms are well prepared prior to children's arrival. Rooms are very bright and inviting, with many examples of the children's art work and other displays, making the environment welcoming, as a result children arrive happy and settled. Staff make good use of the entrance area to display information for parents and carers on activities and other pre-school information, this ensures that they are kept up to date with their child's care and education.

Children have access to an extensive range of toys and equipment, which supports an interesting programme of themes and activities. Toys and activities are changed during sessions and from day to day to sustain children's interest. Equipment is age appropriate and of good quality. Toys and equipment are checked regularly for safety and hygiene, ensuring children's health and safety at all times.

Children are cared for within a safe environment because staff have good safety policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety at all times. High staff ratios and supervision ensures children are well cared for. Staff are diligent in their care of children and the provision of a safe environment as they undertake regular risk assessments and daily checks prior to children's arrival. Children are also being encouraged to have an understanding of the need to keep themselves safe as staff remind them about the importance of walking indoors.

Children's welfare is carefully considered by staff who have a clear understanding and awareness of the procedures to be followed regarding child protection. Staff are clear about their role within this area and the responsibilities of the designated staff member. Detailed written child protection policies and procedures, which are shared with staff, parents and carers ensure children are cared for within a safe environment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All children have access to and benefit from an extensive range of activities and opportunities, which promotes their enjoyment. A high ratio of qualified and experienced staff work with all

children, they have sound knowledge of both the 'Birth to three matters' framework and 'Foundation Stage Curriculum', and use these effectively to provide the children with a wide range of opportunities and experiences.

Children's enjoyment is very well supported by an enthusiastic and experienced staff team, who clearly understand the importance of good quality play opportunities for children. High staff child ratios ensure children are supervised and supported well throughout sessions. Themes and activities are supported by an extensive range of resources which are well organised and planned and actively promote children's enjoyment. Toys and equipment set out directly relate to the theme, for example, the current theme of Autumn sees children having access to scales within the maths area where they can weigh and balance leaves and fir cones, the role play area is a shop with a variety of Autumn vegetables, small world toys include animals in a woodland, and craft involves the children in making clay or play dough hedgehogs .

The 'Birth to three matters' framework has been well implemented within the setting, offering younger children access to a wide range of activities and opportunities. Staff responsible for the planning of activities for younger children complete these on a daily basis in coordination with the 'Foundation Stage' planning. Staff show a very good understanding of the differing abilities of the children attending and adapt activities accordingly when younger children are present. Observations and records of achievement reflect 'Birth to three matters'.

Most children arrive settled and eager to participate in the wide range of opportunities offered to them, immediately involving themselves in the various activities on offer. Those children who may be unsettled are given good support by staff, enabling them to quickly participate. Children benefit from the very good staff supervision and interaction. Staff ratios are well above those required, which ensures children are offered very good support. Staff are actively engaged with children in their activities, and as a result children enjoy their day. Children access a wide range of activities each day, staff rotate toys and equipment regularly throughout sessions and across the week to sustain children's interest and enjoyment.

The premises are very welcoming and bright with lots of colourful displays of the children's work and other posters. Rooms are very well organised on a daily basis, with activities rotated throughout sessions, this enables children to have opportunities to be actively involved in a wide range of play experiences. For example, children have opportunities to be involved in craft activities, experimental play, role play and construction. They have opportunities for free play or more structured activities involving smaller groups or as a whole group. The setting have recently introduced more opportunities for child initiated activities, where children are able to choose activities from the range on offer.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff use the 'Foundation Stage Curriculum' to plan a range of activities across all six areas of learning. All staff are clear about how children learn and the purpose of the planned activities. Most children arrive happy and settled, showing an eagerness to involve themselves in the activities offered.

Children are becoming confident as a result of the positive praise they receive from staff for their efforts, attempts and achievements. Staff interaction and support is effective and aids the development of children's confidence and self-esteem. Children show good levels of concentration and persevere at activities, such as creating designs on peg boards, building train layouts and as they help to cut vegetables prior to staff making soup. They are becoming independent, for example, as they make choices about their activities during free play, as they deal with personal tasks and as they put on and take off outdoor clothes. Children are developing good relationships with one another, this is particularly evident as a small group of girls are engrossed in role play, acting out a wedding and reception. Children are also developing good relationships with the adults who care for them. Children share and take turns with toys, equipment and activities and listen carefully to stories and instructions. Children's behaviour is good as they take turns with toys and equipment and as they sit quietly whilst others speak. Children are becoming competent communicators as they describe their paintings, what the clay feels like when making clay hedgehogs, and what their favourite vegetables are when making soup. Children's pencil skills are developing well, all children are able to make marks with some children being able to form letters. Children have good opportunities to develop these skills through access to a designated writing area, along with writing materials within imaginary play, for example, children write out pizza orders when playing in the café. Children listen intently to well read stories, joining in when appropriate, and are able to independently access books. Children enjoy listening to stories read by staff who use a variety of books, for example, large and small books and a range of story sacks. Register and circle times are supported by good resources.

Children are beginning to develop an understanding of number and number operations and with assistance they are able to count the number of children lining up prior to going to school, and count the number of cups needed at snack time. Children have access to a variety of number charts and number lines to develop their understanding of numbers. Children experiment with weighing scales, counting and balancing fir cones and leaves. Children are developing a good understanding of their own environment and that of the wider world through varied themes of work, for example, they are involved in nature walks collecting leaves, conkers and fir cones as they study Autumn, and celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year. They learn about their own community and those who help us, as they have visits from the dentist, and visits to the fire station. Children competently use a range of technological equipment, for example, as they use cash registers and a telephone when playing in the café and vegetable shop. Children competently build elaborate three dimensional models using varied sizes of construction equipment. They are able to describe what their model does, for example, a child uses smaller building blocks and toy cars to make a car ferry.

Children's physical development is well provided for through their access to a range of activities and equipment, which promotes both their large and small skill development. Children are developing good manipulative skills and hand eye coordination as they build train tracks, create patterns using pegs and boards and use knives when helping to cut vegetables ready for making soup, and as they manipulate clay when making hedgehogs. Children excitedly join in with music and movement as they pretend to be leaves blowing in the wind. They safely move around the room and in the front outdoor play space. Children have daily opportunities to use outdoor play space at the front of the building, where they competently use bicycles and scooters.

Opportunities for children to freely use the rear outdoor play space throughout the whole year are not yet available. Children's imagination is developing through access to a range of good resources, for example, children pretend to visit the café and vegetable shop. Children are beginning to develop their imagination as they play within role play areas as small groups or individuals. Children access a wide and varied range of creative resources and materials enabling them to produce interesting and individual pieces of art and craft work. They are proud of their finished pieces of work, for example, children proudly show their completed clay hedgehogs to staff, parents and carers. Children have regular opportunities to listen to and play music using a variety of musical instruments. Children listen carefully to instructions to play instruments quietly or loudly, which they do successfully, and are able to identify the name of an instrument when played out of sight.

Activities are well planned and involve the children in a range of interesting and stimulating activities across all areas of learning. The pre-school also plan for continuous provision and have put in place more opportunities for child initiated activities throughout the session. The pre-school have very recently changed the way they undertake their planning. The manager completes long term plans, which are devised on a two yearly cycle, medium term plans are formulated from these. Daily plans are completed by the manager at the end of each day. Plans and focused activities are evaluated immediately after completion, these evaluations and daily planning allows the manager to adapt activities and re-visit skills promptly. A system is in place to track how plans are working across the stepping stones. Staff make observations of children's achievements both spontaneously and within focused activities. The manager and staff team are clear about the need to ensure that achievements are observed on more than one occasion to ensure that these are accurate. Once the staff team are clear that children have achieved a particular skill, then this is recorded on their developmental record. Staff meetings take place weekly where plans are evaluated and individual children's progress is discussed. The manager is clear how to plan the next steps for children's learning, and how to adapt activities to meet the needs of all children including the more and less capable children. A recent parent questionnaire resulted in the amendment of children's developmental records to make these more user friendly. New records are now in place which show how children are progressing across the stepping stones. These records are shared regularly with parents and carers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and have equal access to the activities offered. Children are encouraged to share and take turns with toys and equipment, promoting an understanding of the needs of others. Children are developing a good understanding of the wider world through various themes, for example, by celebrating a variety of festivals throughout the year, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year, or as they look at other countries. Access to appropriate resources, such as books and other play materials, promotes positive images of diversity. Children make regular visits to the adjoining school for physical activities, and other activities, such as story time. School staff also make regular visits to the pre-school to foster good relationships and ease children's transition to school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

Staff work effectively with parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure that children who have particular needs are appropriately cared for and given support enabling them to participate fully in all activities. Staff work well with children on a daily basis, supervising children with particular needs through discreet observation, enabling them to integrate and be included as part of the group. Good individual planning, verbal and written feedback, and liaison with parents, carers and other professionals supports children's placements.

Children's behaviour is good as a result of effective staff interaction with children. Children receive lots of positive praise and encouragement from all staff for their efforts, attempts and achievements, fostering children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff are good role models for children, they communicate well with one another and children, and as a result children's behaviour is good. A positive behaviour management policy and use of appropriate strategies encourages children's good behaviour.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Children benefit from the effective partnership with parents and carers. Parents and carers have access to, and receive plenty of good information about the setting and what it has to offer in terms of their child's care and education. They have access to information on themes and activities through the displaying of plans on notice boards, and are welcome to copies of planning to enable them to participate in their child's learning at home. Staff make good use of the entrance area to display information about the group in general, for example, policies, procedures, planning and other childcare information. Parents and carers are invited to discuss their child's progress with staff on a regular basis through both informal and formal discussions, and are also made aware that children's developmental records are available at all times. Parents and carers spoken to were very positive and supportive of the provision and what it offers their children. This effective partnership helps to promote children's learning, development and general well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good.

Children's learning and development benefit from the good leadership and management of the pre-school, staff are well led and managed by the person in charge. Staff are deployed well during sessions and work effectively together to ensure that children are provided with an environment that is conducive to their good learning, development and enjoyment. The manager and staff team regularly evaluate the provision as a whole and are committed to the ongoing development of the setting, keeping up to date with and implementing new childcare initiatives and changes in legislation.

The manager and staff team are supported by the registered provider, which is made up of a voluntary committee of parents and carers. The committee are aware of their responsibilities and have addressed the recent changes in legislation in terms of staff appointments, and have in place a clear recruitment policy. Staff working with children and committee members have either undertaken clearance or these are in the process of being completed. The committee

are supportive of the development of the pre-school and the staff team, and provide staff with opportunities to develop their skills and expertise through training. A high ratio of qualified staff work with the children on a daily basis. Staff are qualified and experienced in child care, and are aware of how children learn and develop. Staff are encouraged to and are committed to attending training to enhance their existing good skills and knowledge. Staff are clear about their individual roles and responsibilities within the group on a daily basis and within the staff team as a whole. Staff meet briefly before the start of the day to discuss the session and individual staff roles and responsibilities, and meet on a weekly basis to discuss planning and children's progress.

The premises are very well planned and organised, maximising opportunities for children's play and learning. Activities are well planned and supported by good quality equipment. Activities and experiences are rotated well throughout sessions to engage children's interest and enjoyment.

All legally required documentation and information, that contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place, well maintained and reviewed. A policy document is on display and available to parents and carers at all times, this ensures staff, parents and carers are kept up to date with the group's responsibilities in terms of children's safety and well-being.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last combined inspection, the registered provider was asked to address two recommendations relating to the care of the children and one relating to the funded nursery education aspect of the provision.

The first recommendation related to children's safety and asked the provision to amend the uncollected child policy to show the procedure to be followed. This policy has been amended and now shows the actual procedure that would be followed in the event of this occurring. This policy is shared with parents and carers.

The organisation of the provision has been improved by the recording of staff attendance, showing their times of arrival and departure on a daily basis.

One recommendation was raised in relation to the nursery education. The setting were asked to continue with plans to introduce a system of self-assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision as a whole. The manager along with the staff team regularly undertake evaluations of the provision, drawing up action plans to address any issues raised.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 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):

- consider the arrangements for snack time and the provision of drinking water during sessions.

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):

- consider the planning of the rear outdoor play space to enable children to use this throughout the year.

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