



Earleybird Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148652
Inspection date	05 December 2006
Inspector	Sheena Bankier
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Registered person	Earleybird Pre-School
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 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?

Earleybird Pre-school is run by voluntary committee made up of parents. It opened in 1986 and operates from its own premises situated within the grounds of Hawkedon Primary School. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open during term time from Monday to Friday mornings from 09.15 to 11.45 and afternoons from 12.45 to 15.15. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 55 children on roll aged from rising three to four. Of these 40 children receive funding for early education. Children come from local area. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 11 members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from fresh air as they play outdoors on a free access basis unless the weather is very poor. Children enjoy challenge from the wide range of equipment, such as the adventure castle where children can develop their physical skills and confidence in their abilities. Children are physically active indoors as they bounce on the trampoline brought in from outside and balance along a beam. This effectively helps children use their energy in a positive way. Children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle is encouraged through posters displayed and the healthy based snacks which the pre-school provides. Children take part in topics about teeth care which develops their understanding of self-care. This contributes to the children's good health.

Children are cared for in a clean environment. They learn the importance of personal hygiene, as there are pictures displayed reminding children to wash their hands, for example, in the toilet and by the hand washing bowl used after messy play. Children show good awareness of hand washing routines, asking each other as they sit down for snack if they have washed their hands. Staff promote children's understanding of good hygiene, as they discuss germs and the importance of hand washing. Children are encouraged to cover their mouths when coughing and to use and dispose of tissues correctly.

The pre-school has all necessary documentation to ensure children's good health, for example, staff have access to records regarding children's health needs, such as allergies or medical conditions. Accidents to children are quickly recorded and parents are given a copy of the record, which ensures they are fully aware of the injury and treatment given. Five staff hold current first aid certificates and the nine core staff are all trained to administer epi-pens. This ensures staff can effectively manage accidents or emergency treatment for anaphylactic shock.

Children enjoy a café style snack time and choose when they wish to sit down to eat and drink. Healthy eating is well promoted through the snacks on offer which include a variety of fruit, such as grapes, apples and clementine oranges with crackers. Children are offered healthy options to drink of either water or milk. They have access to a water jug and disposable cups during the session. This ensures children can access drinks to suit their individual needs. Children's social skills are developed through the informal snack time where they can sit and chat to each other and staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The pre-school give a high priority to keeping children safe at the premises. Equipment is used to prevent children's access to dangerous items, such as guards on the heaters. Risk assessments are in place and are also displayed in relevant areas of the room. Children are closely supervised at all times by staff both indoors and outdoors. Children begin to understand about keeping

themselves safe through discussion with staff, such as ensuring only a certain number go into the den and through practising the evacuation procedure each half term. This promotes children's safety.

Children benefit from the child friendly environment which has child sized tables, chairs, toilets and basins. This supports children's independent skills. The pre-school is welcoming to children and parents as art work, posters and information is displayed. Resources are stored on open shelving which enables children to initiate their own play. There is a good range of age and development stage appropriate toys and resources which support children's learning.

Children's welfare is safeguarded. There is a nominated person for child protection, who has attended training and briefing sessions. All information from these are relayed to the other staff. This ensures all staff have a good knowledge of child protection procedures and are up-to-date with current practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter confidently and quickly decide what to do from the activities and play opportunities on offer. They show enthusiasm, for example, as they find aprons for messy play or when going outside to play. Good relationships are established between children, who play together in small groups, such as in the home corner or as they play with construction toys, making bridges and towers. Children are happy and settled at the pre-school and know the routines well, for example, washing hands before snack. Children are at ease with staff and enjoy very good relationships as they talk about their home experiences and past and future events in their lives.

Children benefit from the high ratio of staff and the employment of support staff. This ensures children's keyworker's can spend focused time with the children. This benefits the children's learning and development. Staff support children's progress very well, as they are skilled at asking questions to stimulate children's thinking and understanding of concepts. Children learn through play and staff support their understanding, for example, of shapes, colours, numbers and letters through the planned activities and whilst playing with the children. A four plus session is offered to children, which offers more structured and focused activities. This helps support children's development in preparation for school.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching & learning is good. Staff have good understanding of the Foundation Stage and attend regular training courses. Together they plan a good range of experiences, activities and play opportunities which enable children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff use their knowledge and understanding of the individual children to plan for their next steps in their development. Staff regularly observe the children's development and their progress is recorded in development files which link to the stepping stones and early learning goals. However, some development records have not been completed. This does not give a clear indication of children's progress. Some evaluation of activities is undertaken, although this does always reflect the outcomes for children.

Children's independent skills are overall, very well supported. Children can self-select resources from the open-shelving and staff support them in their choices. Children are learning about the boundaries of the pre-school as staff help them to negotiate and think of others, during discussions and through asking questions. This helps children find solutions. At times, there is inconsistent practice, such as children not always being fully encouraged to pour their own drinks at snack times.

Children learn mathematical concepts through play, for example, staff encourage counting as children play with ponies, bricks or coloured pegs. Children confidently understand positional language as they build towers which are 'tall' and describe 'big' and 'little' cakes. Children learn about sequencing as they make patterns with the peg boards. Tools in the sand develop children's awareness of volume and size as they fill and empty different containers. Snack time is used as an opportunity to develop the children's understanding of shape, as different shaped crackers are used.

Children learn that print carries meaning as labels are used in every area of the pre-school. Areas of the room and objects, such as the clock, heater and home corner are labelled. Children learn to recognise their names as name labels are on pegs and boxes, for their belongings. Children use their emergent writing as they have access to paper and pencils in the home corner for writing in role-play and use boards and markers in their free-play which encourages mark making. Children hold pencils correctly and are often encouraged to write their names either over dots or in free-hand by staff, however, this not always consistent practice. In the four-plus session children bring in items beginning with a letter, as part of their learning process. Children regularly use the book area, either sitting together on the comfortable seating to look at books or with staff reading to them individually or in small groups. Children participate in larger group story times, when often there are two groups; however, the screens are not always put in place. This leads to children becoming distracted as they lose concentration.

Children enjoy being imaginative as they make 3D models out of construction straws, one child makes a 'tidy up' tool and explains how it works. Children use their own creative ideas during art and crafts, such as deciding where to place paint, glue or glitter. During these activities, staff support them in their understanding of colour and children explore different textures. Children develop small physical skills as they use tools, such as brushes, scissors and glue spreaders.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about others through the good range of resources which they can freely access. This includes dressing up clothes, play food and kitchenware in the home corner, such as woks and noodles. Posters of different festivals around the year are displayed. Visitors are welcomed to the setting to talk to children and bring in items of interest in connection to religion and culture. Children celebrate festival and religious dates, for example, Christmas, Diwali and Chinese New Year, some of which reflect the backgrounds of the children who attend. This supports children's acceptance of others and respects the individual backgrounds of the families who attend the pre-school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff understand the children's individual needs well. They gain information from parents about these needs as they start pre-school and build upon these through regular communication. Children's backgrounds are fully respected, for example, religious observances. This ensures children's needs are met and valued. There are currently no children with learning difficulties or disabilities attending the pre-school. Support is available through the trained Special Educational Needs Co-Coordinator within the pre-school, who liaises with parents and outside agencies. Individual Educational Plans are developed when needed. This provides consistent care and support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Children's behaviour is good. They understand the boundaries in place and through discussion are learning right from wrong. Children learn to be responsible, as some spontaneously tidy up and join in routines such as helping to clean the table before snack time with a paper towel. Staff provide very good role models to children as they are calm, polite and respectful to adults and children. Children's behaviour is managed positively, with plenty of praise and encouragement for good behaviour and achievements. This boosts children's self-esteem and confidence and encourages their good behaviour.

There are very good partnerships with parents. Parents are kept well-informed about the pre-school setting, curriculum on offer and their child's progress and development. A comprehensive prospectus is provided to parents. This has information about the pre-school and the curriculum. Communication is very good with regular exchanges of information at the beginning and end of sessions between staff and parents. Parent evenings are held and parents can access their child's development records at anytime on request. Communication books are used between home and pre-school to enhance the exchange of information with parents. Parents are invited to join the committee and take part in the parent rota. They are encouraged to share any skills or information, such as religion or cultural backgrounds with the pre-school. Newsletters and notices displayed keep parents informed of current information, such as topic headings. This contributes to continuity in the children's care and education.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The committee and staff understand their roles and responsibilities well. Staff are motivated and attend regular training which helps them to review and develop their practice and understanding. Meetings between the committee and staff are undertaken regularly which ensures a consistent approach and good communication.

Staff enjoy very good relationships and work well together as a team. They use their time and resources effectively and are well deployed within the room. A high ratio of staff to children is maintained and support staff are employed. This enables keyworker staff to focus on the children and spend individual time with them. At times, staff practice is not always consistent. This means the children do not always benefit from opportunities, such as to pour their drinks or to write their names on their work. Staff provide good interaction with the children and have a very good understanding of the children's individual needs. Children enjoy space to play both

indoors and outdoors the pre-school is organised in a child friendly manner, with accessible resources from which children can self-select.

Detailed policies and procedures are in place although some information regarding the regulatory body is out of date. Children's development records are not always kept up-to-date and the evaluation of activities does not always reflect how children have gained. Overall the records, held promote the health, safety and welfare of the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school was set two recommendations from their National Care Standards inspection and three from their Nursery Education inspection. The recommendations were in regard to the organisation of the room and the children's access to toys and equipment, to provide opportunities for the comfortable sharing of books, promote three year olds independence during snack time and to further children's awareness of cultural issues.

The pre-school have addressed the recommendation regarding organising play space by obtaining open shelving units, from which children can independently choose and self-select their own resources. The room is clearly laid out with hard floor, carpet and table areas. This enables children to move safely around the room and to access the toys and equipment easily.

The book corner area has a large cushioned bench area with additional scatter cushions, making this an inviting area for children to sit either by themselves to look at books or to share books with staff. This develops children's language, social and concentration skills.

There are some inconsistencies regarding the staff practice when managing snack times. During the inspection it was observed that some staff encourage all children to be independent, for example, pouring their own drinks. However, some staff do not actively encourage children in their independent skills. This means that staff practice is not always consistent and children at times are not fully encouraged to develop and practise their independent skills.

Children celebrate a range of festival and cultural dates within the curriculum and the pre-school actively encourages families to share their backgrounds with them. Children have access to a range of resources, such as kitchen play equipment and traditional dressing up clothes which relate to religions and cultures. Posters are displayed of different festivals around the year. This enhances children's understanding and acceptance of others.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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 complaints 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):

- ensure paperwork, such as policies and procedures contain up-to-date information about the regulator

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 children's development is regularly recorded and the evaluation of activities reflect outcomes for children
- review staff practice to ensure consistency, for example, routine opportunities for independence at snack times and encouraging children to use their emergent writing.

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