



Earlybirds Pre-school (Ravensmere)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251465
Inspection date	23 February 2007
Inspector	Susan Smith
Setting Address	St. Benedicts Road, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 9DE
Telephone number	01502 712367
E-mail	
Registered person	Earlybirds Pre-School (Ravensmere)
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?

Earlybirds Pre-school is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community. It was registered in 1999 and operates from a classroom within Ravensmere County Infants school in Beccles, Suffolk. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open from 12.45 to 15.15, Monday to Friday, during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and occasional use of the school hall when it is not timetabled for school use.

There are currently 28 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding area.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is supportive of children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about healthy eating through discussion and healthy snacks such as fruit and vegetables. Their individual dietary needs are met well with good recording procedures in place to ensure all staff are fully aware of children who have special dietary requirements. In addition, all staff have received training for children requiring medical assistance in the case of a severe allergic reaction. Children have free access to drinking water throughout the session to ensure they are not thirsty.

Children are learning the importance of good health and hygiene practices through the regular routine of the session. For example, staff ensure children wash their hands thoroughly before snack time and when they accompany them to the toilet. The more able children are encouraged to go to the toilet independently and they are not always reminded by staff to wash their hands.

Most staff have a current first aid certificate and have attended food hygiene training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedure to follow to maintain children's health and prevent the spread of infection. However, if they had a serious accident, they may not be able to act in their best interest as they have not obtained permission from parents to seek emergency advice or treatment. Parents give written instructions for the administration of medicines. Staff maintain the accident and medicine records appropriately and share these with parents.

Children participate in a range of activities which contributes to their physical health and fitness. Indoors children have access to the school hall one day a week, where they enjoy taking part in music and movement sessions and using the school's physical play equipment and apparatus. In fine weather they have access to the school playground on a daily basis so they can use equipment, such as ride on toys and enjoy the fresh air. Children demonstrate increasing control while using equipment such as glue sticks, paint brushes, different size chalk pieces and construction sets to help them develop their hand-eye coordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming and safe indoor and outdoor environment. Children are kept safe by the appropriate procedures in place such as the good routines for their arrival and departure and the completion of risk assessments. Children and their parents and carers are greeted on arrival by staff to make them feel welcome in the setting. Staff prepare the room before the children arrive and provide them with a good range of safe and suitable toys and equipment which interest and motivate them.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff are vigilant. All potential risks are identified and are minimised with daily risk assessments completed. Children benefit from a child friendly environment where they can move around freely and safely. There is a good range of high quality toys and equipment which are well maintained. Children are able to access these independently from tables, clearly labelled trays and boxes situated at their height. This enables children to make many of their own choices, increases their independence and helps them to organise their own play.

Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe with staff explaining some safe practices. For example, staff talk to them about walking inside and sitting on their chairs so they do not hurt themselves. The require fire safety precautions are in place and staff practise emergency evacuations with the children so that they know what to do in the event of a fire.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. They are aware of recording and reporting procedures and fully understand their responsibilities. A child protection policy is in place which all staff know how to implement if they had a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and settled in the pre-school. They arrive eager to learn and happily separate from their parents and carers or are appropriately supported by staff to do so. At the beginning of the session they explore and investigate their environment. They know the routine of the session well and enter the setting full of expectation and excitement.

Younger children experience a range of activities and play opportunities which overall contributes to their development and learning. Staff have a sound knowledge of child development. The daily routine has a balance of adult-led and child initiated play. Children's independence is encouraged as they are able to move around freely and make independent choices in their play. They have regular opportunities to experience creative play such as paint, sand and water play.

Currently, the group have a low number of children under the age of three years attending. Staff are familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are awaiting further training to develop their knowledge and understanding further.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of all aspects of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They use their knowledge to provide a broad range of stimulating play and learning opportunities designed to help them make good progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Planning covers the six areas of learning and is linked to the appropriate stepping stones. Focussed activities take place with identified learning intentions and some adaptation to address individual children's stage of development. Observations are made and transferred to the children's assessment records and staff are beginning to use this information to identify the next steps in individual children's learning.

An effective key worker system is in place with staff knowing their key children and their families well. Subsequently, children's individual needs are effectively met and they develop confidence and self-esteem. Staff use successful strategies to engage children, for example, at snack time encouraging children to listen by asking them to identify children by what they wear and the colour of their hair and at tidy up time using photos cards to help children to identify what needs to be done and where resources are stored.

The use of time and resources are good. The sessions are balanced to enable children to experience group time, outside play and to pursue their own interests. Staff know their children well and often ask searching questions that challenge the children in order to aid their progression to the next steps in their learning. Children cooperate with the routine, such as helping to tidy up and eagerly line up to go and get their coats on so they can play outside.

Children are involved and motivated, they are keen to offer their own ideas and respond well to challenges. For example, children enjoy building the farm houses and confidentially talk about the animals sleeping in the barn because it is raining. This enables them to use their initiative and concentrate on what they are doing. They negotiate roles in their play by clearly talking to each other especially in the home corner when enacting familiar scenarios from home such as making cakes. This enables them to form meaningful relationships with each other.

Children have good self help skills, they are able to manage their own needs such as putting on aprons, accessing the toilet independently and pouring their own drinks at snack time. They are developing good relationships with staff and other children. They are cooperative and well behaved with staff managing their behaviour positively and they are beginning to learn the consequence of their actions.

Some children enjoy sharing books with staff and relish the close interaction and attention this affords them. This helps children to appreciate books, recognise that print has meaning and seek comfort from staff when needed. Most children are confident communicators as they speak confidently and clearly with adults and each other. The environment is rich with inviting resources to promote the children's letter recognition, for example, lots of clear labels, name cards and tactile letters. Some children can recognise their names and some of letters within it. Children have opportunities to develop early writing skills, for example, on the daily writing table.

Children have good opportunities to learn about the natural world, growing and caring for plants. They design and build using the train track and use programme toys such as cassette players in their play. This helps them to learn simple skills such as turning the equipment on and off which helps to build their confidence. Children operate the computer competently and demonstrate good control of the mouse. However, staff do not currently monitor the use of the computer to ensure that all children access it.

Children have many opportunities to sort items into different colours, shapes and size. For example, children are engrossed in matching the coloured letters on the graphic table and putting the matching coloured shapes onto the correct pegs. They confidently name simple shapes and count up to 10 and beyond. Staff make good use of the everyday routines to encourage children to practise their counting skills. For example, counting how many children

line up before and after they play outside. Children are given good opportunities to identify numbers and staff use prompts as the 'early bird' puppet to effectively engage children in counting. They learn about patterns and sequencing through planned activities. However, these activities are not always extended to promote learning for the more able children. For example, pre-cut squared shapes and paper with grids on are provided for the children to make patterns. This means that this activity does not provide sufficient challenge for the more able children who are competent at using scissors and want to explore patterns with different shapes.

Children have daily opportunities to experiment with different colour paints and planned activities such as junk modelling allow children to be creative. However, there is a very limited range of media and materials for children to choose from on a daily basis to encourage them to be creative with their own ideas. This restricts their ability to explore and experiment with a range of resources at their own level. Children enjoy using their imagination based on their own experiences while using the role play area and the dressing up clothes. They can freely access musical instruments during the session and enthusiastically join in with the planned music activities. They enjoy joining in with their favourite songs and rhymes such as 'Incy Wincy spider'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued as individuals and are able to make positive choices and decisions during their time at the setting. They are developing a positive attitude to each other and gain an understanding of the wider world through discussion and resources that show positive images of difference and diversity. Children participate in a range of planned activities which enhances their understanding of different celebrations and festivals, these have included Chinese New Year and Christmas. Children have a clear understanding of their place in the community and share information about their homes and how they live. An effective partnership with the school provides a smooth transition for children into the school.

The setting works closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children's specific needs are met. Policies are in place to care for children with additional needs and there is a nominated member of staff to seek additional support and advice from other professionals to ensure that children's needs are met. Children with additional needs and English as a second language are well supported to ensure they are fully integrated in the setting. This enables children to increase their understanding of difference in a meaningful way.

Children behave well as they know what is expected of them. They are learning responsible behaviours and these are reinforced by the staff through gentle reminders and simple explanations which are at an appropriate level for their understanding. They share resources and negotiate without adult intervention. This enables them to make choices, take decisions and build harmonious partnerships. A behaviour policy is in place and is shared with parents. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered as they take part in the life of the setting and receive appropriate support from staff.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff have built a good rapport with parents and exchange information on a daily basis regarding any issues that may have arisen, this

ensures continuity of care. Parents are encouraged to view their children's assessment records, however they are not currently stored on the premises which hinder the parents ability to contribute and play an active part in their children learning. Some information on the Foundation Stage is on display on the notice board which helps to raise parental awareness. Parents are asked to complete a child profile when their children start at the pre-school to help identify their children's starting point and again when their children start the Foundation Stage. They receive newsletters which gives general information regarding the running of the setting. Parents are able to participate in the parents' rota, which helps them to gain a better understanding of the activities that their children join in with. Parents views are actively sort through a questionnaire. They make positive comments about setting, such as the group 'has a lovely warm environment', which 'prepares children extremely well for full time school 'and the staff are 'very approachable'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are relaxed and happy in the setting. They are safeguarded as recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff have a high regard for the well-being of all children and ensure there are robust systems in place regarding visitors. This ensures children are safe and secure. Children are well supported and staff awareness contributes to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Most policies and procedures are in place and work in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Although some require updating to ensure they reflect current regulations. The staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well together to create a caring environment for children.

The room is organised to allow children to move freely and safely and the routine of the session helps children to settle well. Staff are mostly deployed effectively within the setting, spending the majority of their time interacting with the children to support their care, learning and play.

The leadership and management is good. The current staff team have been together for a year and work closely to improve and enhance the setting for the children. They review and monitor their procedures and practice which ensures children's needs are actively promoted. Their work is well supported by the committee who are fully aware of their role and responsibilities. The staff are a strong team who compliment each other's skills. Children benefit as the staff are enthusiastic and committed in promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters. Staff meetings and support from the local authority help to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education to ensure that all children are making good progress. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group were asked to review the child protection procedure to include a procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The group have devised a procedure to follow should an allegation be made against a

member of staff. This is currently undergoing further review along with the child protection policy to safeguard the welfare of the children.

The previous nursery education inspection set key issues relating to planning challenges for the more able children, implementing staff appraisals and utilising resources to encourage children to write their own name. The group have a comprehensive planning system and an effective keyworker system in place to ensure that all children are provided with activities that provide sufficient challenge for them. In addition, staff adapt activities and use questioning skilfully to provide further challenges to the more able children. The group now carry out staff appraisals which identify the strengths and areas of improvement of the setting. This is used to develop a training plan to further improve the quality of service provided by the pre-school. Children now benefit from regular opportunities to recognise their own name, such as name labels on their coat pegs and self-registering. A good range of resources are now in place to encourage children's independence in writing their own name. For example, each child has a name card which they freely access throughout the session. This enable children to initiate and experiment with writing their own name at their own level.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 1 April 2004 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 complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- obtain prior written permission from parent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment
- continue to update and review the operational policies and procedures in line with current regulations.

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):

- improve the system to encourage parents to share and contribute to their children's records and providing information on the foundation stage
- increase opportunities for children to explore and experiment with a range of media and materials of their own choosing.

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