

Earlybirds Pre-school (Ravensmere)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	251465
Inspection date	14/07/2010
Inspector	Janet Keeling
Setting address	Ravensmere Infant School, St. Benedicts Road, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 9DE
Telephone number	01502 712367
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

Earlybirds Pre-school opened in 1976 and has operated as a registered charity since 1993. It operates from a classroom within Ravensmere County Infants School in Beccles, Suffolk. The group is managed by a committee and works closely in partnership with the host school. The group has access to an enclosed outdoor play area, which they share with the main school. The group serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas.

The group is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 24 children from two to under five years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 35 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The setting receives funding for early years education. The group open Monday to Friday from 12:45pm to 3:15pm during school term times only.

The group have procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff who work directly with the children, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and eager to learn in this very vibrant and welcoming group. Staff successfully recognise and promote the uniqueness of each child and support children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. Staff are highly motivated, work well as a team and have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, consequently, children make excellent progress in their learning and development. Staff strive to offer an inclusive service where all children are respected and valued as individuals. Highly effective partnerships with parents and other agencies ensure each child's care and education is supported and tailored to their individual needs. The pre-school is led by a very motivated and experienced manager who has embraced the process of self-evaluation and who demonstrates a commitment and ability to sustain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review and develop the daily risk assessment procedures to ensure they clearly demonstrate what action has been taken to minimise all potential risks to children

- review and update documentation to ensure it is written in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, this refers to the children's registration forms.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Good priority is given to safeguarding and protecting children. All staff have completed their safeguarding children training and are fully aware of the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child in their care. Effective procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are in place together with effective procedures for the induction of new staff and students. Children's health, safety and well-being is enhanced through the effective maintenance of documentation, however, the children's admission forms have not been updated in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. There are effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children. Staff are highly motivated, very competent, work well together as a team and demonstrate an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Risk assessments are completed and cover all aspects of the learning environment and outings. However, the daily risk assessments do not clearly demonstrate what action has been taken to minimise all potential risks to children in the outdoor area and in the corridor outside of the pre-school room. Deployment of resources is excellent. For example, staff make effective use of available space and ensure that children are able to freely access all resources. Staff are also successfully deployed to support children's care, learning and well-being.

The manager and staff have a clear vision for the setting and strive to develop their practice at all times. For example, through the use of their self-evaluation system and from the feedback from parent questionnaires they monitor and evaluate the quality and standards of the pre-school practice. Staff also have access to ongoing training to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated regularly. Recommendations made at the previous inspection have been fully addressed and have had a very positive impact on outcomes for children in the pre-school group. Regular staff meetings are held which provide valuable opportunities for staff to discuss planning, share good practice and to identify any training needs. Methods to promote equality and diversity thread through the setting, this is successfully achieved through planned activities, the use of visual displays and posters, role-play equipment and through open discussion between staff and children. The manager and staff demonstrate an excellent commitment to working with external agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Excellent links with the host school are well established. Regular meetings with the reception class teacher and a programme of events in the summer term ensure children's smooth transition into the classroom environment.

Partnerships with parents are outstanding. Children benefit enormously from the warm and relaxed relationships that have been established between their parents and the pre-school staff. Parents are warmly welcomed by staff and clearly feel very comfortable within the setting. Staff dedicate time getting to know children

and their families, fostering excellent relationships and helping to ensure that children settle and feel secure. The daily exchange of information ensures that children's changing needs are consistently met. Parents access a wealth of information regarding the group through the use of a parents' notice board and newsletters. Parents evenings are also arranged which provide opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress and look at their child's individual 'learning journey folder'. All required documentation such as contracts and consents are completed and well maintained. Parents also receive a prospectus before their child starts at the group and have access to all policies and procedures. Parents say they are extremely happy with the excellent care and learning opportunities that are provided for their children and that their children make excellent progress during their time at the pre-school group. Parents commented that staff are approachable, professional, caring and very aware of their children's individual needs. There are good opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the pre-school group. For example, parents are welcome to attend committee meetings, participate in outings, be part of the 'parent helper' rota and support fund raising events throughout the year.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children benefit from a very welcoming environment and from the staff's knowledge and understanding of how to develop children's learning through play. There is a vibrant atmosphere where children thrive and respond to challenges with great enthusiasm. Children have excellent opportunities to make choices about their own learning as they freely access a wide range of activities and resources both indoors and outdoors. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that result in children being active learners, creative and able to think critically. Staff interaction is excellent, staff know the children very well, are aware of their individual learning needs, ask open ended questions and support children as they play. Children work independently and in groups and share their ideas with staff. All children are valued and treated with equal concern with any specific requirements being sensitively met through discussion with parents and other professionals. Staff have a very good understanding of children's individual needs as they observe and record information on a daily basis. Information gained through observation is evaluated and used to inform future planning. All children have a 'learning journey folder' which contains both written and photographic information of children's learning, achievements and records of children's own work. These folders are shared regularly with parents and are available for parents to see at any time.

Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals because staff demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. Children's personal, social and emotional development is inspiring. Children talk confidently within the group and are able to competently express their thoughts and feelings. For example, as children observed a goldfish swimming in the bowl, they enthusiastically talked about the colour of the fish, used a magnifying glass to observe the patterns on the fish and chatted excitedly about their visit to the Sea Life Centre. One child said, 'I saw a

big fish', whilst another child said they saw a 'shark!'. Children are developing a love for books as they sit attentively at story-time, freely access a wide range of titles and are able to choose a library book at any time to take home and share with their family. Children are beginning to learn that print carries meaning as they self-register on arrival and are encouraged to write their names on their own work. Children relish their daily opportunities to play outdoors, they confidently negotiate the fixed play equipment, competently pedal bikes and skilfully throw and catch balls. One group of children had enormous fun playing basketball, they carefully threw the ball and chuckled with delight as the ball went through the net. Children's creativity is fully supported through an excellent range of role-play equipment, construction toys and access to a wide range of media, such as paint, water, sand, chalks and play-dough. Whilst outdoors a group of children played in the sand pit, one child skilfully filled a container and made sand castles whilst another child scooped sand into a funnel and watched as it ran through, when it stopped the child asked an adult, 'why has the sand stopped?', the adult replied, 'can you tell me why?', the child looked on in amazement and then said, 'because it's wet!'. The well resourced home corner is very popular with the children who delight when it changes from a hospital, into a flower shop, to an estate agents and into a cave. Children also benefit hugely from regular visits into the local community where they make observations of different buildings, visit the church and feed the new ducklings down by the Riverside Quay.

Children's behaviour is very good, they develop confidence and self-esteem and are developing an understanding of other people's needs. For example, whilst observing the fish children took turns to use the magnifying glass and whilst at the computer more able children supported the younger children to follow the instructions on the screen. Consequently, children learn to share, take turns and respect each other. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of diversity as staff encourage positive, open discussion about people's differences and similarities, as they celebrate cultural festivals throughout the year. Staff encourage children to keep themselves safe as they discuss the appropriate use of equipment, talk about road safety whilst on outings and practice the emergency evacuation procedures. Children demonstrate a growing awareness of their own health and hygiene needs. Many children are independent with toileting skills and are very aware of washing their hands after using the toilet and before snacks. Children develop an understanding of healthy lifestyles and are beginning to understand the importance of healthy eating through planned activities and the provision of healthy snacks. Drinks are accessible throughout the session to ensure children remain hydrated. Children develop a sense of responsibility as they help to tidy away their toys, use tools such as scissors in a safe manner, hang their coats and belongings on their individually named coat pegs and independently take a painting overall and put it on before engaging in a painting activity. Consequently, children demonstrate that they are acquiring skills that will help them in the future and prepare them well for their transition from pre-school into school.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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