



Belgrave Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	304974
Inspection date	02 May 2006
Inspector	Ron Goldsmith
Setting Address	55-57 Five Ashes Road, Chester, Cheshire, CH4 7QS
Telephone number	01244 671243
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Registered person	Belgrave 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 satisfactory. 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?

Belgrave Preschool Playgroup is run by a committee of parents. It opened in 1973 and operates from Westminster Park community centre which is part of Belgrave Primary School, Chester. A maximum of 24 children may attend each session at any one time. The preschool is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 with a lunch club available every day except Monday from 11.45 to 12.45. The group operates during term times only. There is access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from 2 years to 5 years on roll. Of these 25 receive funding for nursery education. The preschool supports children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language. The preschool employs 7 staff, all of whom, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy energetic and physical activities, moving around the environment confidently and with good control. They show a good awareness of space, themselves and others. In physical play sessions children learn to move in a variety of ways as they run, jump catch and throw. Children are learning to listen to their bodies as they move around vigorously with staff, recognising that exercise is tiring.

Children learn good hygiene routines, always washing their hands at appropriate times. They are protected from infection by the staff's good attention to cleanliness and hygiene. Children enjoy snack time but the variety of snack provided is poor and lacks choice and variety. Their special dietary needs are well met through the regular exchange of good information between parents and childcare staff.

When children are unwell, consents, policies and procedures are effective in ensuring continuity of care between home and setting, through good communication and appropriate action. When accidents occur, children receive good care, because staff have relevant and current first aid qualifications.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in warm, secure and safe environment. The indoor and outdoor areas are secure. The premises are clean and well maintained. Preparation by staff for activities helps make the environment bright and attractive, but not enough of the children's work is displayed to enhance their sense of belonging in the setting. Children are able to move around the environment with ease. There is adequate space for them to play and move around freely, as they independently access resources from tables in activities which staff have prepared for them.

Safety measures are in place such as socket covers, fire fighting equipment and restricted access to the building. Children develop a good awareness of safety as they are reminded not to run or carry scissors about the premises. However, the use of the premises has not been formally risk assessed. Children's safety is compromised by the absence of rigorous procedures for checking and vetting staff. Consequently a staff member has been in post and working with children without being vetted first. This is a breach of regulations. The provider has now contacted the vetting agency and is processing appropriate documentation to resolve this, in conjunction with ensuring that the member of staff is not left unsupervised with

children. Staff have a satisfactory awareness of the procedures to be followed regarding child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a good range of activities throughout the session. They are gaining confidence as they build relationships with each other and the staff. Children are becoming more confident communicators as they initiate conversations and join in discussions at circle time. Children participate fully in learning opportunities, moving confidently between each activity, using the quiet area for activities such as selecting books to read. They learn to share and take turns as they use puzzles, games and small world toys. Children learn to explore and investigate using their senses as they feel the textures of different materials and listen to different sounds they make with rhyming words. Early communication skills are well supported through good quality adult-child interaction. Staff do not always encourage independence by allowing children to complete more tasks for themselves. They represent their ideas and feelings in a variety of ways through the use of a wide range of creative materials, such as paint, dough, sand, gloop, straw, junk modelling and plaster of paris.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. This underpins their very effective teaching and ensures that all children make good progress towards all early learning goals, taking into account their different starting points. Staff are skilled in assessing children's skills, knowledge and understanding and weaving a programme of activities around children's individual experiences and interests. Children are progressing well.

Children's individual developmental check lists, clearly linked to the stepping stones, are completed and staff use this information to ensure that all the children are challenged appropriately. Staff support, encourage and challenge children's learning and thinking using good questioning techniques and good intervention. Staff are very good at reinforcing the children's listening skills, encouraging them to listen at circle and story time, although children's attention in large groups is sometimes distracted. They enjoy stories and they talk about features in the story they are told. They write using a variety of means including pens, paint, sand and in their imaginative play. Staff use resources effectively to meet the needs of all the children.

Children are imaginative in their play and enjoy extensive role play in activities, such as being firemen and hunting for treasure, using maps and clues they have devised for themselves, or creating an aeroplane with chairs and selecting to be pilots or passengers. These activities all contribute to children's understanding and thoughts about the world around them, how things work and a sense of time and place. Several structured group activities during the day help children share their interests and ideas. They talk about their families and they respond with care to a rabbit and goldfish that are brought in to the setting. Children's behaviour is good. They play

cooperatively with each and feel confident in asking staff for particular resources. There is lots of lively conversation. They talk to adults confidently and their relationships with staff and with each other are good. Through these activities children learn to use language for thinking, develop social skills, and appreciate that we write and read for a purpose.

Children eagerly enter the room in the morning and gather round tables set out with equipment that stimulates their interest in shapes, size, and counting. They concentrate and work together well, taking turns to play a computer game, operating the mouse with good control. They manipulate dough skilfully into different shapes and they junk model, accessing different textured materials. Children enjoy counting in everyday situations such as counting each other or the number of plates at snack time. They construct towers with blocks and proudly share their creations. Through these activities children develop a range of mathematical knowledge, in addition to developing enquiring minds, helping them to understand their world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued as individuals. They develop a positive attitude to others and gain a good understanding of the wider world and the community through celebrating and participating in festivals and visits to local places of interest. They enjoy and respond to visits made to the setting by people such as the midwife or fire-fighters.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff treat each child as an individual, acknowledging and respecting their home experiences and developing their self-esteem as they are given a warm welcome each day. Children develop awareness of peoples similarities and differences and learn to appreciate diversity in cultures and beliefs through some good topics, celebrating different cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year. However, there are few wall posters or resources to reflect diversity. Staff work well with parents and other agencies to follow up concerns about speech and language development.

Children have good self-esteem due to the staff team's realistic expectations of the children and the positive reinforcement they receive. Children behave well and are learning to understand the difference between right and wrong as they negotiate over the equipment and resources, for example, they are beginning to work harmoniously with each other as they share small tasks. Staff provide clear guidance for children by the way of gentle reminders, for example, to listen while information is shared at registration or circle time, which helps them begin to accept the needs of others.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff provide parents with good information about the operational plan through the brochure and the notice board. They receive an overview of the early learning goals and how children learn through play and make progress along the stepping stones. A newsletter issued each term informs parents about future topics and the activities planned, should they wish to follow this up at home or make a contribution. Parents provide staff with initial information about their child's capabilities, likes and dislikes and continue to exchange information daily on

an informal basis to promote children's welfare. They may look at children's work at any time but are also invited formally to discuss their child's record of progress and receive a summary report of achievements. However, the timing of this meeting does not encourage parents further involvement in children's education, because it comes at the end of the year.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care is underpinned by mainly comprehensive policies and procedures, which staff know and understand, due to effective induction procedures. However, no record of complaints has been devised and there is no formal risk assessment. An appropriate checking procedure for new staff is not carried out. Children benefit from good staff ratios, giving them plenty of individual attention. Children are settled and secure in the nursery, as a result of well-established daily routines and procedures.

Leadership and management is good. There is good teamwork between the manager, deputy and other staff in the planning and delivery of the educational programme and good organisation of time and resources. This results in good outcomes for children under enjoying and achieving and making a positive contribution. Informal evaluation of the educational programme including good observations on what children have learnt is carried out on a daily basis and used to plan next steps. All staff are qualified and experienced, this has a positive effect on children's learning and welfare. Staffing levels are organised to ensure that they are above the required ratios at all times affording children a good level of attention and support.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two recommendations arising from the last day care inspection which were in relation to updating records and ensuring that gas, electrical and appliance checks had been carried out. The five recommendations arising from the last nursery education inspection were to ensure planning of some activities to ensure that learning objectives are clear; staff deployment to ensure learning from all activities is maximised; provide opportunities for children to develop climbing skills and learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies; to make sure staff use everyday activities to reinforce counting and letter skills. Lastly, to monitor children's participation in activities to ensure that all children receive a balanced range of experiences.

The playgroup has improved the records by updating them. They have ensured that the management committee of the community centre has checked gas and electrical safety and appliances. The certificates are displayed in the entrance area.

The planning for all activities ensures that learning objectives are clear and staff know what they expect children to learn from activities. Staff are appropriately

deployed to ensure learning opportunities are maximised, there are opportunities for children to learn about the effects of activities through exercise on their bodies in vigorous outdoor play and talking to staff about this. Staff use everyday opportunities to reinforce counting and letter recognition, such as children counting each other. The systems for monitoring children's participation have improved. This means that staff are now better informed about what children know and can do, and what to plan for their next steps.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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.

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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):

- improve the quality and variety of food given to children at snack time
- ensure a rigorous vetting procedure, which includes criminal records check is in place for all staff employed
- devise a formal risk assessment to identify potential risks to children and a system for recording any complaints which the setting may receive

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):

- provide further opportunities for parents to be given information children's educational progress in the setting.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk