

Benenden Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 127014 |
| Inspection date | 02 July 2007 |
| Inspector | Vanessa Wood |
| Setting Address | St. Georges Hall, The Street, Benenden, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 4DB |
| Telephone number | 01580 714901 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Benenden 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Benenden Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1967 and is managed by a parent management committee. It operates from two inter-connecting rooms on the first floor of the St George's Hall in Benenden. There is a fully enclosed outdoor area for children's play. A maximum of 21 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:00 until 12:00 on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The Monday session is from 9:00 until 15:15 and on a Tuesday they currently hold a lunch club when the session is from 9:00 until 13:30.

There are currently 24 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these 13 children receive funding for nursery education. There are currently no children attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and no children attend who speak English as an additional language.

Four staff work with the children, two of whom hold recognised early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. For example, they know that they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating because this stops germs spreading. Staff clean tables before and after use and paper towels are supplied for children to dry their hands to help prevent the spread of infection. Most staff have first aid qualifications and can deal with any emergencies. However, staff do not record all accidents that take place in the pre-school and this could have implications for children's health. Children enjoy healthy food at snack time. They help to cut up the bananas and hand out the grapes, kiwi fruit and slices of apples. There is milk or water to drink and children can access drinking water at any time during the session. Children enjoy physical exercise and develop a positive approach to this through regular opportunities for outdoor play. They confidently climb the large apparatus and slide down the other side. They persevere in trying to walk using the stilts and play games with the bats and balls.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. Their work is displayed around the rooms and storage units are at children's level which enables them to access toys and resources easily and safely. Children sit at low tables and chairs so they can work in comfort. A risk assessment has been completed on the building and many safety measures are in place to minimise risks, such as covers for all electrical sockets, bars to the windows and smoke alarms. However, the two doors to the rooms are not kept locked to prevent any unauthorised visitors entering the pre-school. The space in the rooms is mostly used effectively to ensure children can move around freely and safely. Staff explain safe practices to children, such as why children should not run and why they should pick up items dropped on the floor, so that other children do not fall and hurt themselves. This helps children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Staff understand the child protection policy and the manager has attended training recently to update her knowledge and understanding of new procedures. The policy document is to be updated to reflect this training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Opportunities for children's independence are promoted well during the free play sessions when there is a good balance of adult led and child initiated play. Children are able to access toys and play materials that interest them, take part in the craft activity and learn to be independent with their own personal hygiene. Children enjoy this time and are fully involved in a wide range of enjoyable activities which promotes all areas of learning. For example, children enjoy playing with sand, role play, construction and art and crafts. They communicate well with staff, showing them things that they have done and talking about their experiences. Children benefit from warm relationships with staff who are interested in them and give them lots of praise and encouragement. However, the daily routine is organised into separate activity sessions which means toys are tidied away after the free play session to make way for a more formal teaching session and snack time. This disrupts children's play and does not allow children to fully concentrate on their chosen play activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have an understanding of the Foundation Stage and plans are in place to ensure all areas of the curriculum are covered. Staff provide a wide range of activities to promote children's learning. Assessments are made on children's achievements and staff plan the next steps in their learning. However, the daily routine is not flexible and at times does not provide children with play opportunities and first-hand experiences to enable them to build on their natural curiosity as learners in order to develop their language and mathematical thinking and to develop social relationships. At times large group activities are not managed well because staff do not support the children and one another. As a result, children can lose concentration and become disruptive.

Children enjoy books, accessing them independently and listening attentively to stories in small groups. Children learn about phonic sounds as they talk about the elephant masks they are going to make and think of other words that begin with the same sound, such as egg and eye. Staff extend learning by showing children a train and asking about what makes the train work. Children discuss this until they discover the word engine begins with the same sound as elephant. Children have opportunities to write for a purpose and some children are beginning to write their names. Children learn to count as they count 12 trucks for the train and how many children are present. They are beginning to understand simple addition and subtraction through play situations as they add and take away trucks on the train and count how many are left. Children enjoy matching and threading and learn measure and weight as they play with sand.

Children show an interest in the lives of people familiar to them and people from the community visit the group to talk about their work. For example, they learn about road safety and how to keep themselves safe in the community. They develop an understanding of the natural world through topics and focused activities. They grow tomato seeds and nurture these to see how they develop and there is a herb garden in the outdoor play area where children enjoy touching and smelling the plants and learning about the different herbs. Children enjoy using all their senses to explore a wide range of different materials including sand, dough, and woodwork. They learn how to mix two different coloured paints to make another colour, such as grey to paint their elephant masks.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children feel welcome and included because staff have positive relationships with them. Staff seek information about children before they attend the pre-school which enables them to provide for their individual needs. Children begin to learn to respect cultural difference as they celebrate different cultural festivals, such as Chinese New Year and there are many posters around the pre-school showing people and children from different countries. Clear procedures are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In general most children's behaviour is appropriate. However, large group sessions can take too long and children become distracted and behaviour deteriorates. Deployment of staff does not allow for them to support children and each other during these sessions. As a result children's learning is compromised.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are invited to join the committee and become part of the pre-school. The committee members praise the pre-school and organise many events to raise money to support the pre-school. Staff work closely with parents regarding their children's care and education. This includes daily discussion with parents, newsletters and a

good prospectus. Questionnaires have recently been sent to parents to look at good practice and the response from parents has been very positive.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There is a clear written set of documentation in place to show the aims and objectives of the pre-school and their policies and procedures. Some paperwork is undergoing review, such as the policy for Child Protection and the daily safety check list. The arrangements for security at the pre-school are also to be reviewed and systems must be in place to record all accidents to children. Staff are aware of the required ratios, but this is not always maintained in large group sessions. Staff are not deployed effectively to work with the children at all times. As a result, supervision of children's behaviour is not consistent.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The committee and staff know their individual roles and responsibilities. They meet regularly to talk about developments and any issues of concern. Regular appraisals are in place to monitor staff training needs. The daily routine is not flexible and does not provide children with play opportunities and first-hand experiences to develop their learning.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four recommendations following the last inspection: to develop staff's knowledge of child protection issues; to provide information for committee members about their roles and responsibilities; to seek advice regarding the appropriate use of the accident book and to utilise the risk assessment as part of an operational plan.

All recommendations have been completed. The supervisor has recently attended child protection training to update her knowledge and she has made other staff aware of new procedures. Committee members now have job descriptions to ensure they are aware of their roles and responsibilities. An accident book has been purchased to ensure confidentiality and there is a written risk assessment which forms part of the operational plan.

There were three recommendations following the last education inspection: to extend planning to (a) ensure children find out about cultural diversity and (b) to give children opportunities to investigate and learn how things work; to ensure planned activities are linked to the stepping stones and to provide parents with written information about the Foundation Stage curriculum.

All three recommendations have been met. Staff provide activities such as French lessons and teaching children about different cultural festivals to promote children's understanding of cultural diversity. Activities are provided for children to investigate and learn how things work, such as watching how tadpoles change, how seeds grow and through cooking. Comprehensive plans are in place and the areas of learning are linked to the stepping stones to ensure all areas are covered. New parents are given a prospectus and a booklet which gives information about the Foundation Stage curriculum.

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 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:

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 all accidents to children in the provision are recorded and made available to parents
- review security of the premises to ensure a system is in place to prevent unauthorised visitors entering the building
- develop strategies for managing children's behaviour to ensure acceptable behaviour and respect for others is promoted
- ensure staff are deployed effectively to work with the children at all times

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):

- plan the daily routine to provide children with play opportunities and first-hand experiences which allow children to build on their natural curiosity and develop their learning

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