



Malyons Preschool Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203873
Inspection date	15 November 2006
Inspector	Jacqueline Oldman
Setting Address	Northlands Park, Community Hall, Felmores, Basildon, Essex, SS13 1SD
Telephone number	01268 450158
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Registered person	Maylons 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Malyons Pre-school is committee run. It opened in 1983 and operates from two rooms in the Northlands Park Community Hall. It is situated in the Felmores area of Basildon. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:20 to 11:50 and on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:20 to 14:50 for 38 weeks of the year. The pre-school does not have an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 48 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local community. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these, five staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are currently working towards a further recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because practitioners adequately follow most environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. Staff monitor children as they use the toilet facilities to keep them safe and ensure they wash their hands after going to the toilet. A suitable nappy changing policy and procedures are well implemented to help stop cross contamination. Parents supply nappy bags for soiled nappies and these are taken home by them at the end of each session. More able children help themselves to tissues while younger children are gently reminded to fetch a tissue and blow their noses. All children learn to dispose of used tissues hygienically to protect others from germs. However, children's good health could be compromised as they use a communal bowl to wash their hands after art activities and do not consistently wash them prior to eating food. A sick child policy helps to stop the spread of infection and parents are asked to collect their child if they become unwell at pre-school. However, they are not fully protected as the exclusion period for sickness and diarrhoea is not in line with current recommendations. Staff have attended first aid courses and keep clear records of any accidents or medication administered to meet the requirements of the National Standards.

Children sit in small groups with a member of staff to enjoy healthy snacks. They readily tuck into apple, orange or banana followed by a biscuit or bread and butter. Children learn the importance of good health through looking at and discussing the wide range of posters and displays around the play room together with staff talking to them during snack time about foods that are good for them and why; this helps promote a healthy lifestyle. Children have their health and dietary needs met because information is gathered from parents and staff are made aware of any allergies or special dietary needs.

Children have daily opportunities for physical exercise, which contributes to their good health. Children have plenty of space to crawl or climb and have great fun using the tunnels to climb inside, sit on or crawl through as they pretend they are going on trips or are on a train. Children do not have regular access to a garden but have some opportunities to go on outings to the adjacent park to engage in energetic play. Children use the range of large apparatus to practise and refine their skills while benefiting from being outside in the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, well ventilated, secure and safe indoor environment. Staff arrive early to prepare the playroom for children's arrival to ensure it is warm, child friendly and organised effectively with a range of well spread out activities. Colourful posters, wall hangings and displays of children's work are put up daily and furniture, toys and equipment

that are safe and suitable for those attending, are organised to provide a stimulating environment to encourage children to settle quickly to their chosen activity.

Security is given high priority and staff are very vigilant in ensuring children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and are protected from unauthorised persons. A door bell alerts staff to any visitors wanting to enter the building. They are carefully checked and asked to sign the visitor's book; as a result, an effective system for managing access is consistently maintained to keep children safe. Children are fully protected as they are supervised at all times, there are well organised collection procedures and a lost child and uncollected child policy is in place. Daily risk assessments, together with an evaluation of accident reports, help identify potential hazards and ensure proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents. Children learn about what is dangerous and how to keep themselves safe. They take part in regular emergency evacuation practices and learn about fire safety. Staff identify potential risks and talk with children about being safe by gently reminding them to sit properly on chairs and showing them how to carry them safely.

Children are protected from potential harm or neglect by staff's knowledge of child protection issues and their confidence in following appropriate procedures should they have any concerns about a child's well-being. There is a written policy and the associated guidance readily available for help and reference. However, the policy doesn't fully reflect the recent revisions and whilst the relevant important contact details are available these are not yet included in the policy; this could compromise children's safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for and taught by a mostly qualified, enthusiastic staff team who plan a stimulating range of activities to help children make progress. A key worker system supports children, when settling in, by helping them to gain confidence. Resources are well organised so they are attractive and accessible to encourage children to make choices about their play. Staff working with children under three have a satisfactory knowledge of individual children's developmental stages and some knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They have been charting all children's progress through three distinct phases: starting out; on the way and firm foundations. They have recently reviewed and implemented changes to the developmental charts to reflect the framework more closely. Staff are beginning to use the framework to plan and deliver activities which help young children to learn and develop, however, opportunities are not yet maximised. Children explore and investigate toys and resources, supported by staff who ask questions to develop their language and communication skills. Staff take time to play with individual children as they follow their interests. For example, sharing books, painting or completing puzzles with them; helping children to develop in confidence and ensuring they feel valued and included.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children in the pre-school follow a curriculum based on the Foundation Stage. They enjoy activities designed to help them make progress through the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals. Staff plan as a team and take responsibility for particular activities on a rota basis, making them appealing and engaging for the children. Activities are generally evaluated and have some assessment opportunities built in. Key workers understand their own group member's needs and work towards some targets for individual children. Children's progress is observed to build into a record showing what they can do. However, this information is not yet sufficiently detailed or effectively used to inform children's next steps in learning to ensure opportunities for individual children are maximised. Children work and play well together, they are busy, motivated and persevere at their chosen activities.

Children interact well with both their peers and adults as they engage in story-making in role play. They talk and plan how they will begin and develop the narrative enjoying using talk to express their ideas and feelings. Children enthusiastically join in with their favourite nursery rhymes and listen and respond with enjoyment and enthusiasm to familiar stories and repeating text such as 'Mirror mirror on the wall'. Children use writing as a means of recording and communicating. They have regular opportunities to initiate writing in play and some are beginning to demonstrate an understanding of phonic knowledge. For example they can recognise their own name and the initial sound of familiar words such as 'mummy'. More able children can write their names with varying degrees of support from staff.

Children show interest in construction activities; they talk about the shapes and arrangements as they build houses and people or match shapes by recognising the similarities. They learn about numbers and counting through first hand experiences. They actively take part in games where staff create opportunities for children to count to ten and count back. Children are beginning to recognise objects can be grouped in different ways with the total remaining the same.

Children spend time investigating and exploring. They manipulate play dough using a range of tools to cut, roll and measure and design and make pictures using hammers and pins with increasing skill. Children use mirrors imaginatively and learn about how cogs and gears work as they design and build 2D and 3D models. They are encouraged to learn about their own cultures and the beliefs of others through topics such as Chinese New Year, Christmas and Guy Fawkes Night.

Children have appropriate opportunities to use large play equipment and take part in energetic play in the nearby park. They are given time to explore, experiment and refine their physical skills and are learning to move with ease and co-ordination. They are gaining in confidence as they develop their fine motor skills when using tools, such as scissors, stampers and punches.

Children have opportunities to be creative and express their own ideas and thoughts through music, art and role play. They are able to differentiate between colours, and work imaginatively building their confidence as they indulge in sensory activities such as hand painting. Children have free access to creative materials and can paint or draw at any time; this encourages children to discover their creative potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young children are supported well giving them confidence to try new things. They decide when they have finished their painting and staff support them in pegging it on the washing line, showing them how to achieve success. All children have good opportunities to be recognised as a valuable contributor to the group. They take it in turns to help at snack times and are offered opportunities to take part in circle time activities as a whole group, small group or individually; this promotes their confidence and self-esteem. Children with additional needs have their specific needs effectively met as staff work closely with parents and other professionals, such as educational psychologists, and provide one to one support, adapting activities accordingly. Children become aware of wider society as the setting has many posters and wall displays reflecting the similarities and differences of others. Children also benefit from topics and resources which teach them about different cultures and attitudes helping to promote an awareness of the diverse community in which they live.

Children respond well to staff expectations. The use of positive language and sensitive interaction helps younger children to learn and manage their own behaviour as they test out boundaries with adults who they trust. Effective strategies such as pictorial prompts and staff's consistent approach help children develop their self-esteem and form positive attitudes. Staff are good role models for wanted behaviour. They are calm, kind, well-mannered and show respect; this encourages children to follow their example.

The pre-school has a clear complaints policy and procedures that are shared with parents. Staff build trusting and honest relationships with parents resulting in any minor concerns being resolved quickly and informally. Parents are made aware they can view the complaints record on request.

Nursery education

Children explore other cultures and festivals. Staff help them to consolidate their learning through discussion and topic work. Positive images and resources provide an inclusive environment which encourages children to discuss and explore their ideas and views. All children have access to a range of toys and equipment which supports their individual progress and ensures their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents are very keen to share their appreciation of the pre-school's practice and the support individual children receive in both their learning and social skills. Regular 'Parents Page' newsletters inform parents of forthcoming topics and how they can support their child at home; this provides a good link between home and pre-school, and involves parents in their child's learning. Children select work to go into their topic book to share with parents; this provides them with a good insight into their child's achievements. Parents have good opportunities to attend formal parents' evenings where they can view their child's development folder and discuss their progress with staff. The record is given to parents when children leave to help support their child's transition into school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff and workplace students who have undergone all necessary checks, are vetted and supervised to ensure their suitability to work with them. Procedures for recruitment and employment of new staff are well thought out and effective. The staff team have achieved a good level of qualifications and demonstrate a commitment to update their knowledge and skills by attending further training. A two day induction ensures staff are well equipped to do the job they are employed for. Regular staff meetings serve to celebrate achievement as well as highlight professional developmental needs, bringing knowledge that will enhance the care and education of the children in meaningful ways.

Staff demonstrate a high regard for the well-being of all children attending. Children enjoy a favourable ratio of staff, usually over and above the minimum requirements. Rotas ensure staff are deployed effectively around the main play room, are available to help children get started with activities and settle those who need a little more time to feel secure enough to join in. A key worker system is in place, giving parents a point of contact for any concerns, as well as to discuss the children's progress and achievements on an informal basis. The use of available space within the pre-school is well organised, with clear areas for storage, play and food preparation. The sessions are organised to provide a variety of teaching methods including free play, whole group and small group times. This ensures variety and stimulation for the children and allows them to develop good relationships with one another and the adults around them.

An operational plan is now in place and satisfactorily organised to ensure the policies and procedures, curriculum aims, staff and committee details and routines regarding the setting are made available. However, some of the policies and procedures require reviewing and updating to ensure they are in line with the National Standards and associated guidance, following the October 2005 revisions. All other documentation to support children is in place, stored having regard for confidentiality.

Nursery Education

Leadership and Management is satisfactory.

Staff are seen to work well as a team to plan, organise and deliver a range of stimulating and imaginative play and learning opportunities for the children. With most of their time spent in direct contact with the children, organised through the implementation of rotas, the result is that there is very little unproductive time for children.

Training and professional development is encouraged and the results reflect in the improvements in the quality of care and education provided. There is a balance of newly qualified and experienced staff who are encouraged to share ideas and new methods of learning to enhance the choices for children. Staff are enabled to try things out; evaluation is part of the structure so ideas are carried forward once they prove to be beneficial and enjoyable. Outside help has been helpful in restructuring the planning and staff's understanding of how to create a sound learning environment.

The child centred approach creates a busy environment where children respond by being motivated and hard working. They have fun as they play and learn; this helps them to make progress.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to develop an operational plan including child protection procedures. This has been satisfactorily completed improving the safety and welfare of children; however, it requires reviewing and updating following recent revisions.

There were three key issues raised at the inspection for nursery education. Satisfactory improvement has been made. Children's learning has been enhanced because staff have been working closely with a curriculum advisor regarding; reviewing planning to improve the range of activities and experiences for learning in the Foundation Stage; reviewing the recording system to ensure records are linked to the stepping stones. As a result staff are now more proactive in providing more purposeful play experiences that cover all areas of learning. The short term planning has been extended so that staff are now made fully aware of the desired learning outcomes. Provision has been made for staff to evaluate what children know and can do. However, these are not yet sufficiently detailed and the information is not effectively used to inform future planning by consistent differentiation to support or challenge individual children to maximise outcomes for all children and a further recommendation has been made.

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:

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 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 fresh drinking water is made available to children at all times
- review hand washing procedures to help prevent the spread of infection
- enhance outcomes for children under three years by implementing an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- review and update policies and procedures to ensure they are in line with the National Standards and associated guidance. This refers to child protection and sick children.

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 planning to ensure observations are sufficiently detailed and used effectively to support or challenge individual children to maximise outcomes for all children.

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