



Longdendale Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	312346
Inspection date	05 December 2006
Inspector	Shirley Leigh Monks-Meagher
Setting Address	Mottram Community Association, Community Centre, Church Brow, Mottram, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 6JJ
Telephone number	01457 764 499
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Registered person	Longdendale 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?

Longdendale Pre-School has been operating for more than 30 years at Mottram Community Centre. The pre-school is committee run and operates from a large room on the ground floor. There are toilet facilities, a kitchen and an outdoor play area to the rear of the building. They have sole use of the premises when operating and serve children from the local community and further afield.

There are currently 21 children aged between two and a half and four years on roll. This includes 10 children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting supports a small number of children with additional needs. There are no children currently attending who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school is open from 09.15 to 12.00 Monday to Friday, during term time only.

There are four staff and five part-time volunteers who work with the children; three staff have early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from Sure Start and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing an understanding of suitable health and hygiene routines. Staff follow sensible hygiene routines and encourage children to attend to their own personal care. Children's knowledge and understanding about 'germs' helps to minimise cross infection. For example, they wash their hands before handling food or after using the toilet and help themselves to low-level tissues which they dispose of in the bin. Children receive appropriate care in the event of an accident because staff are first aid trained. Records relating to accidents and medication are consistently maintained and shared with parents. Children's welfare and well-being is fostered.

Children learn the importance of healthy eating because they are provided with snacks which are freshly prepared and contribute towards a balanced diet. Dietary needs are discussed with parents and recorded. These are known to staff who ensure individual requirements are met. Children are encouraged to collect their own plate and drink and find their seat at the tables. Children are able to help themselves to sufficient food to satisfy their individual needs and are given ample time to practise eating skills, such as using cutlery and chewing food thoroughly. This promotes children's independence well.

Children enjoy physical activities which contribute towards their good health. They benefit from fresh air and exercise as they engage in regular outdoor play. Children are learning to co-ordinate their bodies in activities, such as music and movement or climbing on the apparatus. They are developing good spatial awareness; they swerve around obstacles and know to drive their vehicles around the chalk path in a clockwise direction to avoid bumping into each other.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in warm, suitably maintained premises where furniture is of a suitable quality and an appropriate size. Staff have adapted the toilet facilities to promote children's independence. The hall is organised into learning areas with each area containing a selection of appropriate resources. This ensures the children experience a range of activities.

There are suitable processes in place to keep children safe. Staff are generally vigilant about minimising risks. For example, they undertake regular risk assessments, both inside and outdoors, and address issues promptly. However, there is ivy growing down the wall of the outdoor area and staff have not checked if it is of a safe variety, possibly posing a risk to children. Secure entry systems protect children's welfare. Staff regularly clean toys and equipment, discarding

damaged or incomplete items, to protect children's health and safety. Children are beginning to understand how to keep themselves safe within the setting because staff remind them of the consequences of their actions. For example, when climbing or running. Staff conduct regular emergency evacuation procedures with the children helping them to understand how to keep themselves safe in the event of fire.

Children's welfare is suitably safeguarded. All staff know how to safeguard children and understand that their first responsibility lies with the child. They share their role and responsibilities with parents via a policy document.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff establish positive relationships with children who are well settled and enjoy their time at the group. Children arrive confidently and are eager to participate in the activities. New children settle because staff are sensitive to their individual needs and all children make good progress because they are well supported. Children benefit from consistent staff and close, caring relationships are developing. This increases children's sense of trust and helps them identify a positive self-image. Children engage in a broad range of age-appropriate activities that are based on their own interests and individual learning needs. Staff use a secure understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and evaluative observations to track children's overall development and plan for their learning. As a result, children make good progress. Staff spend time playing with children in their chosen activities. This enables them to offer appropriate support to children, such as asking them open-ended questions which make them think, introducing a new concept or widening their vocabulary.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A well established staff team work together to motivate and support children. Staff demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. This is evidenced by clear planning which adopts a thematic approach and covers all six learning areas. Planning is clearly based on what children already know, understand and can do, and is linked to children's interests. Individual learning is catered for and learning intentions are distinct. Staff use planning as a focus for the sessions but adopt a flexible approach, enabling them to respond to significant events. Staff involve children in routines and simple organisational matters. For example, children have been involved in the reorganisation of their play areas. As a result, children know exactly where to look for additional toys or resources if they want to extend their own play or where something belongs when they are helping to tidy away. This gives children a sense of responsibility and familiarity which boosts their self-confidence and helps them to develop initiative. Staff use a variety of teaching methods, such as small groups, whole groups, one to one support and observing from afar. They act as good role models for skills, such as writing and problem solving and organise the sessions to allow ample opportunity and sufficient time for children to practise skills and strengthen their understanding. However, staff interactions with children during outdoor play are less focused on learning.

Children are confident communicators. They express their needs and ideas fluently and are learning to listen. For example, they listen carefully for their name at registration and respond to explanations and instructions successfully. They confidently ask questions when a member of staff is telling them about the 'Santa Run' she has been involved in over the weekend and are interested in her medal and the photograph of the runners. Children use writing tools competently and are beginning to link letter shapes to their sounds. They recognise their names on cards and files and more able children can recognise names other than their own. Children learn about basic mathematical concepts and use their knowledge to solve simple problems. For example, they use their knowledge of how many toilets they have and the fact that today one is broken, to work out how many children can go to the toilet at any one time. They describe events and actions using mathematical and positional language and recognise shapes and patterns in their everyday activities.

Children explore and investigate in practical hands-on experiences. They understand about change because they watch tadpoles grow into frogs, see the effect their warm hands have on ice, mix colours and bake cakes. They are developing design skills; children make interesting tracks for their trains, use recycled materials to make a large fire engine and build towers and animal enclosures using various size wooden blocks. Children have a very good understanding of modern technology. They use a digital camera with a degree of expertise and understand that they need to download the photograph onto the laptop before they can print it. They support their own learning competently with computers. Children are developing their ideas and creativity. They use a variety of media to explore colour, shape and textures. They can express their imaginations; they imitate grown-ups perceptively and act out their experiences in the role play area and with small world toys. Children are learning to move imaginatively to music and are developing a wide repertoire of rhymes and songs. They are able to tell the story of Noah through songs and actions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the setting and cared for by staff who know them well. They settle into the group because good settling-in procedures are in place. Staff listen to children, value and respect them as individuals and include them in decisions about their group, such as reorganising play areas and the Christmas concert theme. This approach results in confident, happy and secure children who have a strong sense of belonging, play a full part in the nursery and have a positive sense of self. All children make free choices, develop independence and are encouraged to follow their interests and use their initiative. The environment positively reflects the diversity of our society and the play materials and activities offered help children develop positive attitudes towards others.

Children's behaviour is good. Children are motivated and purposefully engaged. Their efforts are encouraged and rewarded with appropriate praise and achievements are celebrated. This increases their confidence in their abilities and fosters self-esteem. Children understand what is expected of them because staff consistently and clearly explain the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. Children are polite and are learning to show concern and care for others; the more able children help less able children with their coats. Most children are able

to take turns fairly and share the resources successfully with staff sensitively supporting younger children's understanding in these areas. Children generally play together harmoniously and older children are beginning to develop the art of negotiation and co-operation. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff share information relating to activities and events both verbally and in writing. The planning file is easily accessible on the main table. Parents are encouraged to look at children's work files and profiles which are easily accessible. Parents are provided with information relating to the 'Birth to three matters' guidance and the Foundation Stage of learning. This empowers them to be involved in their child's learning and make informed judgements about progress and development. This approach to working closely with parents significantly contributes to children's welfare, enjoyment and achievements. Children make good progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff and experienced volunteers who have undertaken Criminal Record Bureau checks and engage in regular training for their professional development. However, the recruitment, selection and suitability systems and procedures are not rigorous enough; consequently children's welfare is not fully safeguarded.

Children benefit from the smooth running of the group and consistent routines which help them to feel secure and settled. Staff work well together to underpin the effective operation of the group. The staffing ratio supports positive outcomes for children. Space and resources are organised effectively to promote children's enjoyment, achievement, independence and disposition. Staff are effectively deployed to support children's learning, health and safety.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Children benefit from the positive and supportive environment which effectively supports their social and moral development. Space and resources are used well to maximise play opportunities and to foster independence, initiative, enjoyment and achievement. The manager is hands-on which gives her a unique overview of teaching and learning and enables her to effectively identify areas for development. This impacts positively on the quality of children's learning.

All legally required records and documentation to promote the welfare and well-being of children are in place and maintained. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to regulate the hot water temperature and remove the foxgloves from the outdoor play area. They also agreed to review the play environment and resources linked to number and letters, increase simple scientific opportunities and provide opportunities for children to solve simple problems.

A new central heating system has been installed in the setting which includes a thermostatic control for the hot water. As a result, children can independently and safely wash their hands in warm water. The foxgloves have been removed from the outdoor play area thus minimising the risk to children. The whole environment has been reorganised with the help of the children. Children have writing and mathematics areas where there are many examples of the alphabet, upper and lower case letters and numbers. Children have a very good understanding of what is available to them and use the resources well in their play because they have been involved in the reorganisation of the play areas. Well planned, practical activities help children to explore and discover independently and open-ended questions from staff encourage children to question and think through solutions for themselves. Children make good progress in all areas of their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted have received one complaint.

Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 7 - Health, National Standard 12 - Working in partnership with parents and carers and National Standard 14 - Documentation. A childcare inspector visited the provision on 26 June 2006. An action was raised and satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- seek horticultural advice relating to the safety of the ivy in the outdoor play area
- ensure rigorous systems are in place to determine the suitability of adults working with 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 the support and interaction offered to children during outdoor play to help them meet identified learning outcomes for large physical development.

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