



Mereworth Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127376
Inspection date	24 January 2007
Inspector	Vanessa Wood
Setting Address	Village Hall, Butchers Lane, Mereworth, Maidstone, Kent, ME18 5QD
Telephone number	01622 812777
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Registered person	Mereworth 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 good. 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?

Mereworth Pre-school has been registered since 1982. It operates from two rooms in the village hall in Mereworth. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:00 and for two afternoons from 12:30 to 15:00, during school term times. Children have access to a small outdoor play area that can be made secure.

There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. No children attend who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 13 members of staff. Of these three hold an appropriate early years qualification and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have a good understanding of the importance of their own personal hygiene. They wash their hands after using the bathroom and talk to staff about germs. Staff provide children with paper towels to help prevent the spread of infection and ensure tables are wiped with anti-bacterial spray before being used for snack time. Children benefit from staff who have an up-to-date knowledge in first aid procedures and children's health is protected by the implementation of a clear sickness procedure. Snack time is a social time when children sit together with staff. Parents provide fruit for their children's snack and children are offered milk and water to drink. Drinking water is always available for children throughout the session. Children thoroughly enjoy the good activities provided by staff to develop their physical skills. Each morning after registration children take part in a warm up session of gentle activity. Later in the morning there is further opportunity for physical exercise as children enjoy a good obstacle course which is set up so that children learn to climb, balance, jump and crawl through tunnels. Staff talk about how children feel after physical activity and talk about the changes in their bodies such as being hot and feeling their heart beat.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in a well maintained, stimulating environment. Formal risk assessments are done yearly on all equipment and staff carry out daily visual checks on the premises to ensure children's safety. Children learn about their own personal safety. For example, there are fire guards around the heaters with notices to warn children they are hot to touch and staff explain to children why they must go round in the same direction when the obstacle course is in place. Occasional outings are undertaken locally when a high ratio of staff to children is maintained. Children are kept secure whilst in the pre-school by staff who ensure a high level of security is maintained. Visitors identification is carefully checked and all visitors are recorded in the visitors book. Children are protected because staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and have undertaken recent training to up-date their knowledge. The clear policy document has been amended to reflect the new changes to procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy at the pre-school. Staff welcome children and provide a child friendly environment in which children are offered good opportunities to learn. They confidently relate to one another and staff as they move around the setting. Children become interested in the range of stimulating activities set out by the staff. Staff carefully plan to meet all children's needs, including the younger children, although they are not using the Birth to three matters framework to monitor children's progress. Staff are caring and supportive to children and plan activities to promote children's capabilities and development in all areas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how to plan to meet children's needs. Clear plans are in place to show how the curriculum will be covered. Staff effectively record children's development and can talk about the next stage in children's learning, although this is not recorded. Staff are deployed to ensure they work with the children at all times in small and large groups. Staff encourage children in their play and are enthusiastic about developing children's learning. They have good conversations with children to extend learning and help them think for themselves. Staff work within a set daily routine and this can reduce children's time to fully explore and investigate activities that really interest them.

Children form good relationships with adults and with each other. They are developing confidence and personal independence as they select their play and learn to take care of their personal needs. Children are developing an awareness of their own feelings and other people's. They share their play materials and learn to take turns at activities where there is only room for a few children. Children enjoy listening and participating in story time with adults and guessing what might happen next. They confidently talk about things that relate to the topic that they have brought into the pre-school from home. Children are given good opportunities to write their name on their work and to learn the sound of letters and words. Children can count with confidence and they recognise numbers in play such as the number five on the play house door. They have a good understanding of the concept of size, fitting jigsaws together and have a good understanding of different shapes. They learn about weight and measure as they play with water.

Children are able to explore and investigate. For example, the activity to see which objects such as a cork, keys, feather, plastic and metal spoon, float or sink. Children are encouraged to record their evidence on a chart to show their findings and staff talk about why this happens, extending children's learning of light and heavy objects. Good construction activities allow children to develop manipulative skills as they join objects together using wooden screws and screwdrivers. Children learn about natural things as they grow herbs, bulbs and sun flowers in the small patch of garden outdoors. Children are able to experience different materials and textures as they paint and play with dough. They enjoy playing in the role play area pretending to be nurses and doctors as they bandage a member of staff's arm and talk about making her better.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children play well together in small and large groups. They show respect for each other and learn to share and take turns. For example, a child says that we must put the pot of crayons in the middle so that we can all share. Staff are good role models for children such as apologising for standing in front of a child thus preventing a child seeing what is going on. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with fairly, sensitively and according to the individual needs of each child. Children take part in a variety of activities that inform them about festivals and celebrations that may be different from their own. They learn a few words from different languages when children attend who are bilingual. Staff are skilled in caring for children with learning difficulties or disabilities and provide a very caring, sensitive environment to meet children's individual

needs. They ensure they work closely with parents and other agencies. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. The pre-school is supported by a committee of dedicated parents who support the pre-school in their work and organise fundraising activities to provide new equipment. The pre-school has a range of effective procedures in place for informing all parents about the daily running of the pre-school. There is a notice board in the entrance hall and parents receive newsletters on a regular basis. These give parents information about the plans for the term and invite children to bring in things from home that link in with the weekly subject being discussed. Parents are able to speak to their child's key worker as they deliver or collect children to discuss children's progress, although formal meetings with parents have been less successful.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is promoted by a generally effective organisation. Children receive good support from a staff team who organise their day to ensure their time is spent working with them. Documentation is organised so that it is readily accessible to staff and stored well to maintain confidentiality. Staff maintain high ratios throughout the day and deploy themselves well. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and support children well, using good questioning to develop children's understanding and learning. Staff know each other's strengths and use these to provide effective care and education for children. However, formal staff appraisals are not undertaken on a regular basis to monitor the quality of teaching.

Leadership and management is good. The pre-school is committee run and the committee is very supportive of the pre-school, particularly in fundraising to renew equipment and resources. Most staff are qualified or working towards a qualification and other staff have experience of working with children. Staff work well as a team and clear communication allows them to provide a well-balanced programme of education. Staff are very aware of the strengths and weakness of the provision and have a commitment to providing good quality care and education for children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There are five recommendations from the last inspection. To up date three policies, the policy for non-collected or lost children, the child protection procedures and the complaints policy. The pre-school was also asked to update the medication book and to ensure there is a system in place to prevent children locking themselves in the disabled toilet.

The pre-school has adopted the Pre-School Learning Alliance policies and procedures and adapted these to reflect their own practice. The medicine book is in place and the door to the disabled toilet can be opened by a member of staff from the outside should a child wander into this toilet by mistake.

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.

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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):

- ensure the Birth to three matters framework is used to monitor young children's progress in order to plan for activities to promote the next stage in their development
- develop staff appraisals to ensure training needs are met and to monitor the quality of teaching

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):

- consider having a more flexible approach to organisation of the daily routine and to the organisation of the two rooms in order to give children the opportunity to move around independently and to give them more time to explore and investigate activities that interest them
- ensure assessments show the next steps in children's development and provide more opportunities to share these assessments with parents

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