



Maytree Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	105996
Inspection date	06 March 2007
Inspector	Anne Legge
Setting Address	Woodbury Village Hall, Flower Street, Woodbury, Exeter, Devon, EX5 1LX
Telephone number	07749 383402
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Registered person	Maytree 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?

Maytree Pre-School has been registered since 1992. It operates from the village hall in Woodbury in East Devon. The pre-school has use of the main hall and there is a kitchen, storage and toilets within the building. There are also two smaller rooms, which are used for part of some sessions, when the hall is occupied by another organisation. The hall does not have an outside play area but the pre-school regularly uses local parks and areas of the school grounds. The group is managed by a voluntary committee and serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered to care for up to 24 children, aged from two to five years. There are currently 38 children on roll, including 24 funded three- and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group welcomes and supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Sessions are from 09.15 until 13.15 on weekdays in term-time. There are four

staff working with the children, three of whom have early years qualifications. The group receives support from the Pre-School Learning Alliance and the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from eating very healthy snacks. They enjoy an excellent variety of fresh fruit and savoury items, such as cheese cubes and breadsticks. Packed lunches are well-balanced, as staff work with parents to encourage the inclusion of foods which promote children's health. Special dietary needs are carefully recorded and met, including during cooking activities. Children have plenty of fluids, as they are offered milk, water or diluted pure fruit juices at snack, and they have constant access to fresh drinking water. They enjoy regular opportunities to be physically active. At each session, they use the ample space in the large hall to ride on wheeled toys, play parachute games, balance on beams or develop their throwing skills. In the summer months, children use local parks or part of the school playground to enjoy physical outdoor play. However, during the winter months, they have few opportunities to access fresh air, except on occasional walks around the village.

Children are mainly well-protected from infection. The premises are clean and staff carefully check toilets and floors, before children arrive. They meticulously disinfect tables before food is served and they wear aprons when preparing snacks. Children learn good routines regarding hand washing, as staff remind them to wash after using the toilet and before they eat. However, they use a shared bowl of water to wash their hands, which reduces their protection from infection. An effective sickness exclusion policy is in place, and helps to prevent the spread of infection. Children's care is consistent when they are unwell or injured. All staff have current first aid qualifications, and records of accidents and medication are comprehensive.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children use the facilities of a spacious hall and two smaller rooms. Staff make very good use of the available space to provide a variety of play opportunities for children. They adapt particularly well, under difficult circumstances, when the large hall is used by an adult club for part of two sessions a week. Children's security has been very well addressed and all issues surrounding this shared use of the hall are well-managed. Doors are locked and the main entrance to the hall is alarmed, to ensure that children are safe. Children choose from a very good range of toys and resources, which are maintained in a good, clean condition. Sufficient resources are available at each session, and stored at low levels, so that children can access them safely and independently.

Children play in a mainly safe environment. They know and follow the pre-school's safety rules, such as not running in the hall or climbing on the stage. Staff carefully risk assess the premises and carry out daily checks, to reduce risks to children. However, unused electric sockets in one of the small rooms are left uncovered and pose a risk to children's safety. Children are safe in emergencies, as all fire equipment is serviced regularly. Children practise evacuation procedures

each half term, on two different days, so that they all know the routine. They are safe on outings, as each trip is carefully risk assessed and hazards are addressed. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of most safeguarding issues and procedures. However, there are no robust systems for dealing with concerns about injuries which occur outside the setting and consequently, children are not consistently well-protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a very good variety of activities and resources when they play in the large hall. Sessions are planned to include a good balance of structured activities and periods when children choose freely. The youngest children enjoy a variety of sensory and imaginative play, using dough, paint and dressing-up clothes. They especially enjoy using the excellent range of wheeled toys. Most activities are appropriate for their stage of development, although some small and large group sessions are not relevant to them, so do not promote their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff plan interesting topics, which cover the Foundation Stage curriculum over time. They often interact skilfully with children, such as when discussing the contents of their 'magic boxes', helping to build a tower or extending role play. They observe and record children's achievements, but they do not systematically track their progress through the stepping stones, so targets for future learning do not always build on what the child already knows. Staff often use their knowledge of their key worker children when organising activities, but the links between assessment and planning are not clear. This leads to the planning of some inappropriate activities, such as when older children focus on writing letters and numerals, rather than hearing letter sounds and using practical tasks to explore number patterns. Some group activities are unrelated to the stage of development of the children taking part. For example, a number-matching game, with no objects to count or match to the numerals, is inappropriate for younger children, who do not recognise the symbols or understand their meaning.

Children develop a love of books, as they share stories and take books home to enjoy with parents. They talk confidently, developing their use of language, as staff effectively question them about special items brought from home. They make marks and learn to use drawing and writing for different purposes, such as writing their name or drawing a map to represent an obstacle course. They begin to recognise familiar words, such as days of the week, but able children have limited opportunities to explore letter sounds and shapes through practical activities. Children count in a wide range of daily routines, including counting those present, or cups at snack-time. They discuss shapes and use number puzzles. Able children are not systematically challenged to develop their understanding of number patterns by comparing and combining groups, or considering one more or less through practical activities using everyday objects. There is an over-dependence on the use of worksheets for this purpose, which are inappropriate for most children.

Children use very good resources to design and construct models, including recycled materials and plastic or wooden bricks. They make good use of the local area to develop their sense of place, as they visit the church, park or beach. Children create freely, using paint, dough or drawing materials. They have access to very good resources for making collages. They develop their imaginations in role play, as when they dress as firemen and go on a journey in the large wooden car, effectively encouraged and challenged by staff. Children enjoy singing familiar songs and using musical instruments. They make very good progress in their physical development, as they pedal or scoot wheeled toys, practise throwing skills or balance on beams. They develop good co-ordination with small equipment, such as pens, brushes, scissors, rollers and glue spreaders.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave very well, as they respond to the calm and peaceful atmosphere of the pre-school. They enjoy plenty of praise and they willingly comply with daily routines, such as helping to tidy up when they hear the appropriate music. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn to share and take turns, as staff use good strategies, such as helping them to watch a sand timer, while waiting for their turn on a tricycle. Children become aware of the needs of others, as, for example, staff discuss the feelings of a child whose carefully-constructed tower has been demolished. They develop an understanding of different cultures, as they celebrate a range of festivals or try foods from other countries.

All children and families are welcomed and included. Children's interests are valued, as they are encouraged to share toys and experiences from home, when discussing their 'magic boxes'. There is a good sense of belonging within the group, which is enhanced by the wearing of uniforms, by children and staff. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are effectively monitored and supported, as staff work closely with parents and other professionals to meet their needs.

Children receive consistent care due to the pre-school's good systems for communicating with their parents. Key workers are always available to talk to parents, and information is exchanged whenever appropriate. Carers are invited to stay with their child while they settle. They have access to policies and procedures on the notice board, and to good information about all aspects of their child's care in the prospectus. Newsletters from the committee keep parents well-informed about all developments. Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents meet regularly with key workers, to share progress records and discuss targets for future development. Children's records include photographs and comments about their achievements, and provide an attractive record for parents. Library books are sent home after each session, and parents add their comments to a shared notebook. Curriculum newsletters provide information about topics and activities, so carers are able to support their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by well-qualified staff, who work as a cohesive team. Their roles are clearly defined and they are well-deployed during sessions to support children's play and learning. Ratios are good so children have plenty of individual attention. Staff provide a good variety of resources and activities when the main hall is used. Space is generally used effectively, and limited displays of children's work, together with good use of furnishings, boards and dividers, make the environment interesting and comfortable, especially in the main hall. Provision for children's health and safety is satisfactory. Children's care is underpinned by all the required documentation, and there are good systems to regularly review and update policies and procedures. Records are shared appropriately with parents. The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are good. The new committee Chair has implemented effective systems for monitoring the quality of the nursery education. She has accurately identified areas for development and has sought help and advice from the Local Authority. Assessment and planning systems are currently under review and staff are committed to attending relevant training, to develop their understanding of the curriculum. The pre-school is becoming very reflective in its practice and good systems are now in place to monitor and improve the quality of provision.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the pre-school was asked to update registration systems and the policy relating to sick children, to include all the required details. Staff were asked to extend resources and activities which promote children's understanding of disability and which encourage them to design models and join materials. Assessment systems were to be improved, so that children's progress could be tracked, using the stepping stones, and targets agreed with parents. Staff were asked to develop the use of daily routines to promote mathematical development.

Since the last inspection all documentation has been reviewed and policies and procedures are now comprehensive. Registers record the exact times of children's attendance. Staff have provided good resources and activities relating to diversity and disability, to help children develop their understanding of personal and cultural differences. Children have access to good resources for craft and designing activities, and opportunities are planned for them to develop skills in these areas. Daily routines are used effectively to encourage children to count, but not to help them develop an understanding of simple calculation. Targets for learning are now set regularly and shared with parents. However, children's progress towards the early learning goals is still not tracked effectively, and staff do not use assessment information consistently to plan for children's individual learning needs.

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):

- further promote children's good health, by providing regular opportunities for them to access fresh air and by enabling them to wash their hands in clean, warm water
- further improve children's safety, by ensuring that unused electric sockets are covered and that staff have a thorough understanding of all safeguarding issues.

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):

- continue to develop assessment systems, so that children's progress towards the early learning goals is clearly tracked. Use this information to plan activities which build on what children already know and to help them move to the next stage of learning
- use a wide range of practical tasks to help children develop their understanding of letter sounds and number patterns
- plan group sessions carefully, so that activities are appropriate and all children taking part can make good progress.

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