



Motcombe Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141106
Inspection date	15 February 2007
Inspector	Penny Wood
Setting Address	Motcombe First School, Motcombe, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 9NT
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Registered person	Motcombe 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?

Motcombe Pre-school is a committee run pre-school which operates from a purpose built mobile unit within the grounds of the village primary school, in Motcombe near Shaftesbury. Children have access to an enclosed outside play area. When not in use by the school, the group may also use the school hall and playground. The pre-school serves both the community of Motcombe and the surrounding area. The pre-school employs five staff, three of which have completed training in early years care.

Motcombe Pre-school operates term-time only and is registered to provide sessional care for a maximum of 17 children aged between two and five years at any one time. There are currently 25 children on roll, of which 15 receive funding for nursery education. The group operate Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 09:00 to 12:45 and Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 to 11:45. On Monday afternoons there is a 'Ready, Steady, School' session

between 13:30 and 15:15 and on Wednesday afternoons there is a session for two year olds which operates between 13:30 and 15:15. The group support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a healthy variety of snacks, such as fresh fruit and raisins. Spontaneous discussions regarding foods, such as healthy fillings for sandwiches when in the role-play area, promotes children's understanding of healthy diets. Records of children's allergies ensure staff only provide foods that are suitable for children's individual dietary needs. Regular access to water throughout the session and drinks of juice or milk at snack time ensures children do not become thirsty.

Children are developing a clear understanding of the importance of good hygiene. They regularly wash their hands during the routines of the day, reducing the spread of germs and infections. Clear explanations by staff enhance their understanding of when and why it is important to wash. Visitors to the group, such as a dental hygienist, encourage children's greater understanding of good personal hygiene. Regular cleaning of the premises and equipment by staff ensures children are free to play in a hygienic environment.

Children benefit from the care they receive from staff that are trained in first aid, with appropriate resources available within the first aid box to ensure minor accidents receive suitable medical care. Systems are in place to gain parental consent for staff to seek emergency medical treatment in the event of a major incident, although not all parents have signed the relevant section of the form. The accident and medication records contain sufficient information of events; however, they are not routinely shared with parents at home-time to ensure parents are informed of the care their children receive. An effective sickness policy ensures the exclusion of sick children in order to reduce the spread of contagious illnesses, with those children who fall ill whilst in the group receiving comfort and reassurance until their parents arrive to collect.

Very good opportunities for children to be physically active promote their physical well-being. Agreements with the school to enable the group to use the school's facilities and equipment for physical exercise, encourages children to develop good co-ordination skills and body strength. Within the enclosed area directly outside the pre-school unit, children enjoy further opportunities to play with a large range of equipment, such as balls and stilts. Children are developing very good control of their movements, negotiating their way around balance courses, running around with ribbon sticks and when playing football. Children recognise that they can become thirsty after exercise and are able to help themselves to drinks from a water fountain.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enter a purpose built building that is warm and welcoming. Displays of children's work, posters and photographs encourage children into the child-friendly room. The play room itself

is compact, with defined areas for play, such as a role-play area, a book corner and an area for children to enjoy using the computer. The good range of resources receives regular checks to ensure all toys remain safe for children to play with.

Within the building, children experience high levels of supervision where staff are able to observe children from all areas of the room. Good measures are in place to reduce the risk of harm to children, such as covers for the heaters and plugs and the use of a stable-door to prevent children's access to the kitchen. Good systems are in place to ensure the premises remain secure, with parents escorted to the pre-school through the school grounds at the beginning and end of each session. This ensures all adults not associated to the school or pre-school are supervised whilst on the school premises, safeguarding all children.

Regular practises of the fire evacuation procedure ensure all children and staff become accustomed to the action to take in an emergency. Risk assessments ensure the regular checking of equipment; such as the extinguishers and smoke alarms, and staff are vigilant in ensuring exits remain clear throughout the session to enable a prompt escape if necessary. During the year, visits from the emergency services, such as the fire brigade and police, enhance children's understanding of the importance of keeping themselves safe.

During outings, staff ensure potential venues are safe, with risk assessments completed prior to the outing taking place. Suitable levels of staff and adults ensure children receive appropriate levels of supervision, with systems in place to enable staff to act promptly in the event of an emergency, such as an accident.

Staff's knowledge and understanding of the child protection policy and procedures promote children's safety and welfare. Good systems aid staff in their identification of children at risk of harm, with records in place to enable them to record their concerns. Staff are clear on where to seek advice and support in the event of identifying a child at risk, with clear procedures for the referral of concerns to the appropriate agency.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter with ease and quickly settle into their play. Most children leave their parents with confidence, with additional support from staff to reassure children, with a positive result. Children enjoy playing with a good range of toys, which they can access for themselves from the storage units within the room. Children talk about enjoying pre-school 'because they are able to do things that they are unable to do at home'.

Children who attend the pre-three's sessions enjoy activities that are age appropriate and engage them in play. The sessions familiarise the younger children to the environment and play opportunities available in preparation for them joining the regular pre-school groups. However, staff do not sufficiently plan for and record children's achievements within this age group to ensure they receive a breadth of experiences and make suitable progress within their development.

Good levels of praise and encouragement boosts children's confidence and self-esteem, with non-verbal encouragement, such as 'thumbs up' offered when appropriate, for example, to encourage children during singing. Most children are confident in their play with staff moving effectively to support and engage quieter children. Those children, who struggle to concentrate and sit still during large group activities, receive additional support from staff, with strategies adopted to encourage their participation.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy a good range of activities, which cover all aspects of the early learning goals. Staff plan topics and activities together. A review of children's records when planning identifies which areas require additional attention to ensure children make balanced progress across all areas.

Weekly plans identify the intended learning for children, with observations made during, and evaluations made after activities to assess how children learn and achieve. Examples of children's work and photographs of them at play bring children's records to life and offer visible examples of how children participate in activities. Staff ensure children are sound in their acquisition of achievements before entering the information into children's records. As a result, records portray a realistic view of children's position in their learning journeys with evidence to support the judgements made by staff. To ensure staff continue to make sound judgements within children's records, they liaise closely with the school to evaluate how accurate and valuable the children's records have been once the children have moved on to the reception class.

The provision of a 'Ready, Steady, School' group provides additional opportunities for those children preparing to go to school. For example, children enjoy further structure and challenge within activities, in addition to learning how to change their clothes for physical exercise and to dress themselves again afterwards. However, not all activities within the pre-school consistently challenge all children in order to maximise their learning potential.

Staff effectively manage activities to ensure all children are able to actively participate. For example, those children who are secure in their knowledge of topics, such as the alphabet, enjoy taking on the role of 'teacher', which encourages other children to take turns in identifying the letters, whilst allowing the staff to assess how all children are making progress.

Children are developing good use of their language skills through discussions with each other during their play and through the effective questioning techniques adopted by staff. Most children are confident talkers and readily engage each other and staff in discussion, for example, when talking about healthy options for sandwiches in the role-play area. They are developing a good understanding of language, through the simple instructions offered by staff, for example, when giving instructions on how to use equipment.

Some children are particularly accomplished in recognising and linking sounds with letters, confidently identifying the first letter of a variety of random names and words. Children enjoy choosing and listening to stories, although staff do not always complete the stories due to time restrictions, resulting in frustration and disappointment for the children.

During singing, the effective use of props, such as pictures of five speckled frogs, engage children in the activity and helps to maintain children's interest. Staff also use the props of name cards from children's pegs to aid children when writing their own names on their pictures. Children enjoy participating in craft activities, exploring with paint, glue and dough. They are confident in naming a range of colours and shapes, recognising when they are different or have the same features. Opportunities to examine shapes of different textures encourage children to explore with their senses.

Children are developing very good skills in the recognition of numbers through a variety of ways. For example, drawing over templates of numbers and picking number cards, placing the correct quantity of discs on that number and sometimes choosing to do so in the same colour of the card. Children are beginning to count to high numbers, such as how many children are present in the group. Staff extend this activity to encourage children to calculate how many adults are present and to add the two numbers together. When laying the table for snacks, children also calculate how many mats and cups are required, if they have enough or how many more they need to enable each child to have one. When playing in the transport café, children talk about how much things cost, with staff encouraging the children to use their writing skills to write receipts for their customers.

Children enjoy opportunities to develop their manipulative skills, for example, when playing with dough and are proficient in their use of a range of equipment, such as knives and cutters. They display good hand-eye co-ordination skills, competently threading cotton reels onto laces and using a mouse with the computer. Further opportunities encourage children to grasp a good understanding of using programmable equipment, such as the use of 'Bee Bots' (robotic toys that move in different directions when instructed) and walky-talkies.

Children are joining with the school's reception class to develop the outside area by planting flowers in tyres and watching them grow. Opportunities to explore local areas, encourage the children to develop an interest in the natural world, for example, visits to local woods for walks and to enable children to go pond dipping to look at fish and tadpoles. Overall, children are making steady progress within their learning journeys.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children take an active role within the routines, developing a sense of belonging to the group. They help to tidy up, prepare the tables for snacks and meals and enjoy sweeping up after using the sand. Staff value the children within the group. They listen to what children have to say, allowing them all to take an active part in discussions and during group activities, such as counting the number of children present. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children are welcomed into the group. Support to encourage all children to take part encourages children to develop the confidence to participate. Additional support from external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, aids staff when working with the children and their parents in order to meet the children's individual needs and encourage their development.

Children are gaining an appropriate awareness of diversity through the celebration of a range of cultural festivals and opportunities to play with a range of resources which depict positive images of race, gender and disability.

Children behave well, with staff acting as good role models for the children to follow. Clear and age appropriate strategies to manage inappropriate behaviour, such as discussions regarding the effects and consequences of behaviour, have a positive result. Incidents of challenging behaviour, such as biting or hitting, are acted upon and shared with parents, ensuring issues may be resolved in partnership with parents.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. In addition to working with parents to overcome challenging behaviour, the group develop strong working relationships with parents in many ways. Children benefit from the support offered to their families, such as when settling them into the group. Parents are frequently welcomed into the group to observe children's work and to discuss their child's development with staff. Bright displays of children's artwork, comprehensive folders of children's work and photographs of children at play, offer parents an insight into what their children do when at pre-school.

Parents play an active role in their child's nursery education. They frequently help their children to find topic related items at home and allow their children to take them to pre-school to 'show and tell'. Parents receive very good guidance on how to follow and understand their child's records of achievements. Further information available with newsletters, on notice boards and within a detailed prospectus ensures parents remain informed of changes within the pre-school and the topics children are currently enjoying.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the attention they receive from the high ratios of staff, the majority of whom are qualified in early year's care and attend a range of short courses in order to extend their knowledge and professional expertise. Recruitment procedures ensure the group employ staff that are suitable to work with children, with clear induction procedures to inform new staff of their role and the group's routines.

All regulatory documentation, such as registers, health and child records are in place within the group. However, not all of the current committee members have submitted the necessary documentation to Ofsted to notify Ofsted of their involvement with the committee, as required within regulations. This puts children and the group at risk as a result of Ofsted's inability to make the appropriate checks on their suitability for their role.

Staff organise the space well, allowing children to access the range of activities available. During sessions, staff are aware of their roles and work well as a team to ensure the smooth running of the group.

Leadership and management is good. The manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the group and the provision of nursery education for the children, is committed

to improving her professional knowledge and building on new skills. For example, she continues to attend training opportunities, such as business management courses, to increase her knowledge and understanding of her role as a manager. Staff appraisals identify staff strengths and highlight areas to build upon, particularly through training opportunities. The group as a whole take an active part in the evaluation of their provision, regularly reviewing how they meet and can improve the outcomes for children.

The manager and committee are pro-active in forging strong relationships with the local community, particularly with parents and the school. Children benefit from regular opportunities to visit the main school, with time set-aside for those children preparing to go to school to join the Reception class and school assemblies. The group receive support from the local authority through visits from a pre-school development worker and an advisory teacher. All of which enable the staff to build and develop their provision of care and education.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group have made improvements based on the recommendations raised at their last inspections for care and nursery education.

At the last care inspection the group were asked to improve upon the provision of resources available within the play environment to reflect positive images of diversity, and help to raise children's awareness; to further develop the systems in place to ensure children's security is maintained during arrival and departure times and that hot surfaces are not accessible to children and finally; to improve the current systems of recording the administration of medication and accidents to ensure all required details can be clearly detailed.

As a result, the group have purchased further resources that depict positive images of race, gender and disability, raising children's awareness of diversity naturally through their play. At the request of the school, all parents are now escorted to the pre-school on arrival and departure in order to safeguard all children within the school grounds. Staff supervise the entrance door to ensure children do not leave the building during this time. During the session, the premises are secured through the use of a security chain, preventing unauthorised adults from entering the building unannounced. Guards currently protect the radiators. However, these radiators are scheduled to be replaced, with staff stating they will assess the new radiators for safety once fitted. Health records clearly detail events and maintain confidentiality. However, not all records are shared with parents at home time and this remains an area for ongoing improvement.

At the last inspection for nursery education, the group were asked to improve upon the organisation of staff deployment, resources and snack times to ensure all learning opportunities are maximised at all times, allowing for regular interaction with children to support the development of their social and independence skills; to implement a system to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, to support and monitor the overall progress and aims for improvement of the pre-school; and to provide more regular opportunities, both planned and spontaneous, for children to build on their current awareness of number concepts, including recognising the written number, within the play environment and in everyday practical situations and to encourage them to solve simple problems independently in play.

As a result, an improvement within the organisation of staff deployment ensures that children receive support during social times, such as snack-time and in supporting children in their development of independence. Staff sit with children during snacks and meals, enjoying relaxed discussions about children's mornings at pre-school and their experiences at home. Children are able to access an improved and extended range of resources, both those provided by staff on a daily basis and from the storage units. Staff now regularly carry out self-evaluations every half-term, assessing how the provision has improved and identifying areas where improvements can be made. Visits by advisors from the local authority aid staff to improve their provision, identifying areas for improvement and offering advice on how to do so. Children display a good understanding of mathematical concepts particularly that of matching items to numbers. They regularly use mathematical terms within their play and routines, for example, identifying when something is big or small and when someone is in front of or behind another in a line. The use of numbers in play opportunities, such as on menus in a café scenario or dialling telephone numbers during emergencies, encourages children to recognise written numbers.

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 good.

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 health related documentation is completed appropriately and shared with parents
- develop systems to plan and monitor children's progress and development within the pre-three's group, for example, through the use of the Birth to Three Matters Framework
- ensure the committee complete and submit to Ofsted the relevant documentation upon changes within the committee structure.

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):

- ensure sufficient time is allowed to complete activities, particularly when reading stories to children
- ensure all children experience consistent challenge in order to maximise their learning potential.

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