

Great Meols Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306395
Inspection date	27 March 2007
Inspector	Sue Anslow
Setting Address	Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, Merseyside, CH47 7AP
Telephone number	07715170406
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Registered person	Great Meols Pre School Playgroup Committee
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Great Meols Pre-School is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents, staff and representatives from Great Meols primary school. It opened in 1993 and operates from a mobile unit in the grounds of Great Meols primary school on the Wirral peninsular. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 08.50 to 11.45 and Tuesday and Thursday 13.15 to 15.45 in term time only. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area and access to part of the school grounds if required.

There are currently 25 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local community and attend for one year before moving on to schools in the area. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties.

The pre-school employs three members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, stimulating and hygienic environment. They thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet children's individual needs. These include effective cleaning systems to prevent risk of cross-infection, such as different cloths for specific tasks. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines, for example, they wash their hands independently after messy play, before eating and after using the toilet. They are aware of their own health needs as they explain why you have to wear sunglasses, to stop your eyes hurting. Good levels of adult support help children stay healthy and all staff hold first aid certificates. Effective procedures ensure children are cared for appropriately if they feel unwell or have an accident and records are kept as required. Jugs of fresh drinking water are available for children to help themselves to during each session and a range of healthy snacks are prepared each day. Fresh fruit, raw vegetables and salad items are included weekly and children are growing beans and cress to use in their sandwiches, which help them learn about healthy foods. Individual dietary requirements are respected in consultation with parents and children choose between milk or water to accompany their snack.

Children explore, test and develop physical control during stimulating daily indoor and outdoor activities. They are confident when using a range of wheeled toys and balancing equipment and move safely and with control when using large and small tools and materials. Well planned and spontaneous activities enable children to explore and extend their physical capabilities. They walk confidently up and down the entrance steps, hop and jump between squares when playing hopscotch, crawl through the tunnel, throw balls and bean bags at desired targets, and explore concepts, such as over and under during circle games. Children use a range of small tools with increasing control and confidence, for example, glue spreaders, scissors and the sticky tape cutter.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy ample play space, both indoors and outside, in this lively, stimulating environment. Children's art work and photographs are displayed around the room, which together with windows on three sides, gives a feeling of welcome to this bright, attractive setting. A wide variety of play equipment, organised tidily and safely on low shelving, allows for freedom of choice and independence. Effective cleaning and checking systems support the health and safety of all the children and they enjoy helping to wash the dolls and the home corner equipment. Children enjoy using natural play materials, such as leaves, feathers, sand and wood, which enhances their creative skills and extends their knowledge of different textures.

Good safety procedures are in place to keep children safe and effective staff teaching develops the children's awareness of potential hazards. For example, holding on to the hand rails when climbing up and down the entrance steps and not climbing on tables in case of falling. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through regular activities and discussions. For example, they know what to do when the fire bell rings and how to ride the bicycles and scooters safely on one side of the playground, all going in the same direction. Children are aware of safe procedures as they explain how they should hold adults hands when walking near roads. Effective systems are in place to ensure children are collected by named persons and the buzzer on the entrance door alerts staff when it opens. Children are very well protected by staff who have a clear

understanding of child protection policies and procedures, and give top priority to children's welfare. All staff have attended relevant training courses and a comprehensive policy is available for parents to read.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the pre-school. They arrive happy and are eager to meet with their friends and show them the things they have brought in for 'show and tell'. Children are keen to try out all the games and activities prepared for them that day and excitedly choose which area to start with. Children achieve well because staff are highly skilled and use their knowledge and sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to provide high quality care and education. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Early communication skills are extremely well supported through high quality adult-child interactions. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are excited and interested in the extensive range of stimulating activities, relevant to their needs. The well chosen toys and play materials including those from the natural world, such as sand, water, seeds, food products and textiles, all support children's learning across all areas of development. Children are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They listen intently to stories and join in with their favourite lines. Appropriate questions from staff help children think and predict what might happen next. For example, 'what do you think the farmer will do now' and 'what time of day is it, how do you know it is night time'. Children practise their mark making skills in the writing area and have very good opportunities to write for different purposes in other areas, such as taking orders in the 'café'. Letter and number displays help children recognise the correct shapes and they register themselves on arrival by selecting their name cards and putting them on display. Children confidently count how many plates they need for the snack table and calculate how many counters they have all together on their two Easter egg cards. They count how many bricks they have built up in the tower and work out how many of each size they will need to build a bridge high enough for the cars to go underneath.

Children learn to take care of living things through planned, practical activities, for example, growing beans, planting seeds and looking at nature, including wildlife. They marvel at how caterpillars turn into butterflies and compare photographs of themselves as babies with those of how they look now. Children thoroughly enjoy the role play activities, using their imaginations to create cafés and shops or dressing up as characters from their favourite books. They eagerly request action songs and circle games and join in the singing with enthusiasm, excitedly volunteering to be the farmer or the prince. Children enjoy the many and varied activities available to use their creative ideas and imaginations. They use small world figures in the sand to create houses and roads around them, make strange patterns in the wet paint with combs and arrange the toppings on their muffin pizzas with great artistic skill. Children proudly show off the displays of their work on the walls and enjoy sticking up their own pictures on 'their' wall themselves, which gives them a tremendous sense of pride and self-esteem.

Right from the start, staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs, and build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. A flexible approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child led activities allows children to

learn at their own pace. Staff are perceptive to children's interests and needs and use effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements, and to plan experiences that help them take the next step in their learning. Children thrive in this excellent environment because of the consistent, dedicated staff team, who have sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Staff work closely with parents to ensure children make good progress in all areas of learning, whilst having lots of fun and enjoyment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children enjoy bringing in an object or toy from home, which they delight in telling the other children about at circle time. They have many opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities and resources reflecting diversity. Children celebrate different festivals through their art work, such as making Easter eggs or Chinese dragons, through baking and tasting activities and sharing appropriate songs and stories. Children learn about their local community through visits to the beach and nearby harbour, writing and posting letters in a public post box and watching the progress of the flowers and vegetables they plant. Children with learning difficulties receive appropriate care and education from staff who liaise closely with parents and other professionals for each child's specific needs. This ensures all children make good progress with their development and maximises opportunities for their learning. Children behave extremely well and are learning to share and take turns as they help each other prepare a 'meal' in the café or set the egg-timer for the next person's 'go' on the computer. They eagerly help to tidy up when asked and are learning ways of negotiating with others through guidance from staff. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff which boosts their self-esteem and confidence. They are polite, kind and helpful, showing respect and consideration for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The management of care within the setting is supported by written agreements with the parents and most consent forms are signed as required. However, written permission has not been obtained for the taking of photographs, which compromises children's security in this area.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive a range of good quality information about the provision and the Foundation Stage curriculum, during their year in pre-school. Daily verbal handovers on children's interests and achievements, regular newsletters and lists of ideas on how they can help the children at home, or participate in pre-school activities, encourages close partnerships between home and pre-school. Parents have ready access to the setting's policies and procedures and each term's plans of activities and topic work is displayed well in advance. Written reports on each child's progress and development is given to parents at the end of each term.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The qualified and experienced staff team work well together to provide good quality care and excellent nursery education for the children and they keep their knowledge and skills updated by attending relevant courses and workshops. Children's care is greatly enhanced by the well organised programme of exciting and interesting activities to promote all areas of learning.

Children thrive in this interesting and stimulating environment. The well organised programme of activities both indoors and outside, provides a balanced range of learning in all areas of development. The freedom of movement and easy access to the play equipment allows for freedom of choice and independence. Children's health, safety and well-being is well supported by written policies and procedures and parents are kept well informed of their children's progress throughout the year. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider agreed to provide parents with appropriate information on how the pre-schools policies relate to the National Standards. This has been completed satisfactorily, enhancing the close partnership between home and preschool.

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):

- obtain appropriate parental permission for taking photographs.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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