

Mortimer Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507885
Inspection date	05 July 2007
Inspector	Sheila Collins
Setting Address	St. Johns Hall, West End Road, Mortimer Common, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 3TF
Telephone number	0118 9331668
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Registered person	Mortimer Pre-school
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Mortimer Pre-School opened in 1964. It operates from St. Johns Hall in the centre of Mortimer. The group has use of the main hall, kitchen and a secure outside play area. The pre-school serves the local area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open on three days per week on a Monday, Thursday and Friday during school terms only. Sessions are from 9.00 until 12.00 each morning, with a lunch club and an afternoon session 12.30 to 15.00 on a Monday.

There are currently 26 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is run by a committee who employ six members of staff. Of these staff, four 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 becoming independent in their personal care. They learn good hygiene practises and clearly understand why they have to wash their hands after using the toilet, after messy play, handling bugs and before eating. They know the importance of being healthy and are aware that germs can make them unwell. The staff offer good support to younger children who need assistance in completing personal tasks and deal with any mishaps discreetly.

The children can have a drink at any time during the session but need adult help to access this. The children are aware of the importance of healthy eating. They enjoy choosing their fruit at snack time and pour their own drinks. Snack and meal times are sociable occasions with staff encouraging the children's independence skills. However the limited space available on the table top at lunch time resulted in a child knocking over his drink.

The children's individual health needs are known to staff and there is always a trained first aider on site, who is aware of the appropriate way to deal with any accidents, which further ensures the children's health. Staff are aware of the appropriate way to record accidents and the administration of medication. All the relevant documentation is in place to support children's well being.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities both inside and out, which promotes all round healthy development. They take part in recreational play activities outside for example riding bikes and benefit from planned physical sessions indoors such as dancing to music.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff ensure that premises are welcoming and attractively laid out to create a child centred environment where children can play freely and safely. The staff display the children's work on low level displays which shows the children that it is valued. The book corner is particularly attractive and inviting for the children and consequently is well used, not only for reading but fun play. Although the pre-school are unable to offer free flow at the present time, the outside area is utilised well. Specific activities take place, for example bike riding, painting on large sheets of paper and gardening. Staff minimise the risks of accidental injury to children through daily risk assessments and safety checks. The children have a good knowledge of safety issues and are beginning to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. Their understanding of safety issues is extended as they practise evacuation drills and through reminders from staff, for example, to use equipment correctly.

The children use a good selection of resources and toys that are appropriate to their age and stage of development and cover all areas of learning. They choose from the resources laid out within the room and have few opportunities to select other items for themselves.

Children are well protected by staff who have a good working knowledge of the signs of child abuse and the procedures to be followed. Clear policies and procedures are in place and staff are confident about the routes for referral that they would need to take place to protect children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy and settled within pre-school. They come in confidently and exchange greetings with staff. The children are very comfortable within their environment and receive a good level of support from the staff. They make friends with their peers and have good relationships with the staff. Staff provide children with a comprehensive curriculum with both planned and free play activities. The children enjoy suitable activities and achievable tasks. Staff are able to extend activities for the more able children and have a good knowledge of the way children learn and the learning outcomes for activities. The children receive good support from staff and involve them in their play.

There is a broad range of stimulating activities available each day for the children to choose from. The children understand the routines of the session, which helps them feel secure because they know what to do and when to do it.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are confident in their surroundings. They select the toys and resources they wish to use from the variety available, which are set out each day. However, there are not enough opportunities for them to choose activities for themselves because of the logistics of the storage. Staff however accommodate their requests for example scissors and sticky tape. Children put their own work on the stage but this is not easy for all children.

The children understand the rules of the group and remind each other of these. They receive praise and encouragement from the staff for their efforts and achievements, which builds their self-esteem and confidence. They sit and listen well at group times and respond confidently to their names. They concentrate well and become involved in the well-planned activities.

The children are confident and engage easily in conversations with each other, staff and visitors. They enjoy listening to well told stories and joining in with rhymes. They share books with each other, turn the pages carefully and show each other the pictures, as the adults do. The book corner is an inviting area which is well used by the children not only for reading but also for fun play. The children have daily opportunities to practise their writing skills and can access paper, pens, clip boards and diaries at the writing table. They are encouraged to write their names on their work and practise letter formation with adults for example when making their name worms. Older children are beginning to learn about phonics in a fun way.

Children count easily up to 10, and several count beyond this. They have good opportunities to count, for example how many children are at the snack table and how many spots on the lady bird. They are confident in their use of simple calculations for example when deciding how to share the remaining apple at snack time. They use mathematical language in their play, such as 'longer', 'shorter', 'bigger', 'smaller', 'more' and 'less than'. The older children have opportunities for simple recording as they measured the worms they made and made a graph of their findings. They also take part in cooking activities where they help to weigh the ingredients from a recipe read out by a staff member.

Children are learning about their own and other cultures through planned activities such as celebrating Diwali and Christmas. They are learning about their environment and the world around us through varied topics and at the present time are discovering bugs and creepy crawlies. They enjoy going on a walk to find different creepy crawlies but are careful to return

them to their natural habitat. The children are keen to discuss and investigate visiting living things, for example the spider in the toilets. They are becoming competent in their use of technology and have opportunities to use a range of programmable items, such as the computer, telephones, and the Bee bot robot toy. The children evidently enjoy role-play, for example, dressing up as a tiger, playing in the home corner and interacting in the dinosaurs den. They bring their own experiences into their play, for example filling up the bikes with petrol in the outside play area and driving to the station to get the train to work.

Children enjoy and participate in a very good range of physical activities to assist them in developing their large and small motor skills. They ride bikes confidently. They enjoy taking part in group activities such as musical games. They use a range of small equipment such as scissors, pencils and glue spreaders with dexterity and increasing control. They have opportunities for creativity every day for example using play dough, painting and taking part in adult lead activities such as making lady birds.

The staff are well motivated and enthusiastic, which in turn motivates the children. They are aware of how children learn and progress. They have good knowledge of each individual child's needs and deploy themselves around the room to support the children, encouraging their play and joining in by invitation. The children have opportunities to play without constant supervision, for example in the home corner/dinosaur den and are not pressurised into taking part in the planned activities if they do not wish to. Displays of the children's work are well presented and labelled, for example the worm measuring chart and the display of the bees collecting pollen, which shows the children that it is valued.

The staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the early learning goals and plan an interesting and varied curriculum for the children. The planning covers all areas of learning and staff use evaluations to see if the objectives are met. The staff monitor the children's learning through observations, which they transfer to individual development records. The staff observe the children in both individual and group situations and use these to help with future planning. Staff are aware that the record keeping system does not ensure that the next steps for each child's learning are recorded and that the plans do not differentiate for more and less able children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and value them as individuals. The children have good opportunities to learn about other cultures and have access to a range of resources and activities which reflect the society we live in, for example, small world figures, books, dolls and posters.

The children have a positive attitude to each other and are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They behave well, share, take turns and co-operate with each other. Children with learning difficulties/disabilities are included by other children in their play and supported well by staff who ensure that support is provided sensitively and discreetly.

The children receive visits from members of the community, for example the lollipop lady and are encouraged to support others by raising money for charity both in this country for example when taking part in Red Nose Day and abroad as they have sent gifts to children in India, seeing pictures of the children and receiving an update from the student who took their gifts.

Staff working with the children use praise and encouragement of their efforts and achievements which builds on their self confidence and self esteem. Children behave well and most staff are consistent in their management of children's behaviour. Children join in, take responsibility and play a productive part in the pre-school. They help to tidy up and offer to wash up after the cookery session. Children learn about acceptable behaviour and remind each other of the rules in place. They are given clear guidelines and know the routines well. The children have first hand experience of the consequences of others actions as vandals ruined their containers which they planted.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. The staff know the children well and have good relationships with the children and their parents. They exchange information daily about the children and their achievements and work together to resolve any problems. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their child's learning, for example, bringing items into the preschool. Parents receive an informative prospectus about the preschool but this does not contain written information of the curriculum offered, the early learning goals and the Foundation Stage. Information is available within the area where parents wait with the children and they have access to the plans on the notice board and can discuss aspects of the curriculum with the staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. The recruitment procedure is effective and all staff are cleared to work with the children, so safeguarding their welfare. The staff deployment in the playroom is generally good, however at times children's play is interrupted when staff have to leave them to do other things, for example taking a child to the toilet.

The staff make effective use of the available space within the playroom to provide children with a good range of play opportunities.

All the required documentation is in place to promote the health and welfare of the children. The registration certificate is clearly displayed so parents are aware of the conditions of operation.

The leadership and management is good. The supervisor is aware of the weaker areas of practice in the pre-school and is working with the staff to improve this. Action plans, which were drawn up after the previous inspections have been successfully acted upon. The staff work well as a team and have good knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, two recommendations were made. These were to maintain a constant temperature of 18 degrees or above during sessions and to replace loose accident sheets with an accident book.

The pre-school has made good progress in implementing these recommendations. They have put into place a room thermometer so that they can monitor the temperature and take appropriate action and are now recording all accidents in an accident book.

At the last education inspection, three recommendations were made. These were to look at the planning of focussed activities to support learning goals highlighted in short-term plans, and to show how they can be adapted for children's varying levels of understanding; the use of everyday routines and activities to promote children's understanding of number and calculation, and to further promote independence and writing for a purpose and opportunities for children to develop their own creative ideas during craft activities.

Since that inspection the pre-school have made satisfactory progress. The planning has been reviewed and is ongoing. The pre-school has provided the children with more opportunities to count and calculate during everyday activities such as at snack time and has provided the children with different mediums such as diaries and clipboards to practise their emergent writing on. They encourage the children to write their own names on their work. Children have opportunities for creative activities daily and can use their imaginations for example putting square and triangular spots on their ladybirds.

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 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 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 that parents receive written information about the curriculum in place, the foundation stage early learning goals and the six areas of learning

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):

- review the planning to reflect how activities can be adapted for more and less able children
- extend the opportunities for children to select resources for themselves and to take responsibility for their work and belongings.

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