

Mother Goose Pre School, Wimpole

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	259672
Inspection date	26 April 2007
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe
Setting Address	Wimpole Village Hall, Cambridge Road, Wimpole, Royston, Herts, SG8 5QB
Telephone number	01223 208527
E-mail	
Registered person	Mothergoose 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?

Mother Goose Pre-school operates from the village hall in Wimpole, near Royston, Hertfordshire. The group is a registered charity managed by a voluntary committee.

There are currently 27 children aged from two years six months to five years on roll. This includes 23 children eligible for nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school opens every day during term-time. Sessions are from 09.15 to 12.00. An optional lunch club operates until 13.00 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday each week. A supervised toddler group also operates Wednesday afternoons. A small number of children attend who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Five staff work with the children all of whom have appropriate qualifications, one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The group has recently completed the quality assurance programme Aiming for Quality.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop a sound knowledge of personal hygiene as they learn about the importance of hand washing. Regular daily routines are reinforced by practitioners as they ensure children use soap and paper towels and understand about germs.

All adults working with the children hold paediatric first aid qualifications, which helps to ensure children receive appropriate treatment in the event of an accident or emergency. Records of accidents and incidents are shared with parents and carers to ensure they are informed about their children's health and welfare. Children's individual medical needs and any allergies are recorded so they are cared for appropriately.

Children have ample opportunities to develop a healthy and active lifestyle both indoors and out. A well equipped and stimulating outdoor play area means children learn to run, manoeuvre and climb in safety. Indoors children benefit from enjoyable music and movement sessions, where they join in enthusiastically with action songs such as 'hop little bunnies' or 'wind the bobbin'. Children develop their coordination and pre-writing skills using accessible resources such as brushes, pencils and scissors.

Food served to the children is healthy and nutritious, for example, they enjoy a variety of fruit at snack time. Food related activities enable them to extend their knowledge of food, such as tasting potato wedges and various sauces. Water and milk is offered to the children with their food and they help themselves to water throughout the sessions, which ensures they are well hydrated. Children have some opportunities to develop their sense of responsibility at meals times because, for example, they help to hand out cups and plates.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe and secure environment that is clean and well kept. A gate in the foyer ensures children cannot access the kitchen or the entrance doors without supervision. The room used by the children is bright and cheerful with examples of children's art work and photographs, which gives them a sense of belonging. Children benefit from a delightful outdoor play area, which has mature trees and shrubs to offer shade in summer. A variety of wheeled toys and large climbing equipment enable children to develop their physical skills and have fun. Practitioners are developing a digging area for the children, where they grow, for example, sunflowers from seed.

Adults supervise children conscientiously as they play, for example as children jump off the climbing frame or the tall slide. This gives children confidence and encourages them to explore and test out new skills. Emergency procedures, such as the fire drill are conducted regularly so practitioners and children know how to respond, which promotes everyone's safety.

Equipment is good quality and mainly accessible to the children. However some resources are not always effectively organised to enable children to spontaneously extend their play and learning. Practitioners and the committee are developing the risk assessment, which includes checking the toys and equipment so they are suitable for children play with in safety.

Children are kept safe from harm because practitioners have a satisfactory understanding of child protection procedures. Policies follow guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Boards and these are shared with parents and carers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive at the setting and greet adults and their peers with enthusiasm. They separate from their carers with ease and settle to activities with cheerful confidence. Children enjoy the company of others and they form firm friendships. Practitioners sit with the children as they play and listen and respond with interest, which helps to ensure children feel valued. Younger children settling in get to know their key worker and enjoy one-to-one contact, such as a lap to sit on at story time.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Practitioners have a good understanding of how children learn and are developing effective team work so children benefit from consistent support. Generally activities are interesting and varied and contain a good balance of child and adult initiated ideas, although structured routines do not always enable children to sustain their play. Fun activities, such as experimenting with shaving foam or playing in dark 'dens' with torches stimulate children's interest. Staff question children well, for example, encouraging them to explore language when thinking about whether shaving foam is 'squishy' or 'slimy'. Sometimes additional resources, such as modelling or reusable materials are not always effectively deployed so they are appealing and easily accessible. This means some children, especially those older and more able cannot always fully extend their ideas and follow their interests.

Planning covers all the areas of learning so that children progress well. Practitioners discuss the activities on a daily basis to ensure children have variety, which means their individual needs are met. Assessments take account of the daily evidence that practitioners collect and key workers speak with parents so their knowledge of what their child can do is included. Children's progress along the stepping stones is monitored inconsistently because some key workers do not keep this record up to date. Therefore it does not show an accurate account of children's achievements and potentially affects practitioners' ability to plan accurately for children's next steps.

Children show good relationships, they play together and know how to share and take turns. They demonstrate good levels of independence as they, for example, use the toilets or put their coats on for outdoor play. Children speak confidently in a group, for example, they name a song or story of their choice.

Children benefit from a good selection of books, they enjoy story time and gather eagerly to hear an adult read from books. They access books independently during the session, sitting together to turn pages and follow pictures appropriately. They are beginning to recognise that books contain useful information, such as a picture of a starfish like the one on their display table and they compare them with interest. Some children are beginning to recognise their names, for example, on their name cards and many are beginning to make their marks on their art work. Staff encourage children to develop their vocabulary as, for example, they discuss the taste and textures of the food they are eating.

Children have a well developed understanding of numbers and use them every day in their play. They count cups or plates at snack time and estimate how many children are in the group. Some

children recognise written numbers with help, for example, they pick out the number that represents how many children are attending. Everyday activities, such as sand and water enable children to consider quantity and use concepts such as less and more as they fill and empty containers of different sizes.

Music brings pleasure to children, they gather eagerly to join in well known songs and rhymes and play with musical instruments. They know traditional songs, such as 'hey, diddle, diddle' and more modern ones, such as 'Bob the builder'. Children show a good sense of rhythm as they use percussion instruments to mark the beat and play loudly or quietly with equal enthusiasm and skill. Weekly visits from a dance teacher enables those children who attend to further develop their enjoyment of movement and exercise. Children paint, draw and make models with enthusiasm and enjoy seeing their work displayed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit because their parents have some opportunities to become actively involved in their learning. Parents and carers are encouraged to help in the setting or contribute items to support topics and themes. Written information about individual children's progress is shared with parents and they are invited to open events, where they speak with key workers about children's achievements. Newsletters and a notice board help keep parents and carers informed and extensive use of photographs means they know about the activities and see their children learning and having fun.

Practitioners work with parents and carers to settle children into the setting. Parents are encouraged to visit the setting with their children so they have time to develop confidence. Good information is collected about children's individual needs so practitioners know about children's preferences and disposition. Daily verbal feedback helps to ensure parents know about their children's welfare and progress. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Planned activities help children learn about other cultures and lifestyles, such as making lanterns for Chinese New Year. Some resources help children develop their knowledge of diversity, for example, there are books and posters that show children from other countries. Generally children behave well and understand the rules for harmonious play, they share resources well and enjoy each other's company in both small and large group activities. Children who have learning difficulties are supported well and enjoy full and active involvement in the activities. Key workers liaise with parents and carers as well as other professionals to meet children's individual needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective procedures make sure staff are suitable and have the necessary skills to support children and keep them safe. Practitioners are deployed well in the setting so children are supported in their play. Appraisals have been recently introduced and help to establish practitioner's skills and areas for development. For example, all the staff team have recently attended the required first aid training to update their knowledge and understanding. The committee recognises the need for professional development and facilitate further improvements in qualifications. This ensures children continue to benefit from good quality experiences. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is good. The relatively new staff team are developing their practice well. They work together and support each other, they take individual responsibility for the sessions and work with calm and confident purpose. They meet together regularly to plan activities and discuss children's progress, which helps to ensure children's individual needs are met. The recording of children's progress using the stepping stones is not consistent, which means children's learning is not always accurately noted. However, staff discuss children's achievements daily so mostly the activities take into account children's interests and promote their learning. The structure of the daily routine does not always give children time to develop their ideas and finish their chosen activities.

All required documentation is in place and any confidential records are kept securely. Individual children's records are shared appropriately with parents and carers. Comprehensive policies and procedures support children's health, safety and welfare and are regularly updated so they meet current regulations.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure hazardous plants are inaccessible to children and to ensure the person in charge has appropriate child care qualifications.

Practitioners are aware the children's play area has a quantity of ivy, which is potentially harmful. However the plant is cut back regularly and staff supervise children carefully as they play. The committee has plans to redevelop the garden at which point the ivy will be removed.

Since the last inspection a new leader has been appointed who has the necessary qualifications and experience. All the staff team now have suitable qualifications and as a result the outcomes for children are good.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to ensure there is an effective method of reviewing the planning and assessment to monitor children's progress in the early learning goals. The committee was also asked to improve opportunities for children to explore technology.

Planning covers all the areas of learning and staff meet frequently to ensure plans meet children's needs. Assessments of children's learning are completed by key workers and children's progress is shared with parents and carers. Key workers collect evidence of children's learning, but do not always record children's development using the stepping stones.

Children have ample opportunities to experience various forms of technology, for example, they use CD players, record their voices and help take photographs with a digital camera. Children use torches and understand that batteries need replacing. Normally children benefit from a computer, although this is currently being repaired.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- improve the range of resources which enable children to make choices and extend their own ideas (also applies to nursery education).

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 improve the systems for monitoring children's progress using the stepping stones
- improve the organisation of activities to give children further opportunities to play and learn independently, initiate their own activities and follow their own interests (also applies to care).

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