

Maple Leaf Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY247003
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Inspector	Sara Louth
Setting Address	RAF Digby, Ashby De La Launde, Lincolnshire, LN4 3LH
Telephone number	01526 327653
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Registered person	The Trustees of Maple Leaf 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?

Maple Leaf Pre-School has been registered for approximately eighteen years and is managed by an elected committee. It operates from premises on a military base. There is a 'pre-school' room for the older children and a 'crèche' room for the under three-year-olds. The setting has direct access to a fully enclosed and secure outdoor area.

There are currently 25 children on roll aged from one to under five years. This includes 10 who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend most sessions. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group is open five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:10 until 12:10. The crèche room sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00.

Four permanent staff work with the children. Of these, more than half have early years qualifications and two members of staff are working towards a qualification. Four relief members of staff provide cover when needed. The setting receives support from the Birth to Five Service and Children's Links. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted through staff implementing good health and hygiene routines. Premises are kept clean by staff who follow a daily cleaning rota and policies such as a health and hygiene policy are in place contributing to protecting children's health. Children's health is additionally well-maintained because some staff have current first aid certificates and others are booked on training so any accidents that may occur can be dealt with appropriately. Children are learning good personal hygiene habits. For example, they consistently carry out hand washing before eating, after messy play and after going to the toilet. Pictorial reminders are displayed on the wall to encourage the implementation of hygienic routines. Children are made aware of their own needs by having their noses wiped and putting on their coats with help as required to play outside. However, written permission has not been obtained from parents for the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment. This may compromise children's health.

Children's dietary needs are met through the provision of a healthy mid-session snack that takes account of their individual needs and preferences since they bring them from home in the morning. Children sit together at tables to enjoy their snacks of yoghurt, fresh and dried fruit. They choose squash or milk to drink, and water is available throughout the session enabling them to have a drink when they become thirsty. All staff are fully aware of any children with special dietary needs. This ensures routines are followed to keep children healthy.

Children benefit from plenty of fresh air and exercise through playing energetically outside every day which promotes their well-being. They develop their whole body strength on activities such as riding tricycles, running around and using climbing frames and slides of varying sizes. Children have fun outside as they travel around a track on a variety of ride-on toys showing control and the ability to negotiate space. Staff are positive about ensuring children get outside and provide a variety of activities outside in good weather.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where staff take positive steps to minimise risks, for example, excluding children from the office and daily safety checks of premises, of both the inside and outside areas. Fire safety procedures are in place and staff regularly practise emergency evacuations with the children to ensure they know what to do in the event of a fire and therefore protect them from harm. However, the setting has no fire detection equipment. This may compromise children's safety.

There is a welcoming and stimulating environment provided for children. The walls are covered with colourful, attractive displays including children's work to reinforce learning and show their efforts are valued. The premises are in a good state of repair, warm and well-lit. Children use a wide range of suitable, well-maintained toys and equipment and the rooms are set out effectively providing space for them to play and eat together, move around safely and freely, and to encourage their independence. For example, children confidently access resources and hand washing facilities.

Children are closely supervised because staff are deployed well and are clear of their role in the session through use of a rota. They work together as a team to ensure children are protected from accidental injury. Children develop a good understanding of safety rules and learn to take responsibility for their own safety. They know, for example, to sweep sand up off the floor and to have their shoelaces tied in case they trip over.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded and promoted because staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection issues and procedures. The child protection policy is shared with parents. However, this does not yet contain all the required information.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy being at the setting and quickly settle into the activities provided. They make choices and confidently initiate their own play. The younger children have their own room and activities provided. Older children enter the setting and sit in their place at tables to undertake an activity provided by staff. Once all these children have arrived the group move on to registration then free choice play. A wide variety of easily accessible activities are planned for the children and these are supported by a good range of resources such as pens, paper, stamps, envelopes and a till in the role-play post office area. Staff plan activities with awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework for the younger children and ensure activities are at the right developmental level for children to achieve. For example, small models were provided for children to decorate using paint and glitter as well as developing their colour and body parts recognition. Younger children particularly enjoy the sensory play. They spend time scooping up sand and pouring it through their fingers feeling and watching the effect and develop their creativity through free painting at the easel.

Staff are well organised and sensitively support children accessing activities specifically designed to promote their development and learning. Young children understand the routines of the group and join together happily for group activities such as outside play and snack.

Nursery Education

Children enjoy their time in the setting. They have a good attitude to learning and are happy, settled and purposefully engaged throughout the session. Children are confident and self-assured working and playing effectively on their own or with others. They are fully involved in a stimulating range of developmentally appropriate activities. These provide realistic challenge and are well matched to children's interests and needs.

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play. Children are motivated by staff who have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and understand how children develop. Staff plan as a team and the comprehensive planning shows staff have very good awareness of how children learn. Plans are well thought through and detailed. Staff plan activities balanced across all six areas of learning and use a wide range of teaching methods, such as use of effective questioning to develop children's learning. For example, asking children 'what will happen?' and 'what do we need to put with the powder to make it a liquid?' when making plaster of Paris models. This also encourages children to persevere and maintain interest in activities.

Staff's use of time and resources is good which helps children achieve. For example, children participate in a wide range of hands on learning experiences, they are allowed freedom of choice and they participate in adult-led as well as group-led activities. Assessments of children are thorough and cover every area of learning. Staff make good detailed observations linked to the stepping stones and evaluate activities. They know the children well and use the observations to identify any individuals requiring extra support or challenge, thereby moving children on to their next steps in learning.

Children are self-assured in their play and interact confidently with their peers to share ideas and experiences, such as when playing in the 'post office' role play area. They have fun using stampers on envelopes and posting letters. Children have free access to the book area and mark-making equipment is incorporated into activities to help promote their pre-reading and writing skills. Children demonstrate good knowledge of letters as they point to the letters in their name on a computer keyboard. They show skill counting to ten and develop their number recognition using the Advent calendar. However, there is currently little opportunity for children to develop calculation skills and records show less attainment in this area. Children show good mouse skills as they confidently access the computer programs independently and enjoy dragging food across the screen to feed to the crocodile. They show good use of imagination when they join in the 'bear hunt'. Children have opportunities to develop their small hand skills. For example, cutting with scissors and manipulating play dough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the setting. They are settled as they have developed good relationships with staff who know them well. Children have their individual needs met well as staff gather information about their requirements as soon as they start. All children within the setting are fully included and treated with equal care and concern. The stimulating and welcoming environment fully reflects the children's backgrounds and the wider community. Staff are highly aware that some children may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ensure positive strategies are in place to promote their enjoyment and achievement, such as individual education plans and routines based around specific requirements to ensure needs are met. An organised key worker system is in place to further promote the welfare and development of children.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are eager to play with other children and join in activities. They develop good relationships with adults and children in the setting and engage in conversation throughout the session. Children's behaviour is good because staff use a positive approach by offering regular praise and encouragement to help develop children's self-esteem. Children have their knowledge of the wider world and sense of community developed in meaningful ways. They learn about festival customs such as Christmas and Hanukkah and experience a range of related resources that reflect positive images of diversity which helps to promote children's understanding.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. All the required documentation and most consents are in place to ensure children are looked after according to their parents' wishes. Parents are kept well informed of relevant information regarding the setting, its policies and procedures verbally, by newsletter and through information displayed at the playgroup. However, some policies do not contain all the required information and the operational plan is not shared with parents. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning through newsletters and link activities to do at home.

Children benefit from the good relationships fostered with parents and carers who receive good quality information about nursery education and the curriculum. Planning is shared for each room and photographs showing children undertaking a variety of activities are on view. Staff are available at the beginning and end of every session for exchange of information. Parents are well informed about their children's achievements and progress through their records which are shared with them when they ask. Parents are very pleased with the setting and say how their children love attending and how well they are cared for.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are confident and relaxed in the setting. They are well cared for by dedicated, qualified and experienced staff who work effectively together as a team and have very good knowledge and understanding of child development. They make good use of their time and resources to support children's learning. The well organised environment and effective staff deployment provides children with the best experiences possible thus enhancing children's enjoyment and achievement and their ability to take an active part in the setting. Sessions are well structured with clear routines which help children settle and become confident.

Children are fully protected since consistent vetting procedures are in place. Knowledgeable staff fully understand and implement the setting's policies and procedures to protect children, promote their well-being and support all to develop their potential. Most required documentation is in place, contains the required information and is shared with parents to ensure children's needs are met and promoted.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The supervisor has a very good understanding of the areas of learning, stepping stones and early learning goals. She is a positive role model for others and staff work together closely as a team for the continued improvement of children's nursery education. There is a clear vision of providing a balance of education and care to happy, settled children. Staff make good use of external agencies and training opportunities to keep abreast of any changes, and have developed close links with the school to aid children's transition. They provide a broad and balanced curriculum for every child.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting under care was asked to ensure that the employment policy contains information about the procedure for advertising staff vacancies in accordance with equal opportunities. The employment policy is in place and vacancies are now advertised externally and internally in accordance with equal opportunities.

At the last inspection under nursery education the setting was asked to develop systems for committee/staff meetings by introducing a formal agenda that enables all personnel involved to contribute their ideas and offer solutions and to introduce an effective appraisal system and arrange for any necessary training to assist with the planning and implementation of a chosen procedure.

The setting now shares minutes of meetings through displaying them on the parent notice board and the supervisor meets with the 'Officer in Command' and the chair to discuss the agenda prior to every meeting. An appraisal system is in place and the needs of the staff are

met through ongoing training. There is now a better framework in place for children's care and learning.

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):

- ensure written parental permission is requested to the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment
- review fire safety with regard to adequate fire detection equipment
- update policies and procedures in line with current legislation in particular for child protection and complaints and make the operational plan more accessible for parents.

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):

- develop teaching methods further to ensure there are opportunities for children to develop their skills of calculation through planned activities and everyday routines.

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