

Medstead Pre-school and Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109996
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Inspector	Lorraine Wardlaw
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Registered person	Medstead Pre-school and Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Medstead Pre-school and Nursery opened in 1989. It is run by a parent management committee and is a registered charity. It operates from two rooms in self-contained, purpose-built accommodation within the grounds of Medstead Primary School. There is an enclosed outdoor play area, and the setting has the use of the school grounds.

Sessional and full day care is offered to children usually from two years to under five. The setting is able to offer breakfast club in conjunction with the Primary school. The holiday play scheme is offered to children aged from three years to seven years. The group serves the local area, although they also take referred children with hearing impairments from a wider area.

There are currently 61 children on roll. This includes 44 funded three and four-year-olds. Children can attend for a variety of sessions, from half to full days. The group are able to support children with learning difficulties and children with English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. There is flexible start time from 08.00 with sessions finishing at either 12.05, 13.05 or 15.05. Afternoon sessions including the

lunch period is also available from 12.05 until 15.05. The holiday play scheme is open during the summer holidays for a specified, two week period.

The group has a well established team of nine staff, including the manger. Eight staff are qualified to early years level 3 and above. The setting receives support from the local authority. The setting is accredited by pre-school learning alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit greatly from the all weather, outside play surface, which enables them to develop their physical skills in the fresh air, at a time of their choosing. They skilfully peddle tricycles around corners, use scooters, climb the ladder to the new slide/house and have regular opportunities to swim and take part in physical education sessions. Children use a variety of tools and materials with confidence; for example they use scissors to cut the legs of their paper octopus, use cutters and rolling pins with the playdoh and rollers in the paint. Children's nutritional needs are well catered for, with emphasis and encouragement by staff on healthy eating. They choose from chopped up apple with milk or water at snack time. At midday they can choose to bring their own packed lunch, which is stored in the fridge, or have a hot lunch in the school which is on a rolling menu. Children are able to independently access the toilets to respond to their own physical needs and understand the importance of washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Their health and welfare is supported by good record keeping by staff in the accident and medication records. Staff are highly aware of the procedure to prevent cross infection of infectious childhood illnesses amongst children. For example, they inform parents on the telephone of when a child with chicken pox should return to nursery and keep a log on the door to inform parents of the current amount of chicken pox cases.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for and learn in an attractive, child friendly, safe environment where staff are vigilant about their safety. For example, children are supervised at the ladder to the new play house and are gently reminded to kneel down at the window of the house and to mind their fingers at the door, which helps them to learn new safety rules. Annual risk assessments are carried out by the manager and a separate outside risk assessment, ensures that all areas continue to remain safe for children. Any areas identified as hazardous are swiftly responded to by the management, such as a repair to the fence or investing in a sun awning to give shade to children who play outside, which helps protect them from harmful sun rays. Children learn to keep safe in the event of a fire, by taking part in regular fire drills and learn to dial 999, in an emergency during 'the people who help us' topic. Children play with a very good selection of toys and resources that are checked weekly for their continued safety and suitability. They are able to appreciate many colourful wall displays of their art work and group friezes such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Children are very well protected from possible abuse, because staff are highly aware of their responsibilities and work positively with all agencies involved in safeguarding children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and content in the nurturing, pre-school and nursery environment. They settle quickly at play activities, choosing either the upstairs or downstairs provision. They are keen and eager to select from the good range of practical, hands on, activities on offer to them. For example, they play in the outside water tray with wind up toys or build castles in the pink coloured sand. Two-year-olds receive very sympathetic support and encouragement from staff who interact with them skilfully, at their level and in a fun way. Staff understand the needs of the young child and have introduced elements of the Birth to three matters framework into their planning and assessment. Young children who are not yet comfortable with the routine of registration time or snack time, are able to experience activities which are familiar to them. For example, a one to one story with an adult about Thomas the Tank Engine, or repeated play with paint and rollers.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals, because the staff team are knowledgeable Foundation Stage practitioners and offer a very good continuous curriculum, that covers all areas of learning. Children enjoy learning through exciting activities, particularly in the early learner group where some very good teaching practice takes place. For example, during whole group time children look at an excellent selection of maps, before they sit at the table to make their own treasure maps, some complete theirs with blue rivers and caves. They print skull and cross bones on their own bandana's with potatoes, and work as a team, following instructions, and written signs by physically going on an indoor treasure hunt, crawling through a dark tunnel and climbing over a make believe mountain. Overall, planning covers most of the required elements, such as learning objectives of activities, but there are no clear, written links between children's individual assessment records and the planning system. Key worker staff keep up-to-date assessment notes of four-year-olds, and some of the three-year-olds, based on their capabilities. Some staff informally build into their work, and children's free play time, specific learning aims for their key children.

Children are making good progress in their spoken language and thinking skills. Staff are careful to ask open ended questions and introduce new vocabulary to children during their play activities such as 'vibrate', 'expert' and 'symbols'. All children learn to sign which helps those less confident speakers, those children with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties. Children learn to link sound of letters to the words through whole group teaching with good resources and all staff encourage children to write emergently on their art work. They listen attentively to stories often joining in with elements and words of the story. Children are able to count confidently and recognise numerals; staff incidentally introduce problem solving during free play such as when a child guesses he has eight children on his register list; he counts his list to eleven and the adult asks, so is that more or less than eight? Children are able to recognise two dimensional shapes and learn about capacity in the water tray. They have excellent opportunities to learn about France through the very good French teacher who comes in each week; older children learn about the special holidays in France and all children are gaining a good, basic grasp of the French language. They excitedly and enthusiastically sing the number song and respond in French to a little doll, either giving her a cuddle, kiss or shake her hand. Children use the computer and mouse independently and with confidence. They are able to respond to their senses when on the indoor treasure hunt; tiptoeing through the sand they say it feels 'squashy' and tickly', and they stand in water in their bare feet looking for

treasure. Children have good opportunities to explore paint , to use collage materials and to freely draw, using their imagination. They make pretend cakes with the play doh and role play in the home corner.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff's good understanding of equal opportunities which they encompass into their everyday practice; they value and respect each child and it's family and make everyone feel welcome. Children's specific needs are discussed and recorded on entry to the group; such as children where English is an additional language, to ensure staff are aware of their needs and can give extra support and encouragement. Children experience positive images and can play with a good range of resources which reflect diversity and acknowledges differences, such as posters and books. Their awareness of people with disability is heightened when a local play workshop visits with toys for disabled children for them to try out. There are excellent systems in place to support children with learning difficulties; all staff are trained in British sign language to support children with hearing impairment and there are excellent links with other professionals such as the incontinence nurse. Staff are quick to identify children who have impaired learning and work consistently and successfully with families to aid their development. Children are polite and well behaved often saying 'excuse me' when they wish to speak to an adult; they are well stimulated, happy and receive plenty of praise and encouragement from the staff. Staff are very good role models for children because they are calm, patient and offer clear guidance on how to behave. For example, upstairs, children are quietly asked not to stamp on the floor because it may give the ladies downstairs a headache. All children are focused and well motivated by the exciting activities on offer to them. They operate independently within the environment but there is less emphasis by staff on developing children's personal independence, particularly at snack time. Children have excellent links with the village community and the school which is located on the campus; they take part annually in the village fete and gardening show and perform the annual nativity in the school hall. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers receiving nursery education funding is good. There is regular communication between parents and staff about children's progress, including the sharing of children's assessment records and very good information given to parents about the curriculum offered, on view in the foyer. Very attractively presented newsletters regularly inform parents of up to date information and an informative website also gives very good details of the setting. Parents are involved in a comprehensive hand over to school involving the reception class teacher. The setting consults with parents annually through a questionnaire on how they can maintain the quality of the setting and it's findings are implemented. Key worker staff work informally with parents to plan children's next steps in learning. Parents are invited to share in training courses such as sign language and tips to develop children's communication skills.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are very happy and feel secure in the well organised, relaxed environment, which allows them to access numerous resources and activities. They clearly benefit from the caring, experienced, staff team who work exceptionally well together and who have a professional attitude to their work. Staff are deployed effectively, working directly with the children. Staff are well qualified and attend regular workshops and in house training, such as the 'I can' course,

organised by the speech therapist. Records are well up to date, and most of the required documentation is in place, but some do not completely cover regulations such as the summary complaints log which is available for parents on request. Good written policies and procedures which underpin practice are regularly reviewed including a sound recruitment and vetting procedure for new staff. The group have an exceptionally well organised and effective management committee who are highly aware of their responsibilities and who work tirelessly on fundraising events to benefit the group. For example, every year they organise a summer ball and burns night supper for parents to attend. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. The manager is a skilled and knowledgeable practitioner of nursery education who leads, and influences by example, an effective team. She is actively involved in several piloting schemes organised by the Local Authority such as Pathfinder. All staff work together well, contributing to the written plans, with some written evaluation of the curriculum taking place; supervisors of the early learners group, plan and write their own individual curriculum plans, which vary in content. Monitoring of the curriculum takes place by the manager, by direct observation and the reviewing of key worker assessments, but this does not wholly identify the areas for improvement in nursery education. All staff have regular appraisals and take part in peer to peer feedback to develop their practice. The setting has excellent links with the local authority and is very committed to delivering high quality provision.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting were requested to respond to one nursery education point which was to ensure consistency of recording in children's assessment records, showing links to the early learning goals. The setting uses the Hampshire record of achievement which identifies the stepping stones the individual child has achieved and these are mostly supported by anecdotal written observations and examples of children's work. The stepping stones clearly lead on to the early learning goals. The setting had two care recommendations; the first was to review and maintain records, policies and procedures for the safe management of the group. The setting has an up-to-date risk assessment of the whole of the building including upstairs and the outside area which is reviewed annually. The setting has devised a swimming and outings procedure to ensure the continued safety of children when they are off the premises. The setting were requested to review how dietary needs are to be met for children staying for an extended day. The setting now offer the choice of a hot meal provided by the adjacent school or a packed lunch to those children who stay for the whole day, which has a positive impact on their health.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- refine the system to record a summary log of complaints, ensuring it is in line with regulations

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 more focus plans to ensure there are clear, written links between children's individual assessment records and their learning objectives
- continue to develop the monitoring system to maximise the teaching and learning opportunities for children, particularly the snack time routine

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