

Millbrook Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	102926
Inspection date	17 September 2007
Inspector	Sara Jane Frost
Setting Address	The Village Hall, Millbrook, Torpoint, Cornwall, PL10 1AY
Telephone number	01752 823128
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Registered person	Millbrook Pre-School 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Millbrook Pre-school opened in 1972 and is run by a committee of parents. It operates from the village hall in Millbrook, near Torpoint. The pre-school serves the village and outlying areas. The pre-school is open on Monday to Thursday from 09.30 until 12.00 term time only.

A maximum of 24 may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 23 children, aged from two to five years on roll of whom 19 receive nursery funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school currently employs three full-time staff who work with the children. All staff have suitable early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Children, Young Person's and Family Services.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health and hygiene practices are promoted by staff. Children have an understanding of the importance of hand washing at appropriate times, such as before snack and after using the toilet. Individual hand towels are brought to each session by the children from home. The risk of contamination is raised as the pre-school provides a communal bar of soap for the children to use.

At least one member of staff present during the session has the appropriate paediatric first aid qualification, those whose first aid certificates have expired are in the process of updating their knowledge and practice. Although the setting has obtained parental consent to seek emergency medical treatment it does not have consent to seek emergency medical advice. Parents are kept fully informed of any accidents that have occurred to the children and asked to countersign entries recorded; however the last entry recorded is missing the date the accident occurred.

Children benefit from a well organised cafeteria style snack, this helps to encourage their own independence; for example, children are made aware when the 'snack café' is open and those who are engaged in activities are able to choose when they want to access nourishment, at a more convenient time during their play. Parents provide their child's individual snacks, which mainly consist of nutritional foods, this is in conjunction with the pre-school's healthy eating policy.

Children have various opportunities to exercise, for example climbing and sliding, music and movement and balancing activities. Although there is no opportunity for outdoor play, staff provide a range of physical challenges for children indoors to help develop their large muscles and co-ordination skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The village hall is shared by various community groups and staff work hard before each session to ensure the room is warm and welcoming for the children. Various colourful displays and children's work cover the wall spaces available. Children are able to select activities from a good range of toys and resources, which are clean, well maintained and suitable for their age and stage of development.

Staff are vigilant regarding children's safety. Good security systems are in place to protect the children particularly at the beginning and ending of each session. A simple chain system is used to ensure persons cannot enter the room once the session has commenced and a device is used at the far end of the room close to the fire exit which emits a sound as soon as the beam is broken. Therefore no person can enter or leave the main room without staff's knowledge. Staff carry out regular risk assessments to enable children to move around the room safely. For example, the good organisation of the furniture allows easy access and manoeuvrability for wheelchair users. Children learn about safety aspects such as not playing with matches and are all fully aware that burning candles 'will hurt you very much'. Fire drills are conducted on a termly basis and usually recorded in the pre-school's register. However, although staff are insistent an evacuation drill took place last term there is no record to show to that effect.

Children are well protected as staff are clear about their responsibilities around child protection issues and are up to date with current procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children clearly enjoy coming to pre-school. Most of the younger children enter the setting well and staff have developed strategies to ensure children feel comfortable in the group's routine. For example, at the start of a term children who are new to the pre-school are staggered, this allows them time to feel secure and become confident learners. Staff use the Birth to three matters in their planning. Children clearly enjoy the range of activities that are on offer. For example, the water play fishing game was very popular as was the play dough and role play area. Staff interact well with the children offering support and encouragement at appropriate times. Children are able to move freely between activities, which helps promote choice and independence.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound and secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The planned programme covers all six areas of learning. Staff use the stepping stones; I can statements, assessments and observations to help develop the next appropriate step in the child's learning. However, this is the start of a new term and therefore observational records and assessments are limited, but through discussion staff clearly know, at what stage of development existing children are at.

All children are welcomed into the pre-school setting. The allocated member of staff responsible for Special Educational Needs has attended training courses on the Code of practice and is familiar with writing individual educational plans.

Strong emphasis is placed on the children's personal, social and emotional development and this is fostered very well. New children are able to settle well as staff are sensitive and attentive. Staff engage children in conversations; this helps them to feel valued. Children respond well in a caring environment where they learn to consider other people's needs as well as their own, such as helping those with less mobility than themselves move around the room. They learn how to be cooperative and work well together, for example, during tidy up time when everyone helped. Children respond well to behavioural instructions for example, stop and listen when the 'jingle of bells' is heard. As well as new concepts which are brought into use such as, the wearing of tabards' when using the climbing frame. This visual aid has been introduced to help them understand only a specific number of children can use the apparatus' at any one time.

Children confidently take part in discussions, for example during circle time children discuss the items they have brought in from home and placed on the letter table. Staff are supportive and take time to listen to the children. Children listen to stories well, however the book corner used is not enticing, children rarely access this area independently and therefore it was not used to its full potential. Children are starting to recognise their names as they are encouraged to select their names; for self registration, at snack and when they hang up their coats.

Staff develop children's mathematical language by asking questions to make them think. For example, a child on stilts was asked 'are you taller than me?' 'What about if I sit down, who is the tallest now?' Children are able to count on rote up to 15, more able children recognised from a card displaying three numbers which one was 17. Mathematical thinking is introduced

through every day routines as staff talk about shapes, numbers and simple fractions. For example, at snack time a discussion was had about cutting pieces of fruit in half and quarters.

Children clearly enjoy singing action songs such as 'head, shoulder's, knees and toes' and 'if your happy and you know it' as well as the shortened version of 'Three little speckled frogs'. Children have access to information technology through use of a computer and simple programmes. The younger children are helped by staff and older children in moving the mouse to select specific items.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well met as staff work hard to ensure that all children can be included in any activities offered. Their self esteem and confidence is well promoted. Staff clearly know the children and their families well. Children are provided with opportunities to learn about their local environment. For example, the 'people who help us' project staff invite the local coast guards to visit and chat with the children, helping them to understand how to keep safe when at the beach. Through planned topics children also gain an understanding of diversity.

The member of staff with overall responsibility for special education needs has a clear understanding of the code of practice and is encouraging staff to become familiar with the processes.

Staff are good role models, and actively promote good manners. As a result children are polite and their behaviour is good. They regularly receive praise from staff both verbally and through using reward stickers. Children are learning to share, take turns and cooperate with each other; everyone took an active part at 'tidy up time'. They learn to look out for each other, for example, one child helped another get the resources they required. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive a detailed prospectus when they register their children. Information on the Foundation Stage curriculum is available for parents, regular newsletters are sent home which detail topics and letters of the week and notice boards are set up with various forms of information in the entrance area. The setting's policy of staggered admissions particularly in the autumn term allows younger children to become familiar with their new surroundings, and contributes to developing good relationships with staff. However, staff do not always seek information about children's achievements and targets from parents and carers. Links are forged as children are encouraged to bring in items from home for 'letter of the week' or specific topics. In addition, the pre-school tries to develop further links by asking parents to help with the 'duty rota'; unfortunately, help is not always forthcoming. Parents talk positively about the setting particularly, how approachable and friendly the staff are.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff work well to ensure the setting is ready before children enter the building; therefore staff are able to greet and welcome everyone as they enter the pre-school environment. Staff have developed a good working relationship with each other which ensures children are well supported at all times. Children are well protected as staff ensure unvetted persons are not left alone with

the children. Most of the required documentation is in place, however some areas are not fully completed for example, recording the exact arrival and departure times of staff. All documentation is kept secure and confidential.

The leadership and management is good. The provision is managed by a committee and the day to day management of the provision is the responsibility of the person in charge who is qualified and experienced. Staff are proactive in organising their professional development; this is supported by management who oversee staff appraisals. All staff hold a Level 3 childcare qualification. They have recently attended a briefing on the new 'Early Years Foundation Stage', Birth to five and are considering ways to develop parent's awareness of the new framework. Staff meet on a weekly basis to discuss and evaluate the curriculum planning, monitor children's progress and other areas connected with the smooth running of the group. In addition staff regularly communicate with each other throughout the session of any children's achievements. The pre-school receives support and advice from the Children, Young Person's and Family Services. The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection it was recommended that the pre-school should further develop the security of the playroom; ensure systems are in place to record the administration of any medication; record times of arrival and departure of staff and develop the nutritional value of snacks provided. Children's personal safety has greatly improved as staff monitor the entrance to the main hall at the start and the end of each session in addition to this staff use a chain across the hall door when the session is running and an effective alarm system has been installed should children try to leave via the fire exit doors. Snacks are provided by the parents in conjunction with the pre-school's healthy eating policy. The documentation required is now in place for administering medication to children. However, the recording of staff present at each session does not reflect the actual accurate times of their arrival and departure and therefore will remain a recommendation at this inspection.

At the last education inspection staff were asked to provide opportunities for children to develop their own ideas using a wide range of resources and materials. They were also asked to implement systems for monitoring children who may have special educational needs and develop staff's awareness of the current Code of practice. At organised craft activities children are provided with a varying range of resources and materials to enhance their individual creations. The pre-school has a dedicated member of staff whose role is to ensure any children with special educational needs are suitably monitored. She has attended training courses to update her practice and knowledge and; is encouraging other staff to develop their knowledge and understanding in this area through guidance and training.

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

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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 there are suitable hand washing provisions to help reduce the risk of cross infection
- ensure all records are fully maintained, to include recording of all fire drills, entries of any accidents are fully completed, keep accurate records of staff's arrival and departure times and obtain written parental consent to seek emergency medical advice.

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 the book corner to make the area more enticing and interesting for children to access
- ensure information about children's achievements is obtained and continue to develop the partnership with parents and carers.

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