

Eccles Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127166
Inspection date	27 September 2007
Inspector	Linda Margaret Nicholls
Setting Address	Methodist Church Hall, Bull Lane, Eccles, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7HE
Telephone number	07986259293
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Registered person	Eccles 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?

Eccles Pre-School opened in 1975. It is run by committee. Registration is for 21 children at any one time. There are currently 14 children on roll, of which 10 are funded for nursery education. The pre-school can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school operates from a hall attached to the Methodist Church in the village of Eccles on the outskirts of Maidstone, Kent. The group opens five mornings and one afternoon a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00 and the afternoon session for children attending school during the same academic year is from 12:30 until 15:00.

There are five staff who work with the children all of whom have or are working towards early years qualifications and attend local authority training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about personal hygiene and good health practices through every day routines. Staff reinforce hand washing before eating food and after outside play. Children are protected from cross infection because staff ensure play surfaces, toys and resources are clean using antibacterial solutions. Children are protected from infectious illnesses because they do not attend when they are sick. Clear and effective medical records are maintained. Contact numbers are held securely and parents are informed of procedures should a child become ill or require emergency treatment.

Children are offered a choice of healthy foods at snack time, including portions of fruit. Their personal preferences are taken into consideration. Children chat with adults and children as they wait patiently to choose from a plate of snacks. Fresh drinking water is available at all times. However children are not encouraged to develop independence by pouring drinks or self registering with name cards at snack time. Parents inform the pre-school of any allergies or individual requirements their child may have.

Children enjoy daily planned physical activities and extend their play between the hall and the small outside garden. They climb, slide or jump on the climbing frame or play on tricycles or scooters. Children know to put on coats when they play outside to keep warm. Children relax in the book corner. Children have plenty of opportunities to develop dexterity and coordination as they paint on the easel, knead and model play dough or use scissors, pencils and crayons.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in secure premises because staff supervise them at all times and minimise risks by following safety procedures. The outside play area is securely fenced and visitors details are recorded. There is sufficient free floor space for children to negotiate between furniture and activities. Children make independent choices from equipment that is accessible and attractively presented. There is good ventilation and natural light. Hazardous items are stored in cupboards which children cannot access.

Children have a growing understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They help tidy away resources, take turns on the climbing frame and sit on chairs with care. Fire safety recommendations are in place and fire drills are practised regularly. An evacuation plan is displayed and children know what to do in the event of an emergency. Road safety is discussed on walks around the village or as part of a planned theme. Public liability insurance is current.

Children's welfare is promoted because staff are experienced and know the procedures to follow should they have any concerns. Safeguarding Children training was undertaken in 2007. Procedures have been reviewed and a written statement explains the process to be followed should there be an allegation of abuse by a member of staff or other adult. Local and national contact numbers are available. Parents are informed of the provider's professional responsibilities through policies and procedures and at an initial meeting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make independent choices from a range of freely accessible toys and resources. They put on aprons to paint. They sit at tables to colour or make pin wheel windmills. Children engage with staff easily, asking them to play with the play dough or to share a book. They use a range of mark making equipment, such as crayons, pencils or paint and some attempt to write their names. Children develop confidence as they talk to the whole group about items they bring in. They sing songs at circle time such as 'Here we go round the Mulberry Bush' and 'The Farmers in His Den.' Individual drawings are displayed so they know their work is valued. Children enjoy social activities such as pond dipping and visits to a farm. Children are gleefully attentive when the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' is read.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Experienced staff work well as a team to plan and provide resources for activities. They effectively incorporate elements of the Birth to three matters framework and the early years goals of the Foundation Stage. Observations are taken and assessments made to monitor individual children's progress, although records of children's achievements prior to starting at the nursery are not sought. Planning is clear and effective although there is little immediate information of intended learning outcomes at specific activities. Staff are caring and alert to children's interests. They allow them time to explore and ask them questions to make them think.

Children learn the names of numbers, letters and colours as staff reinforce and extend children's knowledge. They learn about the seasons, paint with autumnal colours such as red, orange and green. Staff introduce new words such as 'fold', 'model' and 'windmill'. Children concentrate and focus with delight on illustrations in a book counting the number of holes the caterpillar has made. They learn to keep time singing to nursery rhymes and to count with staff the number of children present at registration. They learn the properties of shapes and fit wooden track pieces or Duplo construction pieces together. They experiment with paint and glue. Children are fascinated by insects and the shape and feel of large pine cones. They learn about everyday items such as mobile phones, calculators and hole punchers.

Children proudly show Duplo models of gardens they have constructed. They know their work is valued and some label pictures they have made. Children are considerate and take turns with equipment. Children move confidently and competently as they extend their play from the hall to the outside play area. They develop dexterity and coordination as they thread a pin through paper, place pasta shapes on the glue or fold paper in half to construct pinwheel windmills. Overall the provision plans and provides activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a growing sense of belonging as they are welcomed by name as they enter the hall. Children have access to a modest range of toys and books showing positive images of race, culture and disability. They learn about their local community as they attend harvest festival and recognise cultural events such as Diwali. Families are requested to provide information about their preferences and individual requirements. Staff liaise with other

professionals, are highly experienced and suitably qualified to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Children are good natured and learn how to control themselves. They are considerate of others who may need extra support. Staff provide simple consistent explanations of behaviour they want and praise children when they behave well. Children learn to share and to take part in tidying up. They talk about family members, people they know and favourite pets.

The partnership with parents is good. Children receive continuity of care because agreements are signed and individual details are recorded. Information is shared daily between parents and staff. Parents do not provide a record of their children's achievements prior to the start at the pre-school. Parents report their children have 'settled in well,' that they have 'no worries at all.' Parents consider they are well informed. Staff are always helpful, explain everything and tell them 'all I need to know.' Children's records and observations build through Birth to three matters and the early years goals of the Foundation Stage. However there is little displayed information for parents showing the link between activities and the intended learning outcomes. The provider takes positive steps to ensure parents are kept well informed of all relevant policies and procedures. This includes a complaints procedure and contact details of the regulatory body. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children play enthusiastically and learn at their own pace in a welcoming environment with supportive adults. They explore resources and create with imagination although their independence at snack time is limited. The registered provider ensures adults working with staff are suitable to do so. An induction procedure is in place and progressive professional development is encouraged. The registration certificate is displayed. Required documents are held. An operational plan identifies training programmes for the team.

The leadership and management are good. Staff are encouraged and supported in their application of the Birth to three matters framework, although the display of information of the learning outcomes is limited. Senior staff have taken part in a pilot for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Observations and assessments identify children's individual achievements although a record of starting points prior to entry at the pre-school is not sought. Whole group activities are reviewed during regular team meetings. Parents are provided with information of their child's progress daily, on request and as a record of transfer. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection an action was imposed to ensure hygiene practices help prevent the spread of infection. Children play safely with clean resources because hygiene practices have been reviewed and are part of staff induction which helps prevent the spread of infection.

At the last inspection recommendations were agreed to ensure all fire fighting equipment is regularly maintained, to review the child protection policy and confidentiality and ensure one to one support is provided when required. Children play safely as fire fighting equipment is checked annually. The child protection policy is reviewed. Training has been taken. Links with local authority ensure one to one support is provided when required.

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):

- consider extending children's independence together with recognition of their written name at snack time.

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):

- consider the introduction of a record of children's starting points and achievements at home to assist early assessment of children's learning; expand the display of information of intended learning outcomes throughout the hall

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