

Mill Grove Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	128475
Inspection date	26 March 2008
Inspector	Fiona Sapler
Setting Address	10 Crescent Road, South Woodford, London, E18 1JB
Telephone number	020 8504 2702
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Registered person	Mill Grove Christian Charitable Trust
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?

Mill Grove Christian Play Group is run by Mill Grove Christian Charitable Trust and has been registered since 1992. It operates from a large hall, and two smaller rooms, attached to the Mill Grove community complex. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre school at any one time and it is open from 09:30 to 12:00 and 12:45 to 15:15, every day, except on a Thursday, term time only. There is a fully enclosed garden and a large playground for outside play.

There are currently 59 children, aged from two to under five years, on roll. Of these, 31 receive funding for early education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The preschool employs six members of staff. All of these hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Pedagogy Team and has participated in a Quality Assurance scheme

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are supported to develop good hygiene routines that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They know that they need to wash their hands before their snack, and after going to the toilet, because they want to 'get the germs out'. They know they need to flush the toilet and can easily access the hand basins because a step is provided. A visiting dentist helps teach them how to clean their teeth properly and about foods that promote good dental health.

A range of well thought out policies relating to health and hygiene are successfully implemented by all staff and successfully ensure children receive appropriate care in the event of a serious accident or illness. A first aid box is taken on trips and when using the pre school garden. Parents provide prior written consent to administer medication and for emergency treatment if required. All staff hold a current first aid certificate and accidents are well recorded and acknowledged, in writing, by parents.

Children have regular opportunities to develop their physical skills indoors and out. They have the use of a beautifully presented garden that provides a stimulating environment for them to gain from the benefits of lots of fresh air and exercise. They excitedly chase bubbles, attempt to hula hoop or swing from ropes and ladders. Planned activities indoors also help the children to learn different ways their bodies can move as they, for instance, jump and hop during musical movement sessions or learn a variety of skills as they climb, slide and crawl on the climbing frame. Older children confidently negotiate the open space outdoors and receive good support from staff when learning new skills such as throwing and catching balls. They develop their fine motor skills and hand eye co-ordination when they 'paint' the boat and climbing equipment in the garden, with large paint brushes, or competently use smaller equipment when writing, cutting or drawing.

Snack times are organised to be sociable occasions when children sit with their friends and a member of staff and chat about their families and interests. The children know what foods are good when they talk to the key worker about the benefits of eating the apples, pears, raisins and bananas. Growing and tasting activities, for example, when they sample peas from a pod and explore the differences between cooked and raw carrot, help the children understand where food comes from, encourages them to try new tastes and to learn how food helps them to stay healthy and well. They are encouraged to be independent when they carry the plate of fruit to the table and are supported to pour their drinks from jugs by themselves. Children can access drinks of water throughout the session enabling them to develop their self help skills and to enable them to think about their own bodies' needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children confidently enter the pre-school at the start of the session. The hall is organised into areas of learning and room dividers are used to make it more interesting for the children to explore what is available for them to play with. Posters depicting a range of cultural celebrations and a welcome poster reflect the children's different backgrounds and, with the children's work displayed, contribute to a comfortable environment for all the children who attend. Resources are selected to be age appropriate and stimulating and are well maintained to ensure they remain safe and suitable. Children self select from what is set out as well as being able to choose

from the equipment that is stored in accessible drawers and cupboards. Craft equipment and writing tools are organised in such a way so that children can select their own materials from trolleys, thus successfully encouraging their independence and decision making. The garden and playground are used very imaginatively to provide even more exciting play opportunities.

Children play and move around safely because staff are vigilant and effectively deployed. They explain to the children ways they can keep themselves safe, for example when they remind them to hold on when they go down the stairs or to walk carefully on their way to the garden. Safety measures such as a gate across the kitchen entrance and a cover over the pond minimise hazards. Comprehensive annual risk assessments and daily checks ensure that potential risks are identified and suitably addressed. Fire drills are practised termly at different times of the day to ensure all children have the opportunity to become aware of the actions to take in the event of needing to leave the premises quickly and safely. A book is used to record all visitors to the preschool and staff and children's registers are accurate and well maintained to ensure that attendances are well documented.

Children are safeguarded as staff have a good knowledge of how to follow up their concerns about a child. They ably recount signs and symptoms of possible abuse or neglect and the actions they would take. This is reinforced by solid procedures that include what to do if an allegation is made against a member of staff, and a flow chart that is readily available as a tool of reference.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The youngest children recognise their names on cards that they use to self register, helping them to begin to relate to the written word and to nurture a sense of belonging. On arrival, the children soon become engaged in a wide range of stimulating activities that are planned to meet their developmental needs and to be interesting and meaningful. They enjoy handling displays about the five senses where they can smell potpourri, touch shells and pine cones or taste breadsticks. They excitedly look at how their beans are growing or enjoy using funnels and piping in the water, being creative at the painting easel or happily singing along to the karaoke machine.

Children are organised into groups for circle time depending on their ages, so that these sessions can be structured according to the ability and understanding of the children in the group.

Under threes are assessed at the beginning of their placement, based on the Birth to three framework. This helps their key workers to plan activities that meet each child's stage of development while helping them to progress at their own individual pace as they move on towards the Foundation Stage.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and use their observations to assess each child's progress along the stepping stones. Key workers contribute to planning meetings to ensure suitable activities are planned to sufficiently meet each child's individual learning requirements. Staff ask open ended questions to help children think independently and to problem solve. This was evident during water play when a child found it difficult to accurately pour water into a tube and, through skilful interaction from an adult, found a solution by using a funnel and, then, a sponge.

Children link letters to the sounds they make through the introduction of the letter of the week and when recognising their names, and those of their friends, on their name cards. They learn to compose and recount stories when they have 'Carpet Stories' sessions. Children communicate well with adults and each other. They join in with familiar stories, such as the three little pigs, responding to the story teller's enthusiastic reading. Labels and posters around the room help the children to effectively develop their early reading skills. They confidently write their names on their work and, some more able children, also choose to write lists of the bugs they find in the garden. Sound games encourage their listening skills and also help to extend their vocabulary through a fun activity.

Children competently count as they link plastic elephants together and enjoy comparing their sizes. They are helped to measure themselves and talk about who is the tallest and shortest and also use these skills when looking at the progress of their bean shoots. They learn about shapes as they discuss circles and use this knowledge when creating their own shapes out of the chains of toy elephants. They successfully sort objects into size and colour order when they play educational games on the computer.

Children are developing their understanding of the world around them because of interesting planned and spontaneous activities. The garden provides a fascinating place for them to explore and investigate the natural world as they search the habitats of the woodlice and worms and use magnifying glasses and picture cards to identify them. They are provided with digging equipment and gardening gloves to assist them in their bug hunt. They discover the effects of nature as they are fascinated by windmills and bubbles blowing in the wind. Growing activities are linked to themes. They grow 'mustard heads', sunflowers and beans and learn what plants need to grow, taking part in a project about the properties of water. Pictures showing staff members as they grow up, help to consolidate the children's learning. There is an orchard adjacent to the pre school garden where the children have grown spinach, strawberries and potatoes and monitor the progress of the apple trees as they grow and blossom, eventually yielding fruit. Children are developing their ICT skills when competently using the mouse and keyboard on the PC.

Children have opportunities to be creative as they explore and experiment with paints and other materials. They learn how to mix colours to make grey and discover rhythms when playing musical instruments. They are introduced to the concept of volume, soft and loud as they play with drums, tambourines and shakers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued because staff know them well. They learn to celebrate other's achievements when they congratulate their friend who has become a big sister. Their awareness of others who are less fortunate is raised through them participating in charity events such as a sponsored walk. Resources, including dressing up clothes, dolls, small play figures and books, are selected to introduce children to non gender specific occupations, people with disabilities and a range of religions and backgrounds. Parents visit and share their cultures with the children. For example, they came and talked about the Chinese New Year, introduced lanterns and red envelopes and helped the children re-enact a dragon dance. This helps the children understand diversity in the wider world. The preschool has a Christian ethos and children say a prayer before they eat and celebrate, for example, Harvest Thanksgiving alongside other religious festivals. This all contributes to the children recognising people's differences and similarities. Overall, this positive approach fosters the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Although no children are currently cared for with a learning difficulty and/or disability, a positive approach to welcoming all children to the setting means that every child is helped to maximise their enjoyment and potential. The manager has undertaken specialised training in for example, using epi pens, to ensure there is someone available to meet children's specific care needs.

Children are well behaved. They clearly understand the appropriate boundaries within the setting as they have devised their own ground rules and have included some wonderful suggestions of their own, such as saying they must share their Easter eggs with the staff team. They are very willing to help out, by tidying away the activities, arranging chairs into a semi circle for circle time and know they need to stand still for the head count in the garden. The management team have recognised that because of the layout of the setting and the access to the garden, there are times throughout the day when children are expected to sit and wait for longer than necessary. They are currently reviewing the routine and the organisation of the day to address this.

Children's registration forms contain all the relevant information to ensure the staff team can effectively meet each child's care needs. Written consent, including for outings and photos ensures parents' wishes are known. A complaints log is readily available and a complaints procedure is shared with parents, although this lacks sufficient detail to fully inform parents of how they can complain and of the provider's responsibility to investigate the complaint within the timescale. Parents' notice boards ensure they are aware of the planned activities and any other relevant communications. Regular newsletters, an information pack and a file of policies and procedures provide sufficient information for parents to be involved in their child's time at the preschool. Parents are very happy with the care provided and feel confident that any concerns would be quickly dealt with.

Partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. They are provided with information about the Foundation Stage in the information pack and attend parents' evenings where they are able to discuss their child's progress. However, parents do not contribute to the assessment of their children's starting points at the beginning of the Foundation Stage to ensure this is a fully accurate representation.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised and managed competently by the management team who, along with all the staff, ensure children are able to play and learn in safety. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities resulting in effective deployment to provide a good level of supervision at all times. Leadership and management of nursery education is good. Play opportunities are balanced and flexible to consider the children's own interests and abilities. Parents are generally involved well in their child's education.

The staff team are all appropriately qualified and meet regularly to plan the curriculum and activities. The manager takes responsibility for monitoring staff practises and encourages ongoing training to ensure the combined knowledge within the setting is relevant and up to date. Methods of sharing information with parents mostly supports the children's welfare. Children are safeguarded as appropriate checks are carried out on all staff. Policies and procedures, and required documentation, support the children's ongoing safety and well being. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a recommendation was set to ensure that all required details were included in the documentation concerning complaints and child protection procedures. Some additional details are still required within the complaints procedure although the child protection policy has been successfully amended to provide sufficient information. An area for improvement was identified, during the inspection of nursery education, relating to the information shared with parents about their child's progress within the Foundation Stage. This has been addressed through the parents' information pack and regular parents' evenings.

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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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):

- ensure the complaints procedure clearly informs parents of how they can complain and the responsibilities of the provider

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 parent's involvement in establishing children's starting points at the beginning of the Foundation Stage

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