

Maryland Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY234194
Inspection date	13 July 2007
Inspector	Helen Ann Woods
Setting Address	Parish centre, Glebe Way, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP6 5ND
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Registered person	St Leonards Church
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?

Maryland Pre-School has been open for over 30 years. It operates from St Leonard's Church Hall in Chesham Bois. The pre-school has access to a large hall, small room, kitchen and cloakroom facilities. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 until 12.00 during school term times only. A lunchtime club is available from 12.00 until 12.55, three days a week. All children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 49 children on the roll. Of these 41 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local surrounding areas. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also children with English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 13 staff of whom over half hold recognised appropriate level childcare qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing a positive attitude to exercise, which is enjoyed on a daily basis indoors through regular music and movement sessions with staff and a visiting music teacher. Children enthusiastically join in singing action songs whilst accompanied on the piano or the flute. They play outside every day in the large garden climbing, riding bikes, scooters and playing team games. Children use a range of equipment to develop competent small motor control, such as cutting out simple shapes and pouring small quantities of water accurately.

Staff implement effective hygiene procedures to minimise risk of infection across the provision. Over half the staff have relevant first aid training and implement procedures, such as the recording of accidents and administration of medication.

Children develop increasing self care skills which means they gain independent control and a good understanding about maintaining their own health. The older children recognise the need to follow good personal hygiene routines, for example they take themselves to the cloakroom, wash and dry their hands before and after meal times and after using the toilet.

Children enjoy a variety of healthy snacks during the well organised snack times. They help themselves to cheese, bread sticks, cucumber and fruit. They discuss with the staff why it is good for them to eat fresh fruit and vegetables. They pour their drinks of milk or water from small jugs placed on the tables. Children's individual dietary needs are clearly known and followed by the staff. Children engage in conversation with the staff and their peers; as a result the children are increasing their social skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children move confidently around the environment, making their own choices from the activities offered by the staff. The indoor space is well organised and used effectively to allow the children opportunities to be active and engage in table top and floor activities. They have access to a wide range of good quality toys and equipment, which is appropriate for their age and stage of development. Toys are set up, inviting and enticing the children to play. All furniture and play equipment is clean and in good condition, to ensure the children are not harmed.

Children are cared for in a child focused environment, where risks are identified and reduced to safeguard them. For example, the staff check the toys and equipment on a regular basis, to reduce any hazards. There are good security arrangements in place. Children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. The pre-school has an effective fire evacuation procedure and children regularly participate in fire drills.

Children are well protected because staff have a good and clear understanding of their role with regard to child protection issues and know how to implement local procedures. Implementation of effective systems, such as the collection of children and recording of visitors, formal and informal risk assessments, contribute to ensuring children's safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy themselves in the pre-school and happily join in singing action songs with the music teacher as she accompanies them on the piano. They sing and dance with gusto, familiar songs, such as 'One finger one thumb keep moving' and marching round the whole room to the 'Grand old Duke of York'. Children are very confident and self-assured because they are secure in their relationships with adults and with other children. They initiate their own learning and are excited by the interesting activities available. They are polite and considerate to each other and are learning to share favourite toys. Staff ensure that they are well supported in positive learning experiences within a stimulating environment.

Children are independent in their self-care skills, with most children able to put on their own outdoor clothes and aprons for painting. They are familiar with the daily routine and follow this well. Children play well independently and with their peers, as well as enjoying opportunities to work more directly with practitioners through activities, such as playing board games and reading familiar stories.

Younger children are well supported as they acquire new skills and knowledge through planned activities as well as in their self-chosen play. Under threes play confidently with a good range of toys that encourage the use of all their senses. Staff encourage children to develop language skills by talking about their experiences, different colours, textures and about characters from the books they read with them.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good.

Children's attitude to learning is positive as they make their own choices about their play. Children negotiate well with one another making suggestions and using good vocabulary to describe their imagined ideas. For example, when dressing up and acting out a story about the 'magic shoe'. Children are confident speakers and engage easily in conversation with others as they play. They are able to think for themselves as staff use effective questioning techniques to help children extend their learning. Staff listen intently to the children and respond appropriately, helping them to feel very good about their discussions.

Children occupy themselves well and are motivated learners. They independently move from one activity to another keeping themselves creatively engaged in art and craft and constructing with building bricks on the floor. They demonstrate good independence skills as they tidy away resources, select their own choice of collage materials and pour their own drinks at snack time.

The staff plan well to ensure that the children are presented with a variety of activities that have regard for all areas of learning and which focus on specific outcomes. The staff know the children well and collate information about their individual achievements, through observations and assessments.

The children are familiar with the daily routine and follow this well. They are confident speakers and engage easily in conversation with others as they play. They chat excitedly together as they choose from the great selection of dressing up clothes available and say they are going to look in the forest for the 'magic shoe' in the story they are acting out.

They recognise their written names on their name hooks when they arrive and on their art work. The children enjoy exploring books, both individually and in small groups throughout the session. The book area is very comfortable and cosy with the books displayed in an inviting way. Children enjoy story time and joining in rhyming nonsense stories. They can explore mark-making as a writing and drawing activity at the table or help themselves from the resources available, however there are missed opportunities for spontaneous writing within role play situations.

Children count confidently, understanding the sequence of numbers. They count ably up to 10 and over and staff reinforce children's counting skills as opportunities arise, such as giving out the plates at snack time and counting how many more are needed. Children use comparative language appropriately when talking about the 'very small' cars they play with and 'Daddy's big car'. Children recognise colours and a variety of shapes. They have opportunities to build and construct with a range of objects and materials.

The children enjoy pretending to type on the computer keyboard and make telephone calls from old telephone equipment. They talk about their families and special events and show awareness of time such as the three year old who knew that his fourth birthday would not be for 'a long time'. Children discuss the weather and why they can not practise for their sports day because of the rain and thunder. They take turns to record their observations on the weather board at circle time. Through planned activities the children are becoming aware of cultural, religious events and customs of countries around the world.

Children enthusiastically take part in physical activities and have excellent opportunities to reinforce and further progress their skills. They demonstrate good spatial awareness in the music and movement session and when riding bikes and scooters out in the garden. They develop their fine muscle movements as they cut with scissors, manipulate play dough with their hands and use a range of small scale resources, such as counting cubes and puzzle pieces.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and well settled in the pre-school. They have developed positive relationships with the staff and are keen to talk with them and ask questions. New children settle well because parents are made welcome to stay and settle the children in their own time. Children learn about themselves and the wider world through planned activities and discussions, for example around a variety of cultural festivals, helping them to understand and value the similarities and differences between themselves and others. Children are caring towards one another and recognise that they each have different needs. Children have access to a broad range of resources, play opportunities and activities, which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. This positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, staff work closely with parents and other professionals. This ensures that children's individual needs are well met.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the friendly interaction between staff and parents. Children's individual progress and achievements are discussed and shared through regular reviews. Detailed information about the pre-school and the service it provides is available for parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children develop a secure sense of belonging because the pre-school is well organised and staff work with parents to ensure they have a good knowledge of all the children's personalities and abilities. The implementation of an effective key worker system, helps to secure positive relationships within the pre-school and enhance children's confidence and self-esteem.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff work well as a team, and children's learning is promoted through established routines. Staff are efficient, professional and organise a stimulating environment in which children focus on learning through well supported, purposeful play. Documentation to support all areas of practice is well maintained, and policies and procedures promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement. Children are grouped effectively in small groups according to age. The high staff ratios allows staff to build effective relationships with the children enabling them to get to know individual children well and help them to feel confident and secure.

All documents and records are in place according to regulation and made available to parents. However, the recording of concerns does not always maintain confidentiality. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the pre-school and their deployment is good, ensuring all children are secure and happily engaged in activities. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals. Practice is regularly monitored and evaluated and action plans are in place to show how the pre-school will put improvements in place. The staff work very well as a team with children's learning is promoted through good leadership and management of nursery education. The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to develop a procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff, ensure the setting's policies and procedures are known by all the staff and made available to parents, to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and ensure there are clear instructions on the dose of medicines that may need to be administered.

The pre-school has developed a procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff which has been made known to the staff and is also available to parents. There is also written signed permission from parents in order for the pre-school to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and there are clear instructions to be followed about the dose of any medication administered. As a result the children's safety and well being has been enhanced.

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 the recording of concerns maintains confidentiality

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):

- provide opportunities for children to experiment with writing during role play and other activities.

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