

Matlock Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206817
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Inspector	Jennifer Getty
Setting Address	205 Smedley Street, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3JD
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Registered person	The Trustees of Matlock Pre-school Playgroup Association
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Matlock Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1960. It operates from one room in a single storey building in the town of Matlock, Derbyshire. There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local area and surrounding villages.

The setting opens five days a week during school term only. Morning sessions are from 08:50 until 11:50 and afternoon sessions are from 12:30 until 15:30. There are currently 65 children from two years six months to four years on roll. This includes 59 children who receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs seven part-time staff who work with the children. Over half of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from Derbyshire local authority. The pre-school is managed by a parental committee, who delegate day-to-day responsibility to the staff.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted well. They stay healthy and develop good hygiene routines, for example, they wash their hands at appropriate times in the day and are able to easily access the box of tissues. The risk of cross-contamination and the spread of infection is minimised because children use liquid soap and paper towels when washing their hands and there is a suitable policy in place for sick children. Tables are wiped with antibacterial spray before and after snack to ensure that all areas are clean for children to use. The setting takes appropriate measures when children are ill or have an accident ensuring children's needs are met because, there is a detailed policy in place for the administration of medication, and all accidents are recorded and the entry is signed by parents. Most members of staff hold a current first aid qualification ensuring there is always a qualified person available at all sessions, promoting children's good health. Parental permission is obtained for seeking emergency treatment or advice which ensures children's health requirements are met in the case of an emergency.

Children are well nourished. They enjoy choosing from healthy options such as apple, cheese and breadsticks for snack and pouring their own drink of milk or water from a large jug. Children make choices and they are developing good independence skills. Water is available at all times during the sessions for children to freely access. The setting obtains information about children's dietary requirements and displays it for staff in the kitchen area to ensure that children's health needs are well met.

There are regular opportunities for children to be active and have physical exercise, which promotes their physical development. They enjoy going to the outdoor play area; climbing on the equipment and using the slide. They excitedly play in the sandpit with the lorries and use the spades to draw patterns in the frost. Staff encourage children to enjoy their experience outside and use ribbons and kites in windy weather to see how they move. Activities are planned to help children learn about keeping healthy and children discuss why they clean their teeth, eat food to keep their bodies healthy and have drinks when they are thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The setting is warm and welcoming with bright displays of children's work on the walls. Children are welcomed by staff as they enter the pre-school. They join their friends and play with the activities laid out for them around the room. The room is divided into defined areas, for example, reading, role-play and mark-making, this encourages children to make informed choices about their play. The book area has comfortable seating and carpet, offering a quiet area for rest. There is a wide range of toys and resources for children of all ages to use which offer learning opportunities for all stages of development. For example, there are construction toys, maths puzzles, jigsaws, cars, dolls and books. All toys and equipment is regularly checked in order to promote children's safety.

Children are cared for in a safe environment, helping children feel secure. The doors are secure and children are carefully supervised at all times. Staff undertake daily checks on the building and equipment which are clearly recorded, maintaining children's safety. A full risk assessment of the premises is reviewed annually and hazards identified during the year are recorded. However, children's safety is potentially compromised because the action plan for minimising

these risks does not include a time frame or the person responsible for meeting the action. Children learn about fire safety and the setting practises the emergency evacuation procedure to promote children's safety in the event of a fire. There are robust procedures in place to ensure children are safe on outings and walking to the outdoor play area. Children carefully listen to the instructions given, for example, to wait at the next gate and to walk slowly.

Children's welfare is further protected because the staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into place when necessary. There is a detailed policy in place, ensuring parents are fully informed of procedures and staff undertake relevant training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, confident and developing good levels of self-esteem. They find their name card as they enter the session and carefully place it on the board to show they are present. Children form good relationships with each other and have a good sense of belonging as they see their work displayed on the wall and bring in toys from home to show their peers. Younger children quietly complete a jigsaw and enjoy making and decorating an envelope for the card they have made. They confidently stick the sides together with tape and proudly put their completed card inside. Planning clearly identifies how activities relate to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and detailed observations are carried out, ensuring that children's needs are met. Younger children's progress in relation to the framework is clearly recorded with examples of their achievements.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are cared for by staff who have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Planning ensures that all areas of learning are covered during the year and it clearly identifies the learning intention for the activities. Focussed activities highlight the objectives, in relation to stepping stones, and the focus for any observations. Consequently, activities are generally well adapted for a range of ages and stages of development. Detailed observations are recorded for each child, however, they are not used to fully challenge children and identify their next steps in learning. Children's progress in relation to the stepping stones is clearly recorded in their assessment files along with examples of how they achieved it. Staff use some effective questioning to help children progress further and make their own choices. Children are making satisfactory progress in relation to the Foundation Stage. Staff offer good levels of support to enable children to manage their own behaviour. The room is well organised and provides a stimulating environment in which children can learn.

Children have a good attitude to learning and are confident to speak to their peers and staff as well as in a large group. Strong relationships are formed between children and staff, children talk to each other about their games and plan what they will do next. Children's behaviour is good and, in general, they are happy to share and take turns. As children sit in a small group they demonstrate good levels of concentration as they complete a large jigsaw. They are learning about self-care as they put their coats on themselves and identify what is suitable clothing for different weather conditions, for example, children say they wear coats on a windy day. They enjoy reading and listening to stories in a group as they all join in with the words to a familiar story. They look at books both independently and with adults. There is a quiet, comfortable area in which they can fully enjoy the books. There are opportunities for children to recognise their own name and develop their writing skills as they find their name card at snack time and trace the letters with their fingers. Outside, they excitedly make marks in the frost with their

fingers and some children write their name. They have free access to the mark-making area where they use the pens, crayons and paper. Older children are able to link sounds to letters, for example, children using alphabet jigsaws say 'r' is for 'rabbit' as they fit the piece into the correct space. They are forming recognisable letters as they write their name in the Christmas card they have made and younger children confidently draw circles and make marks on their envelopes.

Children confidently count the number of children in the group during register time, and count how many children are at the table for snack to ensure they have the correct number of plates. Numbers are displayed around the room at the children's level so they can be easily seen. Planned activities provide opportunities for children to calculate, for example, adding together the number of children in two groups. Children recognise and express differences in size as they play with the building bricks, saying 'the tower is taller than me' and 'it is smaller than mine'. Planning shows that children are able to learn about shape and space and they regularly talk about the shape of the week.

The activities provided and good staff interaction mean that children are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They listen attentively and with interest as staff talk about the frost and how it melts. Children point out where the frost has melted in the sun and talk about how it is still 'slippy' in the shade. They excitedly walk to the play area saying 'watch out for the white patches' as they look for frost. Children of all ages enjoy constructing towers and cars from building bricks and older children enjoy the challenge of making pyramids by fitting pieces into a container in the correct order. There are a variety of developmental games available to children on the computer and children regularly access this area independently. Staff offer good support when needed. Children talk enthusiastically about the activities they did during the previous days and describe the costumes their peers wore at the nativity play. They are developing a sound awareness of their surroundings and they talk about their town as they play with the car mat.

Children make the most of all the opportunities available to use their imagination. They play happily with cars and emergency vehicles, using a different name for each character and creating realistic scenarios. They say 'there is an emergency, do you need some help here?' as they move their vehicle round to the scene created by other children. The mark-making area is sometimes converted into an area such as a travel agent to link with the current theme and provide further opportunities for children to develop their imagination and writing skills. They are able to express their feelings through a range of media and materials such as sand and play dough. Children communicate their ideas effectively and there are opportunities for children to listen and move to music. Older children demonstrate good pencil control and all children are able to use small tools and equipment effectively. They developing good fine movement skills as they carefully manoeuvre the computer mouse.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly welcomed into the setting. The setting obtains relevant information about children to ensure their needs are met. Children are beginning to learn about the wider world through a range of resources such as dolls, toys and books and there are various posters displaying positive images of diverse cultures. The setting works well with parents to ensure children's cultural backgrounds are reflected in their practice. Children learn about different festivals such as Hannukah and Christmas. Children settle well as they form good relationships with the supportive and friendly staff. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

receive appropriate support to ensure their needs are met because the setting works well with parents and outside agencies. Children are well behaved. Staff use explanation and discussion as an effective strategy to help children learn the difference between right and wrong. Children are developing a respect for others and have formed friendships with their peers. Children understand the consistent rules and boundaries set by the staff and respond well as staff use lots of praise and encouragement. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the positive partnership with parents. Parents receive a handbook with good information about the setting, its practices and a brief summary of the policies. The full details of the policies and procedures are available for parents to read. Parents are able to talk with staff in the morning when they enter the setting and there are systems in place for parents to leave messages with staff.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with information about their child's progress at the parents' evenings which are held twice a year. Parents are able to discuss the assessment records and comment on their child's work. The assessment records detail for parents how the child has achieved each stepping stone, ensuring parents are fully informed of children's progress. The setting encourages parents to be involved in their child's learning by giving them information about the theme for the half term, the number, letter and shape of the week, and suggested activities that link with the learning in the pre-school. They also receive a booklet of activities that offers some extension to learning for the children to complete at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by appropriately qualified staff and there are procedures in place for the recruitment of staff to ensure they are suitable for the position. The induction of new staff ensures they are aware of the pre-school's policies and procedures and all staff have a clear understanding of their roles. The staff appraisal system ensures staff's ongoing training and development needs are met. They are deployed so that they are working directly with children or setting up activities. This means that children receive good levels of support. Children are cared for by enthusiastic staff who are keen to further improve outcomes for children. However, the staff rota system means that staff work in small teams and consequently, there are some inconsistencies in communication between staff with regard to planning and sharing of information, therefore, children's well-being is not consistently supported. Documentation generally works well in practice to promote children's welfare and safety. Key workers are responsible for children's assessment records and individual details are stored confidentially.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The committee works well with staff to promote the outcomes for children, for example, they ensure that staff access appropriate and relevant training and there are clear roles and responsibilities for staff and committee members. There are systems in place for monitoring the effectiveness of nursery education, for example, most activities are evaluated and discussed in staff meetings, although they are not consistently recorded. Consequently, children's next steps and any gaps in learning are not always identified at the early stages.

The pre-school organises time and space well to promote children's learning, independence and development. The activities are laid out for children to self-select and which enables them

to make appropriate choices. Children are therefore happy and settled. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the setting was asked to; extend the documentation relating to seeking emergency advice or treatment; develop systems to improve communication between lead workers; implement a risk assessment that identifies risks and details actions taken; improve staff deployment and organisation; review policies and procedures so that they contain all elements and share them with parents.

The setting's registration forms now include a section which requires written parental permission for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice. Children who have been registered for a longer period of time have completed a separate permission form. This ensures children's needs are met in the case of an emergency. Children's welfare and safety is promoted because the policies and procedures have been updated and contain current information. Parents have access to all the policies. There is a detailed risk assessment of the practice which is reviewed annually and daily checks are carried out and recorded. Identified risks are recorded with detail of how the risk is minimised in the short term, however, the timescale and person responsible for completing actions are not identified. Children are developing good levels of independence because the space is well organised to promote children's learning and ability to self-select activities. The room has been divided into areas and children can easily see which toys are available. Staff are deployed well to promote children's enjoyment and development as they spend time at a particular activity, as well as, moving freely around the room in order to support children in play. There are regular staff meetings and lead workers meet to discuss planning and nursery education. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the sharing of information.

At the last inspection, to improve standards of nursery education, the setting was asked to; develop the planning so that the learning intentions are clear, focused activity plans are detailed and all stepping stones are covered; allow children more independence in selecting and carrying out activities and improve opportunities to recognise their name and solve number problems; develop the use of information technology and construction with large materials; develop children's progress records to link the evidence to the assessment system and use it to inform future planning.

Children's learning and development is promoted because the setting has taken appropriate steps to meet the previous recommendations. The planning clearly identifies the learning intentions and the long term plan ensures that all areas of learning are covered each year and all stepping stones are covered over a period of two years. Children's assessment records are detailed and include evidence of how children achieve each stepping stone. Careful and detailed observations are carried out and staff are able to request particular activities to support children's learning. However, observations are not used fully to plan for children's next steps of learning. Children are developing good independence skills as they self-select activities and make choices about their play because the room is well organised and presented. Children have daily opportunities to recognise their name as they enter the setting and at snack time, and there are regular activities to support children's interest in number problems. Children regularly use the computer because it is available daily and they enjoy playing the games independently, as well as in pairs. They enjoy constructing with building bricks and plans show there are opportunities for children to do 'junk' modelling, allowing them to express their thoughts and feelings through art and design.

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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- further develop the action plan for identified risks to include timescales and the person responsible for completing the action
- continue to develop communication between staff to further promote the consistency of planning and the sharing of information.

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):

- use observations to effectively plan for children's next steps of learning (also applies to care)
- continue to develop systems to monitor and evaluate the provision of Nursery Education in order to identify any gaps in learning.

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