

# Millfield Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	254176
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Lindsey Ann Cullum
<b>Setting Address</b>	South Rise, North Walsham, Norfolk, NR28 0EE
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Millfield Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Millfield Pre-School is run by a voluntary committee and has charitable status. It opened in 1975 and operates from a mobile building in the grounds of Millfield Primary School, situated on the outskirts of the market town of North Walsham, Norfolk. A maximum of 28 children may attend at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 08.55 until 11.25 and from 12.25 until 14.55, during term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The group also has access to the school playing field and 'jungle gym'.

There are currently 62 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 45 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from North Walsham or the surrounding villages. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

Millfield Pre-school employs five staff. All of the staff, including the Lead Practitioner, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receive support from the local authority. The pre-school has developed links with local primary schools and the Poppyland Surestart team.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is extremely well supported. They are cared for in an environment where staff's high standards of cleanliness and excellent hygiene practices effectively promote children's health and well-being. Children are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care and confidently use the toilet and hand-washing facilities. Simple posters, sited at children's height, provide visual reminders to children about the good practices to adopt, for example, flushing the chain and washing hands after using the toilet. Staff discuss with children the purpose of washing their hands and how to prevent the spread of germs. They act as good role models for children, washing their own hands before preparing snack or after handling the indoor pets. Robust systems are in place to prevent the spread of infection and to take appropriate measures if children are ill. Children's health and medical requirements are fully discussed with parents and relevant information is clearly recorded, enabling appropriate care to be provided. Staff seek additional training or knowledge in order to meet the needs of children with specific medical conditions. A well-stocked first aid box is to hand and all permanent members of staff hold current first aid qualifications, contributing to children's immediate safety and welfare in the event of an accident. Good systems for recording accidents and medication administration promote children's good health. Children have opportunities to learn about their own health needs through a varied range of activities and topics, for example, they enjoy visits from the dental nurse or use the role play area to act out visits to the baby clinic or doctor.

Children are learning the importance of a healthy diet as healthy eating is strongly emphasised in the group. Children enjoy a range of fresh fruit, chopped vegetables or dried fruit each day and are encouraged to try new foods during snack time. A snack-bar system enables children to choose when to stop for their snack and it provides a pleasant social occasion as there is a member of staff sitting at the table to talk to the children. Children select five items from an appetising tray of freshly prepared food, promoting their understanding of the five-a-day, healthy eating theme. They are provided with a drink of either milk or water and politely ask for more or to leave the table when finished. Children's dietary needs are known, ensuring no child is put at risk from a reaction to food. Children have regular opportunities to cook, for example, making pumpkin soup or popcorn and relish the opportunity to sample their cooking during snack time. Children take responsibility for their own drinking needs and independently help themselves to cups of water from the dispenser during the session.

Children's healthy growth and development is exceedingly well promoted. They enjoy being physically active and spend time outdoors each session. Staff plan activities outdoors in order to provide children with suitable physical challenges and promote children's physical skills. They set out obstacle courses where children are able to travel around, over or through and to balance on equipment. Children relish opportunities to play on the school 'jungle gym' and demonstrate their competence when climbing or swinging. They skilfully manoeuvre wheeled toys and show an awareness of space as they move around outside. Indoors, children enthusiastically join in action rhymes or games. They are developing competent manipulative skills, using scissors, construction materials and tools with increasing skill. Children are able to rest according to their individual needs and seek comfortable cushions in the inviting quiet area or book corner whilst indoors or use small benches in the outdoor area.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children quickly settle to play as the staff work hard to create an attractive and child centred environment. Displays of children's artwork, photographs, posters and attractive pictures, decorate the walls throughout the premises. Low level windows provide lots of natural lighting and allow children to observe what is happening outside. Space is effectively organised within the mobile to encourage children's increasing independence skills, for example, they can access the toilets independently and are provided with individual coat pegs in the cloakroom so that they may store their own belongings. Low-level, accessible storage invites children to select what they would like to play with and enables them to extend their own play. They select from an extensive range of age-appropriate and well-maintained resources. Staff are vigilant and anticipate risks, such as children not using resources for the purpose they were designed. They remind children of certain safety rules and offer clear explanations which help children to understand how to keep themselves and others safe whilst playing.

Children's safety is given high priority and they are closely supervised by staff at all times. Daily checks of the environment before children arrive ensure that any hazards are identified and appropriate steps are taken to minimise the risks. Work is currently being undertaken to develop the outdoor area. Consequently, parts of this play area are, at times, not completely safe for children. In order to ensure children's safety whilst playing outside, staff undertake a daily risk assessment of the outdoor area and implement appropriate safety measures prior to children playing outside. Good procedures are in place to secure the premises and the door is monitored as children arrive or depart, as result the process is safe. Fire drills are conducted and recorded. However, they are not frequent enough to cover all staff and children attending. Consequently, there is a potential risk of the evacuation procedure not being effective on all occasions. Clear procedures are in place to safeguard children whilst on outings.

Children's welfare is effectively promoted because staff have a sound awareness of their responsibilities regarding child protection. They have attended relevant training to update their knowledge and have appropriate literature available for reference. Children are safeguarded as staff are familiar with the setting's policies and procedures. Effective practices ensure children are protected from adults who have not been suitably vetted.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are confident, happy and enjoy their time in the pre-school. They are greeted warmly by staff and follow the familiar routine enabling them to feel settled and secure. Children eagerly engage in activities of their own choice, initiate their own ideas and explore freely. Staff position themselves at different activities to support children as they play. They quickly pick up on children's interests, for example, children watching the builder's through the window are taken outside to observe this more closely and are provided with a digital camera to record what they see. Children's learning is enhanced through the staff's use of effective questioning, for example, 'where might you find a shark?'. This enables them to build on what the children already know. Children thrive on the praise and encouragement that is freely given.

Children are provided with a wide range of interesting and tempting activities which promote all areas of their development. Staff use elements of the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning activities for younger children. A key worker system ensures that staff get to

know children well, are able to identify children's developmental needs and incorporate these into the activities provided, in order to help children make progress.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of their learning due to staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Staff have an excellent understanding of the ways in which children learn and plan a stimulating environment which tempts children to explore and learn through first hand experiences. All staff are actively involved in planning and ensure all areas of development are covered. Children's current interests are carefully considered when planning, for example, setting up the role play area with resources to represent a baby clinic. Maximum use is made of spontaneous learning opportunities. For example, children's emerging interest in hedgehogs stimulates creative activities, imaginative play and discussion about where hedgehogs live and sleep and what they eat, enhancing children's knowledge. Staff observe the children and make notes on their progress which contribute to their records of achievement. These are used to identify the next steps for individual children's learning. Staff discuss children's progress, however, they do not fully integrate children's identified next steps for learning into future planning.

Children quickly become absorbed in activities and concentrate for extended periods. They are confident to approach staff for help, ask questions or share their ideas. They show pride in their achievements and proudly show their finished work to staff or other children. Children play together, happily sharing, taking turns and co-operating with their friends. Some friendships are clearly evident as children engage in their own imaginative games. They eagerly help with tasks such as clearing away or washing and preparing the fruit for snack. Children are learning about themselves and others in the group as they join in themed activities about 'Who am I'. Planned activities also raise children's awareness of diverse cultures and faiths. Children are becoming confident communicators and enjoy conversations with adults and each other. They eagerly talk about what they are doing, share information about their family and friends or recall recent events, such as watching a firework display. Children enjoy books and listen attentively to stories. They request particular favourites and delight in acting out parts of the story, for example, sleepwalking or predicting what might happen next. Children are learning that print carries meaning as there are many examples around the setting. They observe as staff write their names on their artwork or make labels for their constructions and are beginning to link some sounds to letters. Children practise early writing skills as they make marks during their role play, for example, making lists, drawing shapes on the chalkboard or attempting to write their own name.

Children count frequently during their play and everyday activities. They sort by shape, size and colour and complete shape puzzles and activities confidently. Children use materials such as dried pulses, water and sand to explore weight and capacity. Consequently, they are learning a wide range of mathematical concepts during their play. Children eagerly learn about their natural environment. They learn about animals as they care for the stick insects and African land snails kept by the setting. Children delight in watching these move and feed. They plant seeds and tend these, observing how they grow. Children discover which items float and sink in the water tray. They explore how things work, for example, they use the digital camera to record their own interests or other children's activities and proudly show their pictures. Children learn about their own community and the lives of others through planned topics and activities, discussions and visitors to the setting. For example, taking part in the local carnival parade.

Children enjoy being active and energetically play outdoors. They demonstrate their co-ordination skills as they run, climb, balance and jump. Fine muscle skills are developed well as they model, construct, thread and use a range of tools such as glue sticks, scissors, crayons and paint brushes. They are freely creative and initiate their own ideas, for example, seeking sequins and coloured foil strips to create firework pictures. They enthusiastically paint, draw and chalk and take pride in their creations. Children eagerly help to make play dough, feeling the texture of the flour as they measure this into the bowl. They watch as red and white paint is mixed together in order to create the pink dough they have requested. They enjoy kneading the mixture together and then moulding this into different shapes and designs, such as a shark or fish. Children explore a range of textures, for example, sand, water, ice, dried pulses and natural materials such as soil, shells and leaves. They act out real and imaginary experiences in the role play area, for example, caring for a baby.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children receive an extremely warm welcome. Staff know them well having taken time to meet with their parents and find out about their likes, dislikes and cultural or language requirements. As a result, children are happy and settled as staff treat them as individuals and are sensitive to their needs. Children play with a varied range of resources that help them learn about the wider world and topics develop this further. For example, children take part in celebrating festivals such as Diwali, Chinese New Year and Christmas helping them learn to value and respect differences. They take an active part in local activities, for example, the town's carnival parade and welcome visitors such as the police or dental nurse, promoting their awareness of their own community. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcomed into the setting and take part in a range of activities alongside their peers. Staff are skilled in identifying specific needs and liaise closely with parents and other professionals associated with the children, in order to develop an individual learning programme for children to support their care and education.

Children are sociable, well behaved and confident in the setting. They are learning to be considerate of others, share and take turns. All adults act as good role models and are calm and courteous to children at all times. Children understand what is expected of them in the group and are aware of the basic rules which include, being kind, looking after things and not running indoors. They respond to gentle reminders and staff are 'on hand' to support them, for example, when they want to have a turn mixing the dough. Praise and encouragement is freely given by staff promoting positive behaviour, for example, children are thanked for giving another child a turn. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children are happy and secure due to the exceptional ways in which staff work with them and their parents or carers. Parents are introduced to their child's key worker during the settling-in process and they work closely together. Detailed discussions ensure the child's needs are known, relevant information is recorded and an initial assessment of the child's progress is completed, ensuring staff are fully able to support the child's learning and development. Staff routinely chat to parents as children arrive or are collected enabling parents to keep up to date with daily events and share relevant information. Parents receive a comprehensive range of information about the service provided, which includes the aims of the pre-school, policies and details of the curriculum. They are invited to attend informal open evenings where key workers can devote time to discussing children's progress with parents. Children's assessment records are regularly sent home, enabling parents to share in their child's learning and contribute to the assessment process. Parents

Speak very positively about the care their child receives and how this contributes significantly to their child's learning and development. They comment on how friendly and approachable staff are, how well their children are learning, how happy their children are within the setting and appreciate the hard work and time given by staff to make the pre-school a fun, stimulating and happy environment for their children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the care of suitably qualified and experienced staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of how children learn. The pre-school are effective in their recruitment and induction procedures, ensuring staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. However, there has been a lapse in the programme of staff appraisals and systems to monitor the ongoing suitability of staff have not been fully implemented. Checks have been carried out on the staff and committee. Persons who have not been vetted are supervised to ensure children are protected. Staff are well organised and prepared prior to sessions, enabling them to greet children and parents so that they feel welcome. Children enjoy the relaxed, inviting environment created within the mobile and eagerly explore a wide range of materials and resources which stimulate their learning. Maximum use is made of the outdoor environment to enhance children's experiences. Good adult to child ratios ensure children are well supervised and supported during activities, enabling them to make progress in all areas of their development. All the required documentation is in place and this ensures children are cared for appropriately and according to their parents' wishes.

The leadership and management is good. Staff work well together as a team, utilising each other's strengths and skills to deliver a broad and imaginative curriculum. They are guided by the Lead Practitioner's knowledge and understanding of how children learn. Staff are motivated and clearly enjoy their work with the children, making activities fun and interesting. They meet frequently to plan and share ideas and are flexible to incorporate children's current interests. An active committee supports the pre-school's work and is keen to ensure children's welfare and educational needs are met at all times. Systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision and the pre-school are committed to improving the quality of care and education provided for the children. The setting has clear aims and objectives and is committed to working with parents and carers to enhance children's learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to develop the child protection policy, obtain appropriate medical consents from parents and improve the vetting procedures for staff and committee members.

The pre-school has reviewed and amended their child protection policy and obtains the required emergency medical consents from parents, contributing to children's safety. The pre-school has implemented suitable systems to ensure appropriate staff, committee members and adults working with the children are vetted, ensuring children are protected.

At the last inspection of early years education the provider agreed to improve the information available to parents on the Foundation Stage curriculum, develop staff's knowledge of the early learning goals in particular areas and implement a system to monitor and evaluate the provision.

The pre-school has introduced continuous play provision, setting out the room with resources which stimulate all areas of children's learning and development. Staff use their knowledge of the early learning goals to support children, enhancing their learning. Parents are provided with information on the Foundation Stage through a variety of ways, for example, written information, discussions with staff and attending open meetings, ensuring they are involved in their children's learning. A system is in place to monitor and evaluate the provision and an action plan is in place to address any areas identified for improvement.

### **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 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 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):

- make sure all staff and children take part in regular fire drills
- improve the systems for reviewing and updating policies, carrying out staff appraisals and monitoring staff's ongoing suitability.

#### **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):

- continue to develop planning, using the next steps identified in children's assessments to guide the planning and teaching of nursery education.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)