

Millfield Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256788
Inspection date	08 November 2007
Inspector	Susan Sykes
Setting Address	Unit 3 Millfield Community Centre, Lincoln Road, Peterborough, Cambs, PE1 3PE
Telephone number	01733 310 898
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Registered person	The Committee of Millfield 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 inadequate – notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Millfield Pre-school opened 30 years ago, over 20 years in the present building. It operates from a room in a former school for boys now used as a community centre in Millfield, Peterborough. Millfield Pre-school serves the local community.

There are currently 30 children on roll. This includes 26 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a high proportion of children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00 each weekday morning and afternoon sessions on Monday and Tuesday from 12:30 until 15:30.

Five part-time/full-time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health and well-being in the setting is being compromised. There is no clear policy for the exclusion of children who are ill and those who are ill may attend the setting which puts others at the risk of cross infection. Furthermore, incomplete information collated on children's health issues puts them at risk of potentially serious ailments. This particularly compromises the health of those children who may routinely use, for example, an inhaler. This is compounded by no clear systems in place to record medicines or dosages that may have to be administered. There is limited permission from parents for emergency treatment and this is not in line with current requirements therefore children are left vulnerable in the event of a serious incident or accident.

The setting ensures that a suitably qualified person to administer first aid is always on duty. Children begin to understand the importance of personal hygiene as they wash their hands after using the toilet without prompt, demonstrating they are used to the routine. The provision of liquid soap and paper towels, along with staff supervision, ensures that children's health in this area is fostered. Staff spray tables before snack using anti-bacterial spray and wear disposable gloves to prepare food. All children have a snack during the session and they develop their confidence as they are encouraged to help with setting the table and sometimes pour their own drinks. They enjoy nutritious options including apple, cheese and cucumber thus children learn what they should eat to keep themselves healthy. This is consolidated by other activities which promote healthy eating such as making vegetable pizza's, vegetable soup and fruit salad. Children are encouraged to meet their own health needs by helping themselves to a drink when they thirsty.

Children enjoy activities which contribute to the development of their physical skills. Although children do not have regular access to an outside play area to help them to stay fit and healthy, they are offered alternative physical activities such as see saws in the preschool room, sing songs with actions or group activities incorporating exercise in the large hall where possible. As a result, they learn that being active contributes to their health and all-round development. Children are also taken for walks for example, to collect autumn leaves for an art project thus ensuring that they have opportunities to be in the fresh air. They use a range of play equipment such as threading, scissors, paint brush and jigsaws to develop their manipulative skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The protection, welfare and safety of children in the setting is compromised. The systems to develop staff's knowledge of child protection are not sufficiently rigorous, for example, it is not covered in staff induction training. Overall, staff lack confidence in this area. Some have a limited awareness of their roles and responsibilities while others have an insecure understanding of child protection. There is no system in place in the event of an allegation made against a member of staff. This means that the welfare of children is not appropriately safeguarded. The child protection procedure is not in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, as it does not reflect current information and the 'lost or uncollected child' policy is not in line with current requirements. Access to the preschool room does not promote the security of children. The door is kept closed but often unsecured which means other visitors to the community centre can enter the room or a more able child could leave the room unnoticed and

continue to leave the building through fire exits. As a result, staff are unable to sufficiently protect children from harm.

Staff carry out daily visual risk assessments to ensure the environment is safe for children and these are supported by weekly checks and specific assessments such as for outings. A fire procedure is displayed and staff carry out regular fire drills but these are always on a Thursday which means children who do not attend on this day do not get to practice this routine. Children do not benefit from a full understanding of the evacuation procedures as often the practice does not entail the full procedure of evacuating the room to go to the designated fire point.

Children enjoy a welcoming environment and easy access to a range of appropriate resources, enabling them to be independent when selecting activities. Children learn to keep themselves safe through staff's appropriate guidance as staff remind children not to run inside or they may fall over and hurt themselves.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children enjoy coming into the setting where they are happy and settle quickly into their routine. They improve their learning skills through play and an appropriate range of activities provided by staff, such as imaginative play, construction and sand and water play. Children develop their independence by selecting resources and activities of their choice and initiating play during part of the session. They develop their social skills as they all sit together for snack time and help each other, although snacks are prepared by staff which is a missed learning opportunity for children who could prepare their own fruit. Children have positive relationships with staff and feel confident approaching them for help and staff offer assistance appropriately and become involved in children's play when possible. They interact positively with children and happily engage them in conversation. Children are encouraged to play together and take turns. However, the routine of the session often means children have to stop an activity and put it away before completion, which can undermine their learning and concentration skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make progress towards the early learning goals because staff who plan understand and use the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Each child in the setting has an individual learning plan which addresses the teaching and learning of each individual children. Staff observe the children frequently and monitor their achievements, and this information is used effectively to identify the next steps in their learning through the stepping stones. Activities are planned effectively to cover all six areas of learning and are flexible to change to meet the interests of the children. Therefore, activities promote and progress children's learning in an effective way.

They are developing their sense of belonging and building their self esteem when they are given a sticker to display on their 'helpful bear' when they have been helpful or good and see their photograph on the 'Welcome Tree'. They understand when the tambourine is played it is time to tidy-up and help the staff put their toys away. Children independently choose their play activities from a selection given to them by staff for part of the session and an appropriate selection of resources are available throughout the pre-school room.

Children are beginning to respond to experiences, recalling the previous evenings fun when they went 'trick or treating' for Halloween. Children count numbers within their daily play, for

example, how many cups and plates they need on the table for snack time and sing number songs such as 'five fat frogs'. Children talk about basic colours and shapes as they use resources such as 'tappits' which also promote manipulative skills. They take part in activities such as cooking which help them to learn about weight and capacity, and materials such as sand and water are regularly available for them to experiment and explore mathematical language such as heavier, lighter, independently. Children take part in some adult-led activities for example finger painting where they are able to learn about colour mixing, pattern and texture. However, little of the children's work is displayed and artwork is sometimes adult led using templates, restricting children's imagination and creativity. Children are beginning to recognise their name cards and use the mark making table to draw their pictures. However, more able children are not encouraged to attempt to write their own names on their work.

Children sit together at story time and sing nursery songs, but these whole group activities do not engage all of the children. Children use their imaginations in the home corner as they prepare meals. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through planned activities such as making biscuits for Eid and going for nature walks around the local area.

However, the routine and organisation of the sessions restricts children's productive time in the setting. The sessions include some free play but a disproportionate amount of time is spent between activities, such as the practice of taking the whole group to the toilets before snacks and making children wait until everyone has lined up one by one at the door before moving to the main hall for whole group activities. Much of the session is based on whole group activities, such as story time or group discussions, where children become disinterested and do not use their concentration skills therefore impacting on their progress in the areas of learning. The preschool rooms layout and organisation of resources mean that it can sometimes be difficult for children to move freely around to access resources which can hamper the children's independence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Partnership with Parents is not effective in supporting children's care and welfare needs as accurate information pertaining to the child's health is not sufficient or documented to protect their well being. A written complaints procedure is in place, however, this is outdated and does not reflect the new regulations and staff lack an understanding of how to deal with complaints.

Children have a sense of belonging and they begin to develop confidence as they find their own pegs for their bags and coats and choose freely from the activities on offer. Children have a good relationship with the staff and they feel confident to approach staff for help and ask them to be involved with their play. They learn social skills and enjoy being with and talking to adults and other children.

They develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world through appropriate resources, displays and activities. Children are treated and respected as individuals as festivals and cultures are celebrated to reflect both their home life and beyond. Children are happy and behave well most of the time as they are encouraged to share and take turns while playing with toys and equipment although whole group sessions do not always engage all children and behaviour becomes challenging. Staff use appropriate strategies to manage children's unexpected behaviour but this is not always followed with an explanation as to why the behaviour is

unacceptable which does not support their understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. Children are praised for good behaviour and are encouraged to say please and thank you.

Partnership with Parents for nursery education is good. Parents receive regular feedback on their child's progress and an open door policy ensures parents can discuss progress or issues at anytime although the daily planning sheet is not on display for parents to see. A multi-lingual assistant is on hand to translate letters and assessments and the children's 'records of achievement' contain many photographs which support parents and carers who have little or no English language to understand the learning their child is gaining. Staff actively encourage the learning to extend into the home, for example giving parents ideas for number work so children can continue their learning at home. Because of this parents are able to become fully involved in their child's learning and use opportunities for children to make further progress.

Children are learning to share and care for each other. They are developing an appreciation of their own and other cultures. Children's spiritual, moral and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are not well supported or kept safe as records, policies and procedures required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are not effectively maintained. The daily register marks attendance at each session but is sometimes completed in pencil therefore is not a permanent record. Other records, such as the incident book, have some details deleted using 'tipex' thus rendering them unusable if further action is needed to protect children. Records of staff attendance are not rigorously maintained making it difficult to ascertain staffing levels each session. Policies contain out-of-date information and are lacking important details so are ineffective in terms of supporting children, for example the policy pertaining to the exclusion of children who are ill is not in place and the procedure is not understood by staff. The child protection policy lacks key information, such as what to do in the event of an allegation against a member of staff. However, children are cared for by staff who have been vetted and checked to ensure their suitability to be in contact with children and a robust recruitment system consolidates that suitable persons are employed within the setting.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Staff work together as a team and undertake responsibilities within the daily routine, ensuring, for example, that the snack is provided on time, that the doors are supervised at arrival and collection time and that children are always supervised when using the toilet. Staff's knowledge of the children in the setting means that planning and activities are geared to the individual child thus supporting their progress through the stepping stones when possible during the session.

However, deployment of the staff through the session means children's needs are not always met, for example whole group activities are not effectively staffed which means children become disengaged and behaviour becomes more challenging. Much of the session is routine led and in whole group activities, children's participation is difficult to encourage. The routine does not make best use of either time or space, such as the 'blue room' which is not used on a regular basis. Routines mean that there is often too much unproductive time for children as they wait, for example, for staff to tidy up the room before snacks. This means the children's participation is not always positive and their progress to the early learning goals can be hindered. In general, the committee who oversee the setting do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities thus cannot offer effective support to the staff in the setting.

Overall the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to ensure that thorough written risk assessments are carried out and regularly reviewed, implement an effective system for staff to regularly assess their own professional development and ensure that all communication with parents who speak English as an additional language is effective and consistent.

Risk assessments are undertaken daily using a checklist and other checklists in place for more infrequent checks, such as when undertaking cooking activities. Staff now have annual appraisals which can influence training to be undertaken to ensure continuous professional development. Parents and carers who have English as an additional language benefit from effective communications through a multi-lingual assistant who translates both written and verbal communications. Children's assessments also contain many photographs to help parents and carers gain an insight of their child's learning and experiences in the setting.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure the committee is aware of their roles and responsibilities and offer effective support to the staff in the setting to undertake pertinent training and organise space and resources effectively to meet children's learning needs
- devise and implement a policy and the procedures to be followed regarding the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious and implement methods of recording medication administered
- develop written consent from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment so that it is in line with the National Standards and ensure that adequate information is recorded about children's illnesses

- develop all staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development.
- develop staffs knowledge and make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) with particular regard to the procedure to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff and develop staff's awareness of procedures in regard to safeguarding children
- develop staffs knowledge and understanding of the groups policies and procedures.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- improve the organisation and deployment of staff during the session and at whole group times to meet the needs of all the children and further develop opportunities for children to engage in meaningful learning
- improve opportunities for children with English as an additional language to use and recognise familiar letters, words and text in practical everyday 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