

Maidenbower Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113593
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Inspector	June Fielden
Setting Address	Maidenbower Community Centre,, Harvest Road, Maidenbower, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 7RA
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Registered person	Maidenbower Pre-School Playgroup
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Maidenbower Pre-school is run by a committee. It opened in 1992 and operates from the Maidenbower Community Centre, Crawley. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It opens Monday to Friday 09.00 until 11.45 and Monday and Tuesday 12.15 until 14.45 term time only. All children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 72 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 52 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The pre-school has comprehensive documentation in place to effectively maintain children's good health. Prior written permission is always obtained before medication is administered, and sick children are excluded to protect others from infection. Staff also obtain written permission from parents for the emergency medical of children. The pre-school have extensive hygiene routines in place. Children are encouraged to put their hand in front of their mouth if they cough, and staff ask them why they need to do this, to develop their understanding of healthy habits. Children are taught to flush the toilet after use and a poster by the wash basins reminds them of the correct procedure for washing their hands, to avoid the spread of infection. They use liquid soap and dry their hands using a hand dryer, to prevent cross-contamination.

Children are offered healthy food at snack times, which are extremely well organised by staff, to allow them to decide when they are ready to eat. Parents provide a wide range of fruit, which is shared among the group. Children pour their own milk or water to drink and place their cup and plate in a washing up bowl when they have finished eating, to develop their independence. Staff are vigilant with regard to children's welfare, and all are aware of their allergies. A list of these is kept in the register and the kitchen. A jug of water is available to children at all times, to ensure they are not thirsty. The pre-school have games which children play to develop their understanding of healthy eating habits.

Children use the outdoor play area extensively, all year round, providing they have the appropriate clothing. The pre-school have an excellent collection of outdoor equipment for children to use, including vehicles for them to ride around on, and smaller equipment such as hoops, balls and stilts. They also have a box of wet weather equipment, such as waterproof beanbags and quoits for children to practise their throwing and catching skills. Children begin to develop an awareness of the space around them as they roll and kick the balls around. Inside children exercise on the large climbing frame which is set up in the middle of the hall each day. This has a slide, rope ladder, steps, bridge and climbing area to enable children to climb, crawl, slide and scramble on this throughout the session. If children are tired they rest on the cushions in the quiet book corner.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely warm and welcoming environment, where there are colourful posters, screens and displays of their work on display. They are given a friendly greeting by staff on arrival and move around freely throughout each session, selecting for themselves what they wish to play with. The spacious hall is effectively organised to create a variety of different areas for children to play. There is an excellent range of interesting and challenging toys and equipment that meets the needs of all children. Resources available to children each day are easily accessible and provide opportunities for them to self select. The pre-school have extensive storage facilities for their toys and equipment, which need to be cleared away at the end of each session.

There are substantial safety measures in place to ensure children's wellbeing. There is a secure system for their arrival and departure, and they are unable to leave the premises unsupervised, as the doors are locked when all children are present. Fire drills are held every couple of months,

and are recorded in the group's fire log. The manager ensures that all staff and children take part. Staff are continually vigilant with regard to children's safety, and regularly remind them how the equipment should be used. As a result, they are developing an understanding of why this is necessary. For example, one child who was about to use the scissors told a member of staff of the need to be careful when using them. The member of staff then asked the child why they should take care with the scissors and was given a sensible explanation.

Children are effectively protected from harm, as all staff have training in child protection, which is updated regularly. Staff are aware of the signs of abuse to look for, and understand the need to record any worries and ensure that they remain confidential. They know how to report their concerns to the appropriate authority when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive at the pre-school, as it is exceptionally well resourced, providing them with extensive opportunities to use their imagination and have free choice. The majority of children at the setting wear the group sweatshirt, giving them with a sense of belonging to the group. Younger children complete the same activities as the older ones, and they are effectively adapted to their level. Staff provide them with greater support as necessary, and as a result, they are confident enough to ask for additional help when required. For example, one child asked for assistance in cutting, and the member of staff gave the child instructions on how to hold the scissors correctly. Staff show younger children that they are valued, sitting them on their lap when necessary to provide them with reassurance and to develop their self-esteem. They spend time working with children on a one to one basis, such as in the book corner, where they develop their interest in listening to stories. The Birth to three matters framework is used for planning, and staff record children's progress, identifying what they need to do next.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children learn through free play, whole group teaching and small group work. Staff carefully explain activities to children and skilfully question them to make them think. For example, while making an Easter card children were asked why the rabbit face they were creating needed eyes and whiskers. Staff are always very positive with children and offer them plenty of encouragement while they complete activities. They explain the tasks available to children at the start of each session, and offer support and advice as necessary, rather than stepping in and taking control of the activity. There is an extremely effective system of planning in place. The long term plan shows the continuous work to be covered for each of the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and a diary sheet gives the dates on which particular festivals and events will be introduced to children. The short term plans show the aspects of each area of learning the setting are focussing on for the current week. They also include parental involvement in these plans, suggesting how they can help their child at home, and requesting items they can bring in to resource the activities. Staff discuss how activities should be differentiated to meet children's individual needs when weekly plans are being devised. They record the stepping stones children work on each week, to ensure systematic coverage of the curriculum.

During pre-school sessions staff make a substantial number of observations of children, which are used to inform the following week's planning. They enable staff to see any areas where children are not performing as well as was expected. These observations are also used to complete children's individual development records, which are kept as evidence of their progress.

Children's records are completed regularly by staff, and their achievements are dated and colour coded, to allow them to track their progress. Staff are efficient and complete the overview section in children's profiles to show their next steps in learning. Children's records show that they are making effective progress in the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Children are greeted cheerfully by staff at the start of the day, making them feel valued. Staff raise their self-esteem by giving them the opportunity to share anything they have been doing at home with the rest of the group. They also involve children in tidying up, to develop their independence. Children are effectively involved in the community, as the group sometimes entertains the elderly people that live in the locality. Staff discuss any problems that arise with children and provide them with excellent opportunities to resolve them. For example, the backing card had come away from one of the pieces of a game children were playing with, so a member of staff asked them what they should do about it. With some prompting, the children were able to decide that it could be stuck back together with glue. Children approach mark making tasks with confidence, as the materials for this are always accessible to them. They can identify some of the letters in their own name, and are encouraged to write this on their work.

Staff skilfully create opportunities to develop children's understanding of the language of shape. They describe the pieces of the games children are using, discussing whether they have straight or curved sides. They also talk about the shape of the features they are sticking on the pictures they are making, explaining to children the difference between a square and a rectangle. Staff introduce counting into everyday activities, such as finding the number of children present each day, or how many whiskers they have drawn on their rabbit face. Staff then encourage children to achieve their potential by taking the next step in their learning. They ask them to complete simple calculations, such as finding the number of whiskers there would be on their picture if there was one more.

Staff talk to children about how things feel, such as a feather against their cheek, to encourage them to use their senses. Trays of cornflakes or rice are made available for them to feel the different textures. A computer is always accessible to children to enable them to develop their skills with the mouse, and to become familiar with modern technology. Children sing songs about the days of the week and the months of the year, raising their awareness of the passing of time, as they begin to memorise simple rhymes. Staff introduce the use of hand and body movements as children sing, developing their small muscle skills. They allow children to experiment with the musical instruments, to find the type of sound each one makes, and to explore how the sound changes as they play loud or quiet. Children have access to a wide range of equipment to practise threading, such as beads, cotton reels and small bears. They also use small tools during craft activities, to develop their dexterity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are all treated with equal concern by staff and they are provided with the same opportunities and access to resources. Their records include comprehensive details of any specific needs they have, of which staff are all aware. The pre-school provide purposeful resources to promote children's understanding of diversity and raise their understanding of the world around them by celebrating festivals from other cultures. Staff are experienced in identifying and providing high quality care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The member of staff responsible for this area of the curriculum attends training, which is then cascaded to the rest of the group. Parents are involved when staff write individual play plans for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. They also produce visual aids to assist

them in communicating with these children. Staff liaise effectively with external agencies involved in the care of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and follow their advice and suggestions.

Staff are always very positive with children, continually praising them for small achievements. They are consistent in their approach to behaviour management and get children to think about how their actions make others feel, and encourage them to apologise. The group are resourceful, and have recently introduced a display to celebrate children's kind and helpful actions, to boost their self-esteem. It contains details of the thoughtful things individual children have done each day, such as showing good manners, fetching something for another child, and helping staff to tidy up. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. The pre-school are committed to keeping parents involved and informed. They have their own notice board at the entrance to the setting to provide parents with useful information about the group, such as details of the staff, their policies and insurance. The pre-school's complaints procedure makes parents aware of how any concerns raised will be handled by staff. There is an effective welcome pack for new parents to raise their understanding of how the setting operates and to let them know what their child is expected to bring to the group each day. This includes information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and how parents can view their child's achievement record. Each child has a plastic folder which parents are requested to bring to the group each day. Staff use this to send home letters, and to allow a two way exchange of information to take place. Regular newsletters inform parents of forthcoming events at the group.

The pre-school is highly praised by parents, and they feel that staff are very approachable. They believe that they receive effective feedback about their child's progress, and that the group successfully provide them with plenty of opportunities to be involved in the setting. Parents are regularly invited to talk to their child's key worker, and are provided with a settling in report after their child has attended the pre-school for a period of six weeks. There is an open afternoon in the summer term, to which all parents and prospective parents are invited. They are able to offer their help by volunteering to join the parents' rota, or by being involved in the running of the pre-school by joining the committee or attending their meetings. Parents are invited to participate in fund raising and social events such as quiz nights, and to talk to the children if they have any particular skills or knowledge to share with them.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children thrive at the pre-school, as they are cared for by well qualified staff. Many of them have been with the setting for several years and know the children and their families well. Successful arrangements are in place to protect children's safety when visitors are present. Visitors are required to sign in and out of the setting, and children are not left on their own with them. There are effective recruitment and induction procedures for new staff. Efficient contingency arrangements ensure that there is cover for any member of staff that is absent. The pre-school's register is exceedingly well kept and records children's times of arrival and departure. Their certificate of registration is on display, to make parents aware of the conditions under which the group operates. Children's records are stored securely to maintain confidentiality, and are made available to parents on request. The pre-school's extensive range of policies is regularly reviewed, to ensure they are kept up to date.

The leadership and management of the setting is outstanding. Annual staff appraisals are undertaken by the manager, providing staff with the chance to discuss their performance and training needs. The manager also uses this as an opportunity to thank staff for their hard work. There is a comprehensive staff training and development plan which identifies the learning needs of all staff for the year, and an individual plan for each member of staff. They have attended a wide range of courses since the last inspection. The setting is forward thinking, and has an action plan in place, showing the areas of their practice which they feel that they need to review. The evaluation section of this is completed as items are covered. The manager delegates appropriately, and staff each have their own areas of responsibility. The manager and committee are both aware of their own roles in the running of the group. Regular weekly staff meetings are held, at which planning is discussed and all members of staff are involved in this. These ensure that there is excellent communication between staff, enabling the group to run smoothly. Staff work together effectively as a team and co-operate with each other. They know their duties and carry them out with little need for direction from the manager. The group are currently on the last module of the West Sussex Quality Assurance Scheme, and the manager feels that it has been a positive experience which has transformed their practice. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection recommended that the pre-school ensure that the daily register, visitors book and accident book are maintained with the required details. The setting now records children's times of arrival and departure, and the visitors' book and accident book are effectively completed, to safeguard children's welfare.

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

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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