

Madginford Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127361
Inspection date	15 February 2008
Inspector	Mary Van De Peer
Setting Address	Madginford Hall, Egremont Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8LH
Telephone number	01622 739973
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Registered person	Madginford 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 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?

Madginford Pre-School opened in 1985 and operates from two main halls in a village community centre. A maximum of 50 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:00 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 58 children, aged from two to under five years, on roll, 49 of whom receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs 10 staff who work with the children. Six staff, including the manager/supervisor, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and also receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff ensure the areas where children play are kept clean. All children are able to learn about self-care and participate in effective personal hygiene procedures. They wash their hands after painting or sticking, after using the toilet and before snack time. Cross-infection is kept to a minimum as there is an effective sick children policy in place. The majority of staff hold a recognised paediatric first aid certificate and a well-stocked first aid kit is kept in the kitchen area, close to all areas the children use. If children sustain a minor injury, they are treated effectively. The accident, incident and medication administration records are well-kept and parents receive details of any accident their child has.

Physical development is good. Children are able to learn new physical skills and improve existing ones because there is a variety of different tools and equipment to encourage this, for example, children can ride and play ball games outdoors. They learn to use scissors, paintbrushes and a computer mouse competently. They also go out on local walks to see ducks and swans. Quiet, comfortable areas in the pre-school rooms mean children can rest or relax when they want to, enabling them to learn to recognise their own body signs.

The pre-school supplies children with milk and water, so they receive appropriate nutritional and hydrating drinks. Parents provide their children with easy-to-open food boxes, containing light healthy snacks, such as fruit and bread sticks. Children's independence is further promoted and they are learning about healthy eating. Parents are also able to become more involved in their children's care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The pre-school environment is bright, friendly and safe for children to play freely in. Effective risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis and help to ensure any hazards are minimised. For example, an alarm fitted to the front entrance alerts staff if the doors are opened. Security is given priority by staff and clear procedures are in place to help ensure children's safety when they are collected and on outings. There are low level chairs and tables which allow children to sit safely and comfortably. Many of the toys and activities are stored at a safe and suitable height so children can reach them easily. The outdoor play areas are available for children to use every day. Staff use the planning system to help them achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits for children. An emergency evacuation procedure is practised at regular intervals and helps children learn about keeping themselves safe. The children are well protected by staff, who understand how to safeguard children effectively and give priority to their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children settle well when they arrive and really enjoy their time at the pre-school. Staff work hard to provide a child-friendly, stimulating and happy environment. They have developed a good knowledge and understanding of both Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage. This means they are able to provide children with activities, resources and experiences which are fun as well as educational. A child who had recently travelled on a plane enjoyed building his own plane, using 3-dimensional inter-locking shapes. With nursery rhymes as themes, many

of the children have a great time painting hard-boiled eggs, just like Humpty Dumpty. Children also learn how to roll pastry, cut out cases and fill them with jam, making jam tarts to take home. They are very proud of their efforts, helping to promote their self-esteem. However, in the second part of the session, the free-play opportunities are limited and children have to join in with adult-led group activities, such as singing, playing musical instruments, a parachute game and story time. Although children are well occupied, it means they do not have free choices in their play, reducing the opportunities for them to further develop their independence and confidence. There is a good selection of age-appropriate toys for younger children to play with. A role play area, with dressing-up clothes, encourages imaginary play. Art and craft materials, such as painting, cutting and sticking, allow children to experiment with different materials and be creative. They are also able to assemble puzzles of different degrees of difficulty and play games which help with recognising numbers and counting. A quiet area is available, where children can relax and look at books if they wish to. Computers with appropriate software help develop children's familiarity with information technology. At snack time, children find their own snack box, get themselves a drink of water or milk and then sit down with their friends. They benefit from this social time together and communicate well with each other.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are able to learn, develop skills and have fun. Staff ensure they provide children with good quality activities and resources that support them in all areas of learning. Staff use observations to inform them of children's progress and development. Their next steps are identified and used to direct short term planning. However, there is no consistent system used for evaluating the value and outcomes for children when introducing new routines and activities. This results in limited information to assess strengths and weaknesses. Staff praise and encourage children to achieve, such as when they are learning to hold and use scissors correctly. Children are keen to learn and are confident in their play. They know the pre-school routine, for example, when washing hands, during snack time, and lining up to go outside. Children speak confidently to each other and to adults. They talk openly in groups, about themselves and their family, expressing their thoughts and feelings. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories, joining in with actions and asking questions. Children's listening skills are good, they follow instructions well and take turns, for example, when using the computer, or rolling and cutting out pastry. Pencils, crayons, brushes and chalks provide children with various opportunities to practise mark making. More able children like to write the letters of their first name. Children are able to develop their creative skills using different art and craft resources to make pictures and models. Role play allows children to use their imagination and express themselves. Number, matching and sequencing activities enable children to recognise numbers and count to well over 10. They are able to work out what comes next and place pictures in the right order. Children learn about their environment through visits to local amenities, such as shops and parks. Children are able to make choices in their play for most of the session. They are encouraged to do things for themselves, for example, putting on coats, getting a drink of water and washing their hands, which helps to promote their independence. Children benefit from good interaction and support from experienced staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The pre-school supports children from different cultures. Staff make sure they are clear about the children's needs with regard to their culture and religion. The pre-school provides appropriate activities and support to help them settle and progress. Staff have some knowledge of Makaton signing language and use it to improve communication where needed. All the children play well

together and can access all available resources and equipment. A coordinator ensures children receive the support they need to learn and achieve. Individual plans are used where required and children are monitored and can learn and develop at their own pace. There are positive behaviour management strategies in place and staff are enthusiastic about encouraging children, giving them lots of praise for their achievements. This helps children understand what is expected from them, for example, saying please and thank you and waiting their turn. Children's behaviour is good. They listen to guidance and know the routine of the pre-school. Samples of children's work are displayed on boards, helping promote children's self-esteem. The pre-school has an open-door policy and parents confirm they feel able to talk to any member of staff for advice or information about their child. Each child has a folder where their achievements and development are recorded. Parents receive a good insight into how their children are progressing at the pre-school. The policies and procedures of the pre-school are on display and newsletters provide an additional method of providing parents with relevant and up-to-date information.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive regular information about their children's progress and development in the Foundation Stage. Curriculum plans are displayed, showing the aims relating to the early learning goals. Good communication with their children's key workers mean parents are able to share relevant information. This helps provide children with continuity of care. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school is organised effectively. They use two rooms, with children aged three and four years playing separately from the slightly younger ones. However, they are often together outdoors and at various times during the week. All required documentation and record-keeping is in place. This contributes positively to children's health, safety and well-being. The Ofsted registration certificate and the public liability insurance information is displayed for parents and visitors to see. There is an effective staff recruitment and induction procedure in place, although the appraisal system is undergoing changes. Children benefit from qualified, experienced and caring staff. The pre-school's policies and procedures are being reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and applicable. Staff are committed to the continuous improvement and development of the pre-school.

The leadership and management of the pre-school are good. The supervisor is very experienced and enthusiastic. She is keen to establish more effective ways to improve the pre-school in all areas, enhancing children's learning. The main area planned for improvement is reflective practice, as this is not carried out effectively at present. This has resulted in the pre-school's strengths and weaknesses not always being identified and recorded for future reference. However, regular staff meetings are used to review and assess what practices are benefiting the children and what needs changing. The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation raised at the last inspection. The pre-school provider was recommended to consider offering children more nutritious snacks. The staff reviewed the content and quality of the snack they provided and shared this information with parents. Parents now provide their children with a healthy snack, transported to pre-school in an easy-to-open storage box. Children are involved in choosing their snack with their parents. This promotes the children's independence and the pre-school's partnership with parents.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children have choices in their play activities throughout the session, helping to further develop their independence and learning

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):

- further develop reflective practices to evaluate the outcomes for children, helping to ensure strengths and weaknesses can be identified and improvements made where appropriate

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