

New Marston Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134008
Inspection date	19 November 2007
Inspector	Jill Milton
Setting Address	St. Michaels C of E School, Marston Road, Marston, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX3 0EJ
Telephone number	01865 798320
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Registered person	The Trustees of New Marston Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

New Marston Pre-School opened in 1979 and is a registered charity managed by a voluntary committee. The pre-school operates from its own building set in the grounds of St Michael's Primary School on Marston Road close to the centre of Oxford. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school opens on weekday mornings during school term times, from 09.00 until 11.40. On some days of the week there is a lunch club followed by an afternoon session which runs from 12.40 until 15.10. A maximum of 24 children under eight years may attend at any one time and there are currently 35 children between the ages of two and five years on roll. Of these, 29 children are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting supports a small number of children for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment and they are learning how to keep themselves healthy. The children are familiar with routines for regular hand washing and they collect and dispose of tissues sensibly for themselves when noses need wiping. If children are ill or have the occasional accident the staff are ready to help and they follow well established procedures to ensure they inform parents. Staff and parents share useful information about children's health so that they receive good care and health professionals visit the pre-school if staff require expert advice. There is an ample range of first aid supplies though staff do not store them ideally to keep them clean and dust free.

Children enjoy getting ready for snack time since staff make routines fun by using colourful fruit pictures. Children are eating a healthy range of snacks at pre-school and they eagerly clear dishes of different fruits. They pour drinks for themselves and can access fresh water at all times during the day, learning to respond to their own needs. When children stay for lunch club there is cold storage for their food to protect their health. Children often take part in cooking activities when they prepare nutritious items like milk shakes and soup.

Outdoor play is popular and many children choose to go out in the fresh air where they play energetic games. They access a wide range of good quality wheeled toys and they soon discover how much harder they must work to move the bicycle when a friend is on the back too. This provides useful learning experiences about physical play. Children learn about their own bodies through topic work with X-rays to look at and when making prints using fingers or hands.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a welcoming, bright environment. Staff display many examples of their art work and early writing which provides positive messages to the children about how adults value their efforts. The pre-school benefits from the use of a number of small side rooms along with a large room for play. Children are familiar with routines of where to store their coats and outdoor boots and there is ample space within the setting for play. Parents benefit from a large lobby area to enable them to socialise whilst they wait for the session to start and there is an office should a more private place be required for confidential talks with staff. Although some storage areas are not very well organised there is plenty of equipment available for play. Children benefit from the display of items at their height so they can self-select resources, and the picture and word labels assist them in learning where things belong. The equipment in use in the pre-school covers all areas of the curriculum and the staff make sensible choices when buying new good quality pieces like a play house and furniture.

Children can play in safety since the staff monitor the security of the premises effectively. The adults are vigilant about supervising play both indoors and outdoors so children are safe from harm. When the group venture on outings the staff conduct risk assessments to reduce the impact of any identified potential hazards. Children play safely indoors since the staff ensure electrical and fire fighting equipment has regular checks, and they all practise safe evacuation of the premises.

The staff have a strong understanding of the area of child protection. They have written details of the procedure to follow should they have concerns about a child and the designated member of staff for child protection attends relevant training. The staff keep children safe since they do not let adults who have not undertaken the necessary checks work alone with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children play contentedly in this friendly setting. The staff create a pleasant atmosphere with plenty of interaction with the children as they play and learn. The children are familiar with the daily routine and they quickly engage in the interesting activities on offer. The option of outdoor play enables them to make their own decisions about what they would like to do and some children are content to sit on the large comfortable sofa to look through the book selection. A few children start pre-school before their third birthday and they integrate well into the wide range of activities. Staff adjust the activity to enable children of all ages to participate and there are plenty of sensory experiences for the younger age range.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff are experienced and knowledgeable about delivering the Foundation Stage. They plan the educational programme in some detail ensuring good coverage of the six areas of learning. The children are making good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff chart this progress regularly using dated observations of the children's achievements and by keeping some examples of art work and early mark-making to share with parents. Forward planning of activities takes the early learning goals into consideration though is not yet closely matched to the individual learning needs of children.

The children enjoy their play and are co-operative and sociable. They listen well at group times and benefit from the good ratios of adults to children so that they receive lots of attention. The small group activities enable adults and children to share many conversations and talk is often about the children's families and important events in their lives. A new home corner area is popular for imaginative play and staff spend time with children developing their ideas when acting out scenes. Children listen attentively to stories and they see many examples of print around the setting. The children recognise their names and are learning to write some of their letter shapes.

Children are using their developing understanding of space as they use construction toys or steer equipment in a confined space in the garden. They discuss with staff about the sizes of play dough shapes and they decide how many eyes they need when drawing a face. There are numerals on view within the setting so that children can become familiar with them. Staff plan activities to support mathematics, though on some days the teaching lacks the emphasis given to the other areas of the curriculum. Children enjoy the activities linked to a topic on the senses. They explore natural objects like shells and talk about their feelings and opinions. An activity to make perfume with herbs or put together lavender and rosemary bags results in a lot of conversation and reaction. The children go on regular outings into the local community and attractive photograph books record their experiences of the wider world. Children use their creative talents as they visit the painting easel or play with dressing-up clothes and they have opportunities to express their own ideas within the planned activities. Children use a wide variety of developing skills as they play with brushes, glue sticks or scissors. They learn about

themselves through topics like 'All about me' and a colourful selection of displays illustrates the wide range of interesting activities that provide opportunities for discussion and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The many examples of different languages, pictures and activities in the pre-school are providing children with positive images of diversity. This helps to develop their appreciation and respect for others. Staff introduce colourful and exciting activities linked to festivals and celebrations during the year to demonstrate how they value others and support the families in their community. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered. Each child receives a warm welcome from staff and those who are a little unsure soon engage in play. Children see their own photographs and names around the setting which helps to build their sense of belonging. A colourful time line provides a useful resource for explaining to children what is happening next, especially if a child has English as an additional language.

There are no children currently attending the pre-school who have identified learning difficulties or disabilities. There is a designated member of staff appointed to co-ordinate aspects of a child's care should the situation change and staff have previously supported families in special circumstances. Everyone at the setting is currently learning some sign language and this helps raise children's awareness of the needs of others. The children's behaviour at pre-school is good with many examples of how they meet staff expectations. The children sit quietly at snack times, for example, and demonstrate good manners by remembering to say please and thank you. The staff act as good role models in the way they talk to each other and to the children. The concise behaviour management policy provides staff with guidance on effective strategies to manage situations.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The staff produce an extensive range of helpful information for parents with some good quality guidance on the educational curriculum. There are some interesting ideas for families to share in their children's learning at home and staff participate in regular informal discussions about children's progress. The staff make good use of questionnaires to obtain feedback from parents and families appreciate the fact that their contributions are of value to the group. A booklet entitled 'stay and play' illustrates photographs and comments from parents about how useful they find the opportunity to help on the parent rota. Staff and parents successfully share information about the children's needs in terms of health and well-being to maintain consistent levels of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff provide children with a welcoming and safe place, to play and learn. The team work successfully together and step in to assist each other without having to be asked. The policies and procedures are working well to promote the outcomes for children. Paperwork such as policy documents are currently undergoing a review with sensible amendments and updates. Staff ensure confidential information is securely stored and retained for the required time scales. The leadership and management are good. The committee and the staff have a strong working relationship where all are striving for the same goals. The committee is particularly active in raising additional funds through sponsored events and parents speak enthusiastically about helping.

There are good procedures in place for the recruitment of new staff and the established team are regularly attending training to add to their knowledge and skills. A formal appraisal system is not yet in place though staff are realistic about identifying areas for improvement. They respond positively to advice from other professionals and make changes that have a direct positive impact on children's learning such as developing a writing area. Staff hold regular meetings to plan activities and discuss issues for good practice. This ensures they maintain high standards of care and nursery education. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the staff were required to address two actions and two recommendations. There is now a more detailed child protection policy in place and written procedures are on file should a child be lost or not collected from pre-school. These measures help to keep children safe. The recommendations suggested have been addressed and children can now access fresh drinking water for themselves at any time to help maintain good health. A number of issues linked to documentation have now been addressed including: writing risk assessments for outings; formulating an induction procedure for new staff; obtaining parental permission to obtain emergency medical treatment; keeping a record of significant incidents. The improvements aid staff in maintaining good standards of care for children.

At the last inspection of nursery education the staff were required to address two issues linked to developing opportunities for learning and ensuring children have time to respond and know what is happening next. The staff are continually building up their good practice and introduce ideas to help children learn as they play. The outdoor area, for example has been extended to include more activities which are not all linked to energetic play. Staff do not rush children but give them time to respond and adapt to what is happening next. The children are aware that when a child rings a metal triangle the activity will be changing very soon.

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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure first aid supplies are stored appropriately
- implement a procedure for regular staff appraisals to support individual professional development.

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):

- provide more emphasis on early mathematics as children play
- use the information collected about children's progress to plan the next steps in their individual 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