

Merryfield Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	142953
Inspection date	26 November 2007
Inspector	Jennifer Barton
Setting Address	St Mary & St Peter First School, Copse Lane, Ilton, Somerset, TA19 9EX
Telephone number	01460 52574 or 07818 214 045
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Registered person	The Trustees of Merryfield Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Merryfield Pre-School opened approximately 17 years ago. It is committee run and operates from a portacabin situated in the grounds of St Mary and St Peter First School in the village of Ilton in Somerset. The pre-school have sole use of the premises, which consist of a main playroom, kitchen facilities, entrance, storage room and toilets. There is an adjacent, enclosed play area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00, with the option of staying for lunch club from 12:00 to 13:00 during term time only. The pre-school is registered for 20 children aged from two to five years of age and at present there are currently 16 children on roll, of whom nine children are in receipt of funding.

There are five members of staff who work with the children; and the supervisor and deputy both hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications. The pre-school receive support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a healthy environment, each session there are indoor and outdoor activities to help children develop control of their bodies. Children are able to access a wide range of resources, such as climbing frames, wheeled toys and construction which promotes their physical development. Children have access to an adjoining outdoor area and therefore benefit from regular fresh air which contributes to their good health. Children are protected against the harmful rays of the sun as staff use a gazebo and ensure children apply a sun screen.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks and drinks. Children are able to access drinking water throughout the session to meet their individual needs. Children are learning about healthy foods through discussion and have good experiences of growing their own vegetables. They plant, care for and pick fresh vegetables and participate in cooking activities to make healthy snacks, such as vegetable soup.

Children are well cared for in a clean environment, where toilets and tables are regularly cleaned with antibacterial cleaner during the session. Children understand why they wash their hands before handling food and after visits to the toilet. Children are able to access liquid antibacterial soap, disposable towels and warm air hand driers to prevent the spread of infection.

Appropriate forms are in place for administering medication and there are accurate records for accidents and incidents, thereby ensuring children are well cared for. Staff have parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, which is in the best interest of the child.

Children benefit from staff who have up to date first aid skills and procedures to check first aid resources, which ensures minor accidents can be dealt with effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a safe, bright and cheerful setting. Children's safety is promoted through good risk assessments which minimise accidents, such as daily checks on the premises and outdoor area. The premises provide adequate space and there is suitable furniture and good equipment, which is all well maintained, for all ages of children cared for. Children are able to move safely and freely indoors and outdoors to participate in activities to support their development.

Children access a safe adjacent outdoor area which is securely enclosed and has a bark ground surface under the climbing equipment to promote children's safety. There is a good range of toys, resources and equipment and they are effectively organised so children can easily access them and make their own choices.

Children's safety is promoted by good door security and registration systems. Children's safety against the risk of fire is promoted by staff's clear understanding of evacuation and the participation in regular fire drills, which are appropriately logged. All fire appliances are appropriately located and well maintained.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. There is comprehensive information for further guidance available, however, the child protection policy is not up to date in respect of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in pre-school, they arrive happy and eager to participate. Children are achieving well because staff are committed and interested in what children do and say and respond well to their needs. Staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the framework for Birth to three matters. Staff are enthusiastic and give children lots of choices, which motivates children to participate and be involved. Children benefit from staff's good interaction skills, which extends children's learning. Staff provide a good balance between free play and planned activities and are flexible with their routine to support children's learning. Children benefit from a range of practical and meaningful activities. For example, children participated in drawing around themselves on paper and dressing their model in winter clothes as they are learning about cold weather. Some children ask to dress their model in summer clothes and staff respond well, extending children's learning and interests. Children enjoy familiar and new experiences in role play, such as home corner, 'Father Christmas grotto' and 'Pizza Hut'. Children are encouraged to use information technology, such as cameras, computers and cash tills to appropriately support their learning. Children enjoy and are competent, participating in construction play. They develop their fine motor skills and use good imagination as they build rockets with wooden blocks and make butterflies with pin boards.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning for funded children is good. Children are making good progress across the six areas of learning. Comprehensive plans identify aims and objectives linked to the stepping stones. Children have regular observations and assessment records show children's progress along the stepping stones. Good records show children's next steps and individual learning needs are carried forward to future planning. Staff use good interaction skills, they play, talk and continually ask questions which effectively supports and extends children's learning.

Children are growing in confidence and independence, which is encouraged in every day routines, such as tidy up time, register time and snack time. Children are able to choose and pour their drinks and talk in groups at 'show and tell' time. Children's listening and speaking skills are developing well. Children are excited and enthusiastic as they listen to stories and join in with rhymes, such as 'Ten Fat Sausages Sizzling in a Pan'. Children have many opportunities during daily routines to become familiar with and recognise letters and their names, such as using name cards and the use of labels around the play room. Children access good resources in the mark making area and role play area to develop their writing skills. Children are learning to count, recognise numbers and solve small practical problems as they participate in register and date time. They know how many children need name labels at snack time and know how many more boys than girls are present. Children learn about shape as they visit the village and explore and observe the shape of houses, vehicles and road signs. Children's findings of shape are collated together in a book to support further learning.

Children participate in numerous activities to develop their creative and imaginary skills. Children are able to construct and build with a wide range of resources. For example, their art and craft skills are displayed on the 'Fairy Tale' board where the three little pigs and their houses are built from recycling materials. Children have many opportunities to explore as they participate in cooking and making play dough. Children have good first hand experiences as they grow and care for vegetables in their garden. Children's physical skills are developing well, however,

older or more able children do not have sufficient challenging activities to fully promote their gross motor skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. All children are welcome into the setting and receive good support and care from staff who liaise closely with parents and carers to ensure children's development and progress is suitably enhanced. Children are able to access good resources and staff plan activities, such as food and people from other countries, to reflect positive images of diversity. Staff are proactive in completing training and are aware of keeping records for children who have learning difficulties. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff are good role models, they are polite and calm when requesting children to complete tasks. Children are aware of what is expected of them as they share games, play well together and help to tidy up. Children's good behaviour is promoted through staff's regular praise and encouragement. An effective award system where children aim to gain a certificate promotes children's positive behaviour and self-esteem.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. A welcoming entrance to the premises provides good information about the setting through posters and a notice board, together with access to relevant leaflets and books. A prospectus also includes good information but does not contain details of the Foundation Stage. Staff are available daily to discuss verbally children's progress and development and parents have access to children's records at any time.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled in the well organised setting. Children's work and posters are displayed to provide a warm, cheerful and welcoming environment. Staff ensure furniture, equipment and toys are arranged to cater for the needs of all children and offer easy accessibility to a good range of resources. Indoor and outdoor space is used effectively to meet the needs of the children. Staff are well deployed and children are supported by regular positive interaction.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is good. There is a strong relationship between staff and committee and they are very motivated and committed. They have effective systems in place to monitor the provision with ongoing evaluations of activities, meetings and regular observations on children. Staff have regular contact with some committee members, which allows any concerns or issues to be dealt with quickly. Any areas identified for improvement are recorded and addressed when possible, such as the possibility of allowing children free access to outdoor play during sessions. However, no formal procedures are in place to obtain feedback from parents to support the evaluation and monitoring system. Staff have appraisals and induction for new staff is in place. The staff are very committed to improving their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage through attending regular courses and the committee are very supportive of staff's training needs to ensure they improve outcomes for children.

Children's welfare care and learning is very well supported through comprehensive and effective documentation, including the recently implemented operational plan and good partnership with parents. However, some documentation is not up to date. The good quality of care and

nursery education supports the requirements to meet children's individual needs. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the provision update their child protection and complaints policy and provide a statement of procedures to be followed if a child is lost. Details of procedures for allegations made against a member of staff have been included in the child protection policy and lost child procedures are included in the 'non collected' child procedures to promote children's welfare and safety. Details of the regulators contact details are now attached to the complaints policy to inform parents and carers.

The previous nursery education inspection recommended that the provision improve organisation of the sessions to encourage concentration and interest to maximise children's learning; to extend assessment systems to include children's future planning is recorded and to develop monitoring systems to evaluate and identify areas of improvement. The setting have good daily routines which allow children a wide range of choices of activities; and planned activities run along side these, so children are able to choose and meet their own needs and interests. Comprehensive systems for assessment are in place and children's future learning requirements are recorded so children's needs are met. Various systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision are in place and areas for improvement are recorded and addressed to ensure the provision continually improves standards for children.

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):

- update the child protection policy to include the Local Safeguarding Children's Board details
- provide information for parents on the Foundation Stage in the prospectus
- consider formal feedback from parents to support monitoring of the provision.

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 challenging physical activities to support the development of gross motor skills for older or more able children

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