

Brunel-Meredith Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143442
Inspection date	11 October 2007
Inspector	Gill Moore
Setting Address	Meredith Infant School, Portchester Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 7HY
Telephone number	07900 831016
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Registered person	Brunel-Meredith 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?

Brunel-Meredith Pre-School was established over 25 years ago. It operates in two rooms on the site of Brunel Junior School and Meredith Infant School, Portsmouth and has access to a secure outside area. The pre-school has charity status and is organised by a voluntary parents management committee. This inspection took place at the pre-school situated in the Brunel Junior School Annex. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The group is open Monday to Friday 09:00 - 11:30 during the school term. The pre-school supports children with English as an additional language.

There are currently 23 children on roll. Of these, 17 receive funding for nursery education. The committee employ a qualified manager to be overall responsible for the day to day running of the group. In addition, a total of nine practitioners work directly with the children, all of whom have an NVQ 3 in Early Years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is extremely well maintained because practitioners have an expert understanding of health and hygiene policies and procedures and ensure these are implemented to a consistently high standard across the group. All practitioners have current first aid training, which is renewed on an ongoing basis. Secure systems are in place to deal with accidents effectively, and record these, sharing information appropriately with parents. Robust procedures are in place to administer medication and children stay healthy because practitioners have a good knowledge about their medical history. Children's health is assured in an emergency situation because parents provide written consent for their child to receive emergency medical treatment. Parents are provided with written information about 'bumps' in addition to details recorded in the accident book. Children's dietary requirements are fully met, as written information is obtained as part of the registration process, and all practitioners are fully aware of what children can and cannot have to eat.

Children have an exceptional understanding about healthy living and talk about why it is important to wash their hands after they have been to the toilet. They wash their hands before choosing to have their snack, and after collecting leaves outside, recognising that germs can spread all over their bodies. Children wipe their noses using tissues and throw these away, washing their hands afterwards, recognising the importance of following good personal hygiene routines. They wipe tables, in preparation for snack time, and watch as practitioners use anti-bacterial spray, helping to maintain a clean and healthy environment. Children's understanding of healthy eating is extremely well promoted through the range of healthy options provided at snack times, which include a wide range of different fruits, chopped vegetables and salad vegetables. They talk about the different fruits, showing great interest in how they are grown and where they come from, and recognise that fruits and vegetables are good for their bodies. Children's understanding is significantly enhanced through the completion of a range of tasks and experiences, involving practitioner's and parents, as part of the Pre-School Challenge. Children excitedly recall their visit from Healthy Harvey, who came to pre-school last week to present them with their certificate of achievement for completing the healthy challenge.

Practitioners are highly effective in using play opportunities to increase children's awareness of healthy eating, for example during discussions when cooking dinner through imaginative play. Children learn about why it is important to clean their teeth and have regular check ups at the doctor, and their understanding of this is really enhanced through visits from these professionals, and opportunities to act out their real and imagined experiences through role-play. Topics, such as people who help us, where children learn about roles of health professionals and benefit from visits to the group, also enhance opportunities for them to really understand about keeping themselves fit and healthy. Physical play is exceptionally well planned both in the outside and indoor learning environment. Children have marvellous opportunities to access the full range of large and small equipment each week and engage in music and movement sessions, such as Sticky Kids, which helps promote their understanding of the importance of taking regular exercise. They run around excitedly following their peers and throwing and catching balls. Children follow the maze on the ground and laugh excitedly with their peers when they come to a dead end and have to go back and find another way. Overall, children have an exceptional understanding of why it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle and recognise

that personal hygiene, a healthy balanced diet and regular daily exercise are all significant factors, which contribute to achieving this.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children have an exceptional understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Practitioners make excellent use of incidental opportunities and daily routines to increase their awareness. For example, children talk about why they need to hold the hand rail walking up and down the stairs. They recognise the importance of tucking chairs under the table, when they have finished their snack, and learn how to use tools, such as cutters and knives safely when playing with dough. Children are reminded not to run around with scissors and discuss why it is important to leave them closed when they have finished using them. They talk about why the gate must be kept shut at the top of the stairs and line up patiently by the main door, before outside play, whilst the practitioner goes out to unlock the gates. Children's understanding of safety is promoted through activities and experiences linked to pre-school topics. For example, they talk about the dangers of fire and enjoy visits from the firemen when they learn about Bonfire night. Children practise crossing roads safely, with the help of the crossing patrol lady, and learn how to keep safe when playing in parks and outside their homes, enhanced by visits from the police.

Children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe in an emergency situation is consolidated as they talk about procedures for emergency evacuation and practise these regularly, with the school and independently. Their safety is assured because practitioners have an excellent understanding of safety issues and are vigilant. Practitioners conduct daily formal risk assessments on all areas used by children to ensure risks and hazards are minimised, and extremely secure procedures are in place to monitor this assessing the impact on children's health and safety. Children are well protected whilst at pre-school because all practitioners have completed relevant training and have an excellent understanding of their role with regards to protecting children in their care. They recognise different types of abuse and possible signs and symptoms that may cause concern and have secure systems in place to share information. Secure procedures are known and implemented by practitioners regarding how to respond to child protection issues, both within the pre-school and externally, and practitioners have a secure understanding of how to implement local safeguarding procedures.

Children benefit immensely from the wonderfully bright and vibrant physical environment, which really enhances their independent learning. The room is set up attractively into different workshop areas, which are labelled, and extremely inviting. This fantastic environment has photographs, children's work, posters and labels displayed everywhere, which makes it exciting and wonderfully appealing to children. The layout is exceptionally effective in helping to promote children's independence, as well as ensuring their safety. Children take themselves to the toilets, situated off the adjacent hall, and secure procedures are implemented supervising children, and keeping the main play room door shut, on the few occasions when other users are present in the building. Children have independent access to an extensive array of equipment and play provision, which is all presented at low level. Exceptionally secure procedures are in place to ensure this is safe, clean and well maintained, which contributes to keeping children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children come running into pre-school excitedly and find their name cards to self register. They rush over to the mat and have a quick cuddle with practitioners and chat with their peers as they join in with the singing and morning exercises. Practitioners are extremely supportive towards children who arrive less reassured and sit and cuddle them asking for their help to complete the register, which makes them feel valued and important. Children sit together for registration and participate in group discussions contributing their own ideas about what they think the weather will be. When children begin to chat altogether, practitioners use photographs and picture symbols of 'quiet lips' to remind them about the need to talk one at a time. Younger children benefit enormously from playing alongside their older peers. They become competent learners counting the number of children at registration and recognise photographs of fruit and vegetables, which children attach to the snack menu whilst discussing the daily options available.

Children are extremely familiar with the daily routine and show high levels of confidence and independence. They choose their own activities, which enables them to be creative and imaginative, and receive extremely good support from practitioners who know them exceptionally well. Younger children show high levels of concentration and develop new skills because practitioners show them how to hold tools correctly, for example, and how to use the bat and ball when playing outside. Some of the younger children begin to feel a little anxious and ask for mummy, and practitioners use photographs, representing a visual time line, to discuss what will happen next. This helps them to feel reassured and settled. Children have a fantastic time running around the playground following practitioners. They laugh and squeal with delight chasing them and relish in opportunities to be the leader. Children use their senses to explore a range of media and become skilful communicators talking about the pictures in the book and re-telling stories in their own words. They build on their existing knowledge and learn new skills because practitioners have a good knowledge of child development and plan a wide range of activities and experiences pitched at their individual level. Consequently, children's interest is sustained, they are highly motivated and eager to learn and fully involved in all aspects of the session.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children develop exceptional levels of independence and this is significantly enhanced through the presentation of the wonderful and vibrant learning environment and the daily routine. They have independent access to the full range of equipment and resources and make their own decisions about their learning. Consequently, they concentrate well, show good initiative and persevere with self chosen tasks. Children display wonderful independence choosing when to have their snack. They wash their hands and select the food they want placing it on individual plates. Children pour their own drinks and wash their plates and cups up when they have finished eating. They develop a very good understanding of space recognising when there is not enough room for them to sit down, and happily go off to play with something else until a space becomes available. Children are extremely kind towards one another and understand the importance of sharing. They decide to each break off a piece from their dough, when another child asks to join in their play, and this enables all children to have some. Children fetch sand timers, which they use to take turns on the computer and are extremely confident in accessing a wide range of educational programmes independently.

Children confidently handle a range of tools and equipment, including knives, scissors and cutters. They laugh with their peers as they make wiggly worms from dough and use excellent mathematical language comparing the length and width of their models. Children count the number of worms they make and recognise they have an extra worm, when one breaks in half. They solve their own problems, for example when connecting pieces of construction equipment together, and giggle with their peers building robots with three legs. Children have wonderful opportunities to develop their curiosity and investigative skills using magnifying glasses to examine and compare patterns on shells and leaves. They examine different mini-beasts and wander around the environment exploring with binoculars. Practitioners plan an exceptional range of activities and experiences, which enhance children's learning. For example, children investigate how things change through cookery and planting seeds. They learn how to take care of flowers and vegetables and explore seeds from a range of different fruits. Children use their senses to compare taste, smell and texture and compare how some vegetables grow under the ground whilst others grow on top.

Children examine different life cycles and practitioners use familiar stories and props to help increase their understanding. They talk about different animals, where they live and how to take care of them and enjoy bringing pets from home into pre-school to show their peers. Children's understanding of night and day is explored and they learn about animals that hibernate. Some opportunities are provided for children's learning to be supported in the outside environment, such as looking at shapes and buildings when going for walks. Children benefit from daily opportunities to play outside in the playground and their physical skills are exceptionally well developed as they learn to use a range of large and small apparatus.

Children's early reading and writing skills are extremely well promoted. Children help themselves to an extensive range of writing tools and equipment and enjoy writing letters and posting these to their friends and families. They fetch notepads and pencils to make shopping lists and many children confidently write some recognisable letters. Children's understanding of sounds and letters is promoted through discussions and they recognise the initial sounds in their name. Many children suggest other words beginning with the same sound and all children attempt to label their own work. They have wonderful opportunities to share stories, using a range of puppets, story sacks and props, and learn to use non fiction books to help support their learning.

Children relish in opportunities to explore creativity and express their imagination. They independently access brushes, rollers and stamps to explore paint and practitioners introduce a range of different techniques. For example, children print with vegetables, mix their own coloured paints and use marbles and straws to make different patterns. They help themselves to a range of textures and materials, which they use to make collages, and explore a range of media, including water, sand, pasta and cornflakes. Children use very good vocabulary to describe how things feel and look and enjoy experimenting watching how things change, such as sand when water is added. Their imagination is extremely well promoted and practitioners are highly effective in helping them to extend their ideas through play. For example, children dress up and pretend to be doctors and practitioners show them how to use the instruments explaining what job they do and how to use them. Children imitate this and pretend to give injections to their peers. They show excellent imagination when playing with cars and trucks as they line them all up pretending they are stuck. Children talk about why there is such a huge traffic jam suggesting that a lorry has broken down. They describe what is going to happen and pretend a tow truck is going to come and rescue the lorry. This promotes much discussion and excitement and children recall their own experiences of when their parent's car broke down and they had to be rescued by the RAC.

Children laugh and giggle with practitioners as they try on different types of hats and talk about how some are too big. They have a wonderful time acting out a rainstorm exploring sound patterns using their hands and feet. Children's learning is significantly enhanced because practitioners make exceptional use of every situation to talk to them and help promote their learning. For example, practitioners talk to children about the different things they are gluing onto their paper. This encourages children to describe the texture of the acorn, pasta and twigs and they talk about how the pasta changes when it is cooked and ready for them to eat. Practitioners show children how to trace the leaves they have collected outside and they examine the different patterns on the leaves showing great excitement when they notice a tiny creature.

Children's progress is really enhanced because teaching is rooted in an expert knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and practitioners recognise how children learn most effectively. High priority is placed on individual learning through self chosen play, although children also benefit from opportunities to work and play in large and small groups. These activities are tailored to meet the individual needs of the children in each group and practitioners adapt their teaching techniques and questioning to ensure effective support and sufficient challenges are provided. Systems to plan the educational programme are extremely secure and ensure that all aspects are sufficiently included. Procedures to continually monitor and assess children's individual progress towards the early learning goals are robust, and assessment takes place through a variety of ways. Practitioners talk confidently about children's next steps for development, although these are currently not formally identified, which impacts on their ability to share this information with parents. They update children's assessment records regularly and use this information to help plan for the following week. Consequently, activities are pitched at the appropriate level and children develop at their own rate.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children really learn to value themselves and their peers and recognise the differences and similarities between themselves and others. For example, they notice that some children have freckles whilst others do not. This promotes much discussion about other features and children talk about why some people wear glasses and hearing aids. They discuss their family units, bringing photographs in from home, and talk about who lives in their house. Children's understanding of diversity is exceptionally well promoted through everyday discussions with practitioners, use of stories and access to a wide range of play resources reflecting positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. Children discuss how they celebrate their own birthdays and other special events. For example, they make bonnets and cakes, hunt for eggs and participate in a parade as part of their Easter celebrations. They listen to stories about traditions and customs and engage in practical experiences finding out how and why some people celebrate a range of cultural festivals. Children make a Chinese dragon, dance to Chinese music and enjoy a tea party eating prawn crackers and noodles as they learn about Chinese New Year.

Children talk about their own experiences of travelling to different countries and places they have visited and use the globe and books to help share these experiences with their peers. They go for walks in their local area and increase their understanding of how to take care of their environment through recycling and collecting ink cartridges. Children participate in fund raising events, such as sponsored toddles, to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves and show a very caring attitude towards their peers. Practitioners are extremely effective in helping children to express their feelings, which has a positive impact on the relationships they build within the group. Older children help younger ones to put on their coats and children

share and take turns negotiating how best to do this by themselves. They show exceptionally high levels of self assurance and confidence and enjoy taking on roles developing a strong sense of belonging. Children's behaviour is extremely good. Practitioners are highly effective in the way in which they help children understand the effects of unwanted behaviour, through the use of photographs and discussion around the pre-school rules. Consequently, children have an exceptionally good understanding of what is right and wrong, and learn to value themselves, and other children, praising them for their individual achievements. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children flourish because they are exceptionally well supported by qualified practitioners who have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their individual needs and home and family circumstances. They are cared for in a fully inclusive environment where each child is treated and valued as an individual. Children benefit enormously because extremely strong links are in place between home and the pre-school and practitioners and parents build positive informal relationships. Parents are invited to be involved with the group through a variety of ways and receive detailed information through a prospectus, parent pack and regular newsletters. Flexible settling in and registration procedures help ensure practitioners have an excellent knowledge about each individual child, which impacts on the relationships they build. The implementation of a successful key worker system really helps to develop children's sense of security and belonging. Parents are invited to share ideas and suggestions about the pre-school formally and informally, and are welcomed into the group at any time to share their skills or just spend time playing alongside their child. They have access to all pre-school policies and procedures, although systems to share information with parents about complaints have not yet been fully introduced.

The partnerships with parents of children who receive nursery education are good. Parents are encouraged to support their child's reading skills and enjoyment of books through borrowing story sacks to share at home with their child. They are welcome to discuss their child's individual achievements and progress at any time with their child's key worker and the pre-school have now introduced 'bring your parent to pre-school' days, which occur every half term. These provides opportunities for parents to view their child's portfolio and discuss their individual progress with their key worker. Parents are actively encouraged to share what they know about their child, valuing the role they play as early educators. They are well informed about what their child is involved in on a daily basis, for example through regular newsletters, and planning is displayed on the notice board. However, opportunities for parents to be fully informed about the Foundation Stage Curriculum and how their child learns through play are not yet fully developed. Daily informal feedback occurs relating to special progress children have made, although systems to share information about their next steps for development, and how parents can help support this at home, have not yet been fully introduced.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit greatly because management and practitioners share the same vision and strive towards achieving this. They communicate exceptionally well, through formal weekly meetings, and informal daily discussions, to ensure sessions run smoothly and each have clear roles and responsibilities within the group. The deployment of practitioners is highly effective, and the wonderful use of time, space and resources really enhances children's learning. Excellent communication takes place between the committee and practitioners, formally and informally, which helps to ensure the operational plan is fully implemented. Consequently, the pre-school

is exceptionally well organised and the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Robust and rigorous systems are in place to recruit, appoint and induct new practitioners, students and volunteers and systems to ensure the ongoing suitability of those working in the setting are implemented. Children's health, safety and well-being is exceptionally well promoted because practitioners have an expert knowledge of the policies and procedures and implement these to a consistently high standard across the setting. Secure procedures are in place to monitor and review practice, records and all written policies. All documentation, required in regulations is in place, and this is accurately maintained to include the relevant detail, with a minor weakness in the written complaints procedure. Accurate records are maintained relating to who is on the premises at all times and children are never left unsupervised with anyone who has not been vetted.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The system for planning and assessment is extremely secure and high priority is placed on continually monitoring teaching, the educational programme and the impact this has on children's learning. All practitioners are involved in the overall planning and each key worker updates their child's assessment records weekly, which helps them to tailor their teaching and plan accordingly. Annual appraisals are implemented, which include an element of self-appraisal, and practitioners work with management to identify their own training needs. High priority is placed on training and practitioners are extremely well supported in attending a wide range of training opportunities, which ultimately impacts on their practice and the way in which they promote successful outcomes for children. Management clearly recognise the strengths within the group and continually monitor and evaluate every aspect of the provision to identify areas for improvement. Children's learning is significantly enhanced because all practitioners have an expert knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and recognise how young children learn most effectively. They plan and implement a varied and exciting educational programme, where every child is able to consolidate their learning and develop new skills and knowledge. Overall, children thrive and have a really wonderful experience during the time they spend in the pre-school. They are cared for by dedicated and inspirational practitioners who clearly enjoy their role and recognise and value every child as an individual. Their expertise, the wonderfully vibrant and stimulating learning environment, and the structure of the routine really enables every child to achieve their individual potential in a safe and nurturing environment.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group were asked to ensure all relevant documentation and records contain sufficient detail and are kept as required. This has now been reviewed and improvements made to the recording of children's attendance and medication records to include the required detail. Contact details for Ofsted are displayed on the notice board as requested.

At the last education inspection the group were asked to build on experiences for children to develop their imagination through role play and provide more opportunities for them to make choices, particularly in creative development. They were also asked to provide regular fun opportunities for children to hear, say and link sounds to letters and rhyme and ensure that the presentation of the book area is inviting and encourages children to enjoy, value and care for books.

Increased opportunities have been provided for children to engage in role-play in a variety of different settings and to extend their own ideas supported by practitioners. The art and craft

area has been re-organised, providing a wide range of open shelving units. This allows children independent access to the full range of media and materials and enables them to explore their own ideas through creativity. Practitioners have increased their understanding of how to introduce sounds and letters to children through training opportunities and now use a wide range of fun and exciting teaching methods to support children's development in this area. For example, they use puppets, objects and games to increase children's awareness of sounds and rhyme. The book area has been developed to include new furniture and low level bookcases, which makes it much more inviting. In addition, the deployment of practitioners is extremely effective and supports children as they learn to be responsible when handling books.

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 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

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 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 complaints procedure to ensure it reflects current practice and share information with parents about the requirement to keep a complaints log

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):

- increase opportunities for parents to be informed about the Foundation Stage Curriculum and how their child learns through play, the next steps in their child's individual learning and how they can support this at home
- continue to explore how to increase opportunities for children to extend their learning in the outside environment

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