

Milford Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206820
Inspection date	11 January 2008
Inspector	Sharon Dickinson
Setting Address	Milford Primary School, Chevin Road, Milford, Derbyshire, DE56 0QH
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Registered person	Milford 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Milford Pre-School opened in 1974 and operates from rooms at Milford Primary School in Milford, Derbyshire. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 and from 13.00 to 15.30 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, term time only. An optional lunch and play session operates from 12.00 to 12.45 and is available to children attending the morning session. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 30 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs six staff. Five of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications to Level 3 or 4. One staff member is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted in the setting as very effective hygiene procedures are implemented by staff. They wear disposable aprons and gloves when handling food or changing nappies to minimise cross contamination. Staff attend food hygiene training and follow recommended food safety guidelines. Children begin to learn about good hygiene through consistent daily routines such as hand washing after using the toilet and before meals. Sinks are at child height and liquid soap, paper towels and tissues are available to enable children to undertake personal hygiene routines independently. The risk of infection is effectively minimised and the good health of children maintained. Staff sensitively care for children who become ill at the setting, promptly contacting parents to collect their child reducing the risk of the spread of infection. Children receive appropriate care when they have an accident or become ill to maintain their good health. A number of staff hold current first aid certificates and a fully stocked first aid box is readily accessible at all times. Accidents are clearly recorded and shared with parents. A clear and thorough medication policy is in place. Appropriate parental consent is obtained prior to the administration of any medication and a detailed record is maintained. Ongoing health plans are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to meet children's individual needs. Children are able to rest and sleep should they require. Quiet areas are available for relaxation and parents of younger children attending the afternoon session are able to collect their child at a slightly earlier time if they feel their child would benefit from a shorter session.

Children are well nourished and their health and dietary needs are met because staff work well with parents. Children's dietary requirements are discussed with parents and clearly recorded. Relevant information is cascaded to the staff team via a food allergy list clearly displayed in the kitchen area. Packed lunches are appropriately stored in a separate refrigerator and are clearly labelled if they contain high risk foods such as nuts, to ensure they do not pose a risk to children with specific food allergies. Children learn about healthy eating through topics and discussion. Posters and children's art work displayed relate to the importance of eating five fruit and vegetable portions a day. A menu, containing a good variety of nutritious snacks, is clearly displayed for parents' perusal. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions. Staff sit with children and provide positive role models by eating and enjoying the same snack options. Fresh drinking water is readily available to children at all times. A small jug of water and beakers are provided on a child-sized table near to the hand basins, providing a visual reminder to children throughout the session. A choice of water, milk or juice is always offered at mealtimes.

Children enjoy daily opportunities to be active and have physical exercise both indoors and outdoors which promotes development of their physical skills. Very good use is made of the inviting outdoor play area which is used solely by the pre-school children. A wide variety of fun and stimulating activities and resources are provided which effectively promote all areas of learning and development. For example, Children enjoy using the large variety wheeled toys, climbing equipment and play imaginatively in the playhouse and sand tray. They freely and confidently access play activities and resources both indoors and outside for the majority of the session. Local trips are undertaken, for example, to the library bus, town centre and local fire station. Larger outings such as trips to the zoo or farm are planned during the summer months and parents are requested to attend. Regular visitors and social activities are planned within the setting often in line with themes such as a visit from the ambulance service or a teddy bears picnic which parents also attended.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from a warm and very welcoming environment which helps them to feel secure and comfortable. Staff work exceptionally hard to ensure that the environment, which is not purpose-built and has limited space, is vibrant and stimulating. Walls are covered in themed displays, children's art work, posters and colourful murals. Low-level furniture is very well organised effectively promoting children's independence as they freely choose activities and resources. The organisation of playrooms is carefully considered by staff and areas are used flexibly to ensure maximum use, for example, plans are in place to move the computer desk to the rear, quieter playroom to minimise disruption to children's concentration. Children use an extensive and versatile range of toys and equipment which is safe and suitable. They are involved in the process of choosing new resources as they browse catalogues and indicate their preferred play materials to staff. Many tools and resources are duplicated successfully catering for various ages and abilities, for example, chunky, medium and thin paint brushes are provided. Ample and very well organised storage areas ensure the full range of toys and equipment is imaginatively used to create a fun and inspiring environment.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised very effectively because staff are extremely vigilant and thoroughly risk assess the whole environment on a daily basis to reduce potential hazards. Staff have an excellent understanding of creating a balance between encouraging children's freedom and setting limits to maintain their safety and the children are fully engaged in this so that they know how to keep themselves safe. For example, during woodwork sessions children hammer golf tees into pumpkins and screw screws into cardboard as this is achievable and more suited to their ability. Whilst playing outdoors older children check the balancing beam is steady and safe to use after it had been repositioned. They build an awareness of road safety whilst playing outside on the painted road surface, stopping at the zebra crossing and wooden traffic lights. Children's safety is very well promoted in the event of an emergency. Regular evacuation procedures are practised along with the school. Staff attend fire safety training and fire detection and control equipment is routinely checked to ensure it is maintained in good working order.

Children are further safeguarded because staff clearly understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Staff attend child protection training and have a very good awareness of the types and indicators of abuse. The comprehensive child protection policy has been updated in line with local safeguarding children's board guidelines and staff have reviewed procedures during recent in-house training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy and settled. They thoroughly enjoy their time in the group which is demonstrated by their eagerness to attend and the way they become engrossed in the wide range of exciting activities provided. Children relate well to others and positively respond to adults who are interested in what they do and say. Staff skilfully use open-ended questions to actively seek children's views and opinions in everything they do. From simple choices at snack time to changing the direction of play when children decide to 'fix' the balancing beam using large plastic tools. Children are extremely confident and self assured and happy to express their ideas and opinions. For example, an older child instructs a member of staff to use the measuring tape to measure an object whilst he nips off to play in another room. On his return he delighted in counting how many centimetres a number flashcard and the table measured. Children are

involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and learning. For example, after finding a hedgehog in the playground staff successfully utilised the opportunity to develop children's awareness of habitats and care of living things by contacting The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) to find out how to best care for the creature. Children are encouraged to make decisions, explore and investigate. For example, younger children are given time and freedom to appropriately explore the texture of paint and glue on their hands during craft sessions. Staff are totally at ease with national guidance such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and use it effectively to plan and provide innovative activities for children. There is a clear differentiation between the level of activities for older and younger children. For example, older children create 3D penguin models using cardboard tubes whilst younger children use chunky paint brushes to paint a large penguin outline and stick on wings. Careful planning allows for a general theme to be incorporated into play opportunities. Whilst the established role of the key worker ensures individual children's needs continue to be the highest priority helping children to take the next steps in their learning and development through activities in line with their interests and at a pace to suit their needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children flourish and are making excellent progress because the staff plan an exciting range of activities which are stimulating and fun. The environment is visually appealing with lots of children's work displayed and is rich with resources. All staff are involved in planning activities and these are clearly linked to the stepping stones in the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. The curriculum is delivered through a child-led approach and this highly motivates the children. Staff provide the framework for the children's learning with themselves being key resources. They ensure each child gets as much as possible out of every activity through the use of a variety of purposeful teaching methods such as prompting, questioning and suggesting. A strong emphasis is put on child consultation within the group. Their views and ideas are actively sought, valued and implemented. For example, they suggest ideas for displays and indicate preferences for new equipment and resources. Planning is evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the activities in meeting intended learning aims. Children's progress is very closely monitored with observations being completed on an ongoing basis. These are systematically used in assessment, along with parents' input, which then clearly indicates the next steps for individual children and the planning needed to achieve these. Staff are very perceptive of children's needs and are very aware of the different rates at which they learn. The routine of each session allows children as much time as they need to spend on activities of their choice so that they can fully explore and investigate them. Children's learning is significantly enhanced through being able to freely access the both the indoor and outdoor environment for much of the time they spend in the group.

Children are extremely independent and supportive of each other and adults. They easily access resources for themselves freely because they know where things are kept and the areas where different activities are carried out. They display high levels of concentration often staying on-task for lengthy periods. Strong relationships are forged and children are secure in the knowledge that staff will be readily available to provide support and encouragement at all times. Children demonstrate an awareness of boundaries and behavioural expectations as they happily share resources, for example they stand in line for their turn on the climbing equipment. Children clearly and confidently express their needs and ideas within the group. Staff's consistent use of open-ended questioning further develops children's thinking and communication skills. Children use a narrative to describe their actions during imaginative play and are beginning to

play cooperatively with their peers to recreate roles and experiences. Children have excellent opportunities for mark-making and to develop early writing skills. The writing area enables children to use a variety of media including pencils, envelopes, rulers and hole-punchers. They develop pencil control through practical activities such as tracing patterns and letters in sand. Children frequently extend mark-making opportunities into other areas of learning, for example, they write in meaningful situations such as making lists and taking food orders in the role play area. Children begin to form recognisable letters as they trace their name and label their art work. They link sounds to letters as they find objects beginning with a particular letter and develop an understanding of rhyme through poetry linked to themes. Children listen attentively to familiar stories and songs on compact disc, joining in with enthusiasm. They freely access a wide selection of fiction and information books and other media such as comics, magazines and catalogues.

Practical activities are used to develop children's awareness of simple number operations, such as matching and counting plates and cups during tea parties within the role play area. Children use an extensive range of equipment and resources to consolidate mathematical concepts. They use scales, tils and tape measures and learn that numbers are displayed in numerous ways such as on telephones and price lists. They organise themselves in a line starting with the tallest child to the smallest and estimate how many ruler lengths they measure. Children regularly count on and back when singing songs such as 'Five little monkeys' and hold up corresponding fingers. They create patterns using peg boards and threading beads and when drawing rangoli patterns on their handprints during Diwali celebrations. Topic themes ensure that children learn about themselves, other people and their environment. For example, they bring in photographs of themselves as a baby and listen to sounds whilst on a local walk. Children are keenly attracted to technology and freely access the computers that are available throughout the session, printing out pictures of favourite television characters from a popular website. They work together experimenting with a variety of materials to make slopes and pulleys. Through an innovative range of practical activities and first hand experiences they develop an understanding of the world around them. For example, they make pinhole cameras, propagators and windmills and experiment by melting ice cubes using salt. Children have a wealth of opportunity to design and construct using an extensive range of construction toys. They discuss and observe safety rules during woodwork sessions which are closely supervised and adapted to suit all abilities.

Children move extremely confidently with control and coordination. They negotiate obstacles well and use a range of small and large equipment to great effect. Activities are adapted to allow children to participate at a level they are comfortable with. Staff support less confident children, holding their hand, as they climb apparatus and move in different ways across the balancing beam. As their confidence grows staff encourage children to try new ways of moving and some children even jump off the end of the frame landing safely on the mats provided. Children express the need to wear gloves and a coat outdoors because it is cold and feel their heartbeat after exercise helping them to understand the effects of activity on their body. Children enjoy role play enormously and experiment freely with all sorts of art and craft materials resulting in creations that express the individuality of each child. They use recyclable cardboard boxes to make machines, castles and different modes of transport. Children regularly listen to music, use musical instruments and join in singing sessions. They join in movement sessions with bells and ribbons and enjoy dancing to favourite songs on the computer expressing delight as a staff member joins in.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are fostered. All children are welcomed and play a full part in the group because staff value and respect their individuality and family backgrounds. Children's confidence and self-esteem is extremely high and staff are committed to ensuring that they feel a strong sense of belonging. This is achieved mainly through being listened to and heard effectively and also because photographs of the children taking part in all sorts of activities are prominently displayed in an album with explanatory captions for parents perusal. Children benefit from a very good range of resources and meaningful activities which help them value diversity. They learn about the wider world through planned activities which fully capture their imagination such as cooking Indian sweets, eating snack under the glow of fairy lights at Diwali and exploring and using a full-size wheelchair within the setting. Positive images are portrayed throughout the setting and a wealth of books and resources are available to develop children's awareness of diversity through play. For example, Italian cooking sets are used within the role play area and small world figures depict a variety of disabilities. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well cared for and are given excellent levels of support whilst at the setting. Staff proactively work alongside parents and other agencies to ensure they are fully aware of and are able to meet children's individual needs. They attend a variety of training events such as courses in Makaton, autism and deaf awareness to ensure children with additional needs are fully included within the life of the setting and are given as much independence and support as needed to reach their full potential.

Children's behaviour is excellent due to the clear boundaries and positive role models set by the staff. Good behaviour is recognised through consistent praise raising children's self-esteem. Through discussion children begin to learn techniques for negotiating with others and taking responsibility for their own behaviour. They work harmoniously with others happily sharing toys and taking turns, however, the occasional conflict is soon resolved by staff using a two-minute timer which the children respond well to. Staff sensitively support younger children become aware of expectations through prompt intervention of unwanted behaviour. For example, a key worker kneels at child-height, makes eye contact and clearly explains the reasons why we mustn't throw sand as it may get in somebody's eyes. She continues to play in the sand offering praise to the child for ceasing to throw it, providing a good role model and distraction to a more worthwhile activity with the sand.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff have a dynamic relationship with parents which greatly enhances all aspects of children's care and learning. Parents receive very good quality information about the provision, particularly the educational programme. Planning is prominently displayed and information is posted in each area of the setting clearly outlining to parents what their child is learning from that specific play opportunity. Parents are fully informed about children's progress and achievements. Information is exchanged verbally and through diary's kept in children's 'personal' pot enabling staff and parents to pass on messages relating to planned topics and children's achievements. Key workers produce termly written reports on children's progress towards the early learning goals which include achievable next steps in their learning. Parents are invited to attend annual consultations to discuss their child's development and view a selection of activities and experiences provided at the pre-school. Parents views are actively sought and they are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways. For example, by bringing in photographs and artefacts from when their child was a baby. Staff suggest ideas how to extend children's learning at home in practical ways such as sorting washing or spotting numerals whilst out shopping.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the very high standards and good organisation which enhances all aspects of their care. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for by staff with good knowledge and understanding of child development. New staff follow a thorough induction procedure and all staff are supported through regular appraisal. The well qualified staff team work collaboratively and show a strong commitment to continual professional development. They regularly attend external and in-house training events which supports the care and learning of all children. The use of available space is continually monitored and adjusted to the needs of the children attending at the time. Both indoor and outdoor space is used very well to maximise children's play and learning experiences. This is achieved through staff being effectively deployed and working as a strong team.

Comprehensive and clearly written policies and procedures are in place which are individual to the setting. They have a positive impact on children's safety and well-being and fully support the expert practice of the staff team. All documentation is regularly reviewed and updated is shared with parents to keep them well informed about the service. Required records are in place and well organised, however, the daily record of attendance is not consistently accurately maintained putting children's safety at risk in the event of an emergency. Documentation is stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. Management have a clear vision for the nursery education with a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children. Robust systems are in place to effectively monitor and evaluate the curriculum to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Actions plans are produced to further enhance learning opportunities for children. For example, staff are currently seeking funding to erect exploration and imagination sheds in the outdoor play area. They review practice with the support of their local authority advisor and have also achieved the Pre-School Learning Alliance quality accreditation award Aiming for Quality. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group was required to make sure the water pipes in the middle room are inaccessible to children. These have now been boxed in and no longer pose a risk to children's safety. They were also required to develop the children's register to ensure an accurate record is maintained of children's attendance. The register now clearly indicates usual times of arrival for both staff and children. However, times of children leaving the setting mid-session are not promptly recorded, therefore compromising children's safety in the event of an emergency.

At the last nursery education inspection the group was required to ensure children's access to programmable resources is consistent. Frequent opportunities are now provided for children to access a wide variety of everyday technology and programmable resources such as 'bee-bot' and a remote control duck who proves very popular with the children. They were also required to provide children with more opportunities to create their own ideas and interpretation of themed crafts. Children are now given time and freedom to express their own ideas and create their own unique representations during craft activities. They are encouraged to freely access a wide variety of craft and mark-making media to produce their own creations which are highly valued by staff. The group was also required to record changes on the planning when activities

are substituted to show what children are learning. Staff now record any changes or spontaneous play opportunities in their notebooks and weekly plans are reviewed by the staff team during weekly planning meetings and their evaluations are clearly recorded and retained in planning records.

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

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 outstanding.

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 the daily record of attendance is accurate and up to date.

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