

Simon De Senlis Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 219888 |
| Inspection date | 13 February 2008 |
| Inspector | Mark Evans |
| Setting Address | Simon de Senlis Primary School, Hilldrop Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN4 0PH |
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| Registered person | The Trustees of Milton Malsor Playgroup |
| 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Simon De Senlis Pre-school has been established since 1970 and is a committee run group. It operates from a mobile classroom situated on the school playing fields. The pre-school mainly serves the local area. The setting is open term time only, Monday to Friday, between 09.00 and 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00, with an optional lunch club from 11.30 to 12.30. Children have use of a large group room for their accommodation; other facilities include an entrance lobby, kitchen and toileting area. There is an enclosed outdoor area for children's physical play and activities.

There are currently 58 children on roll. This includes 47 three- and four-year-olds who are in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

A total of eight staff are employed to work with the children. One has an appropriate early years qualification to NVQ Level 3, four have a Level 2 qualification, of whom, three are working

towards a Level 3. The setting receives support from a local authority advisory teacher and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The premises are kept in good hygienic order, which helps to reduce risk of cross-contamination and keep children healthy. Children develop awareness of the reasons for personal hygiene because staff discuss this with them during routines and through group activities. For example, by explaining the reasons for washing hands after toileting and themes that include the importance of healthy eating and the need for sleep and exercise. Children's health is maintained through having well-organised arrangements for medication that needs to be administered and through liaison with relevant health professionals to support children with any particular health needs. Most staff have current paediatric first aid certificates and accidents are recorded and monitored. As a consequence, children's good health is sustained. Clear arrangements with parents for children who are ill or infectious are in place and this ensures that they are cared for appropriately and the risk of cross-infection reduced.

Children have good dietary health because the setting provides a healthy range of foods, including savoury items, such as soup, pasta and cheese, and fresh fruit, for example, apples and raisins. Children develop awareness and interest in various tastes and textures, for example, by having rice and noodles for the Chinese New Year. This encourages familiarity with a variety of foods and promotes good dietary health. Any dietary requirements are recorded and staff made aware so that the foods and meals provided meet with children's needs and maintain their health. Children have access to drinking water at all times, being able to serve themselves from a water jug in the room; they also routinely have drinks at snack and lunch times. This keeps them well hydrated and comfortable and supports their active play and learning.

Children have regular outdoor play and benefit from the fresh air and exercise. They develop large physical movement and skills by engaging in a variety of outdoor activities. For example, children enthusiastically use large climbing apparatus and other resources to climb, slide and go through and they take care to balance as they walk along the top of narrow wooden blocks that are set into the ground. Children experience planned activities that provide them with challenge and encourage them to try different ways of moving, for example, movement to music. They negotiate each other's space when walking, running and using large apparatus, displaying good spatial awareness. Children gain good awareness of health and bodily awareness through themes that support being healthy, such as the need for sleep and personal hygiene.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into a setting, which has premises that are very well presented and maintained. There are informative displays and documents in the entrance area for parents and attractive displays of children's artwork and other pictorial images, such as a welcome poster in various languages, which help to make the environment feel warm and welcoming. Children's safety and comfort is supported by a suitable range of child-sized furniture and play equipment that are kept in sound order. The setting uses policies and procedures to keep children safe. For example, they supervise children at all times, visitors are vetted prior to entry and risk assessments are completed to reduce risk in the premises. However, the risk assessments do

not provide sufficient detail for safe and secure use of the outdoor play areas and this potentially compromises children's safety.

Children have developing awareness of keeping safe because staff talk to them about safe conduct in group discussion, such as the need to walk when helping to tidy up activities to keep the room in an organised, safe order, and through involvement in fire evacuation practices. The setting has written child protection procedures and contact details for relevant local agencies and staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection issues and what to do if they have a concern. As a consequence, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show enthusiasm and enjoyment whilst they participate in a wide range of interesting activities at the pre-school. There are sound arrangements for settling young children into the setting and the system of allocating key staff to children helps them to form attachment, which enhances their sense of security and meets their emotional needs. This enables children to have the confidence to explore their environment and engage in activities that support their play, learning and development. Children benefit from shared information between parents and practitioners, which promotes continuity in their care arrangements.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used to identify learning experiences for younger children at the setting. However, the arrangements for observation and assessment are in accordance with the Foundation Stage, and this potentially causes inconsistencies in their planned learning. Staff have positive relationships with the children and know them well. Children benefit from this when engaged in their play, with staff supporting a sound balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Young children begin to play happily with each other and with adults and they enjoy using natural materials, such as sand and water, engaging in role play and mark-making. Children are generally well behaved; they understand adult expectation through discussion with staff and learn to share toys and equipment and take turns, for example, when washing up cups and plates after their snack.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage guidance, demonstrating awareness of the stepping stones and six areas of learning. They know their key children well and use this knowledge to promote children's learning within planned and child-initiated play, such as discussion about hospitals when in role play and encouraging children to see and copy patterns. Staff have responsibility for observation of key children and attend meetings where they contribute to planning so that they support children's learning. Some spontaneous observations are made of children, although these do not identify which areas of learning they link to, and as a communal record, they are not fully available for individual access and monitoring. Assessment is undertaken, however, these do not fully identify the range of stepping stones achieved by children as individuals and this limits their usefulness to inform planning. Planning identifies activities and learning intentions, however, the learning intentions are inconsistently set at effective levels to support challenge for children's next steps of learning. This is potentially detrimental to the full effectiveness of directive learning for children. Staff have informal meetings to discuss the organisation of the room and for deployment arrangements, making sound use of time and resources to support children's learning.

All staff work directly with the children and provide an environment that is organised to help them to be independent and make choices. There are a wide range of interesting activities, which offer children experiences and opportunities to play and learn, and as a consequence, they make sound progress overall. Children benefit from their discussion times with staff, some organised and some informal, for example, children are able to talk in small groups about items brought in from home and about events and matters of interest from home-life experiences. Children's behaviour is managed positively and they respond appropriately to adult requests.

Children busily engage in activities and show confidence in being without their main carer. They form positive relationships with adults and peers and express their feeling towards others, for example, "she's the best beautiful friend in the world". They interact cooperatively in small group activities where they talk about personal items and matters of interest. Children are developing very well with their independence demonstrating this when washing and drying hands, pouring their drinks, setting out tables to prepare for snack time and washing their plate and cup after using them.

Children use sound opportunities to make marks and write for purpose. For example, by using scribing materials at the writing table area to draw and form letters or chalking on the board which is positioned in the outdoor play area. They start to understand that print has meaning and recognise their own name, for example, they select their seating position at the table for snack time by recognising their name card. Children show interest in books and select them for enjoyment; they have awareness of how to use books, turning the pages left to right and following pictorial aspects of the story narrative. Children use language for thinking and communication, for example, during a group session the staff member asked children "What will happen if...?", to which the children gave thoughtful responses.

Children sing and 'act out' songs that include numbers and simple addition and subtraction; they use props to facilitate the process of taking away by one at a time. Younger children are developing ability to count with most numbers in the right order and others are able to count to ten and above. Children can match and judge space through use of resources such as puzzles. They have sound awareness of shapes and patterns, for example, a child used both thumbs and forefingers to make a triangle shape, which she named correctly, and another child observed patterns of colour with pegs and followed this with his own. Children use opportunities in routines activities, such as snack time, to use mathematics to solve problems, for example, calculating how many plates are needed and matching each plate to a seating position at the table.

Children learn about natural things and patterns of change, for example, by planting and growing flowers, vegetables and herbs for the sensory garden area. After planting seeds, they assist with watering to nurture and grow them. Children use available information technology, including a laptop computer, a tape player and role play items, such as a shop till and telephones. Children's learning for other aspects is supported by use of this equipment, for example, setting a scene for various types of weather using a computer programme. Children can construct and shape using various materials, for example, when using construction toys, collage pictures, selecting and joining household items and in using malleable materials such as play-dough. They have a developing awareness of the wider community through involvement in activities that celebrate cultural and religious festivals, for example, Hanukkah and the Chinese New year; they have a sense of place within their local community through outings and visits by local agencies such as the Fire Department.

Children enjoy various types of music and explore different sounds and ways to use instruments, such as to use them loudly or softly. They can select and investigate various materials to be creative, for example, making models and collages, using water and sand and shaping and moulding malleable materials, such as play-dough. Children use a variety of role play settings to develop their imagination and enact their life experiences, for example, they use props to facilitate the home environment or hospital play. Children respond to their senses in various ways, such as using 'feely bags' and describing the contents by touch.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The setting has staff who are very welcoming and friendly and they provide an inviting pre-school environment for children and their parents. Parents confirm their good relationships with staff; this encourages regular communications, informal and arranged, to share information and promote continuity of care for children. Children benefit from their parents being well informed through a variety of written documents, for example, a prospectus, written policies, newsletters and other displayed information. Written details for the complaints procedure help to encourage transparency for children's care and welfare.

Children are valued as individuals and inclusion for children is effectively supported by the setting. For example, children follow group activities to develop awareness of Makaton sign language. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities integrate extremely well and their developmental needs are met because the setting has excellent partnership with parents and relevant agencies. Commendable practice such as one-to-one staff support and effective consultation meetings where the child's progress and targets are reviewed ensure that children's individual needs are met. Children learn about other cultures, various lifestyles and the wider community through their involvement in themed activities, for example, having Chinese foods, making moon cakes and using dual language books for the Chinese New Year. They develop familiarity and awareness of others through access to a good range of play materials and pictorial images that promote diversity. For example, having positive disability play figures and cultural role play props.

Children develop awareness of suitable and appropriate behaviour because staff use occasions, such as circle time, to discuss this. For example, they remind children of the importance of walking whilst helping to tidy away activities and ask questions so that children can reason consequence of behaviour. Staff regularly praise children for their efforts and behaviour and as a consequence they become confident and demonstrate cooperative attitudes. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive written information from the setting and this includes details on the Foundation Stage. Newsletters and displays provide useful information on events, themes and current matters. Effective partnership with parents contributes to shared involvement in supporting children's educational needs, for example, parents regularly help their child to select items from home to take to the pre-school and share with others and they contribute to activity themes, such as those linked to cultural and religious aspects. Staff welcome informal contact with parents at each session where they share information on their child. Parents have opportunities to be involved in their child's assessments through periodic designated meetings; a portfolio file for each child shows samples of what children do and has information on assessment and records are kept to reflect parent's views and outcome of these meetings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised and is effective in the deployment of staff. There are high levels of staffing for each session and these aspects ensure that children have good levels of supervision and individual attention. As a consequence, children are secure and settled. Children benefit from the proactive approach towards staff undertaking professional qualifications and undertaking core training, such as courses for safeguarding children, paediatric first aid and food safety and hygiene. Adults working with children undergo vetting procedures. However, these are not fully rigorous and robust, which potentially compromises children's welfare.

The setting has written policies, which are very accessible to parents, and these detail policy that is designed to maintain children's well-being; they include procedures such as those for lost or uncollected children and health and safety. A well structured induction system ensures that any new staff or students are familiar with policy and procedural aspects for the safe and efficient management of the setting. Documentation is very well maintained and supports the sharing of information with parents to promote continuity and maintenance of children's welfare, for example, accident and medication details are clearly recorded and signed by parents.

Leadership and management are good. The manager of the pre-school has primary overview of the planning for the nursery education. There is strong liaison with the local authority advisory teacher; review of practice and action plans contribute to the continued development of provision for nursery education. Additionally, documentation for self-reflection demonstrates that pre-school management are very proactive in assessing the quality of provision and developing identified aspects, such as the move into new premises and development of defined activity areas and presentation; the setting continues to develop aspects of observation, assessment and planning. The pre-school has a committed, enthusiastic and well motivated team of staff. They attend regular meetings to discuss ongoing practice, events, children's development and planning. The pre-school management have set in place a staff appraisal system, which is an effective tool to review professional development and training. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the pre-school was required to ensure that the child protection statement includes contact names and telephone numbers for relevant local agencies and the procedures for allegations against a member of staff or volunteer and to include current details of the regulator, Ofsted, in the written complaints procedure. The setting has updated the child protection policy so that it includes contact details for relevant agencies and has written procedures for allegations against a member of staff or volunteer. These aspects help to improve procedural information and safeguard children's welfare. The complaints procedure has the current details for Ofsted and this helps to secure transparency for children's care and well-being.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was required to ensure that evaluation of activities relates to the learning intentions to help inform future planning; provide opportunities for children to learn about the benefits of being healthy and active; provide opportunities for older children to solve simple mathematical problems in everyday routines and organise more opportunities for children to make choices and develop independence. The pre-school has developed a system for key staff to evaluate children's achievements within activities and to use this information to help inform future planning. The planning includes themes and activities which have aspects of being healthy and bodily awareness, such as outdoor play, the need for

sleep and personal hygiene. Children's levels of independence are progressing well because the pre-school encourages them to develop self-help skills, for example, to pour drinks, help set out tables for snack time and to wash plates and cups after use. Children use mathematics to help problem solve within regular routine situations, for example, they work out how many plates are needed for the number of children to be at the table for snack time and count objects such as the number grapes they have.

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 have procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and to keep a record of complaints and their outcome.

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 satisfactory.

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):

- review risk assessment of the premises to include the outdoor play areas, including an action plan with timescales to identify actions to be taken to minimise identified risks
- develop further the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support observation and assessment of children under 3 years and use this to inform planning
- ensure that the system for vetting staff and those working on the premises are rigorous and robust to ensure their suitability to be in contact with children.

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):

- develop observations so that they are individual and clearly related to all areas of learning and ensure that assessment indicates all achievements related to the stepping stones to more effectively inform planning
- develop planning so that the learning intentions differentiate and accurately reflect children's next steps to ensure suitable challenge.

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