

# Threemilestone Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103078
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Janet Chauveau
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Elliott Hut, Threemilestone School, Polstain Road, Threemilestone, Truro, Cornwall, TR3 6DH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 274022
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<b>Registered person</b>	Threemilestone Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Threemilestone Pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents of children attending the setting. It opened in 1976 and operates from an Elliott hut sited within the grounds of Threemilestone School. It is situated in the village of Threemilestone, close to the city of Truro, Cornwall. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 until 11:30 and from 12:30 until 15:00 during term time only. All children share access to an enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 46 children from 2 to 4 years on roll. Of these, 38 children receive funding nursery education. Children generally come from the local area and surrounding villages. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs eight staff, all have appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is currently working towards an additional qualification. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from Family Services and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is supported by staff who follow good hygiene practices in order to keep the areas used by children clean. For example, they regularly clean toilets, wipe tables and sweep floors throughout the session. Good procedures are followed to sensitively support children following personal accidents and the administration of first aid is carried out in a sympathetic manner. Staff record accident information accurately and share it appropriately with parents to ensure the well-being of children. Staff hold first aid certificates, take note and act upon information about children's health and dietary needs. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene, for example, they fetch tissues to wipe runny noses. Staff encourage children to follow good hand washing practice after visiting the toilet and before eating snack, however, the cakes of soap provided at children's hand wash basins are not used effectively by children when washing their hands without adult supervision.

Children have opportunities in most weathers to spend some time in the fresh air. They have use of a small outside play area, and have access to the school's hard courts where they exercise running, jumping and stretching in a variety of ways. The outside areas are shared with others and, as such, lack visual interest for pre-school aged children. Access to physically challenging activities to help develop strength and large muscles are restricted to those set out by staff as part of the planned timetable and are not a daily feature at the group. Children competently use a variety of tools, for example, scissors, paintbrushes, chinks and construction sets to develop small muscle control.

Children have access to fresh drinking water, available throughout the session and bring their own drinks bottles to quench their thirst. They have healthy, nutritious snacks in sufficient quantities for their growing needs. The daily snack menu offers a healthy choice, for example, cheese, crackers, yoghurts and fresh fruit. Children learn about healthy eating by preparing their own snacks such as sandwiches and potato wedges. Children enjoy exploring and discussing vegetables and tasting foods from other cultures as part of their planned activities. They learn social skills as they serve each other food and drinks.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and internally well-presented playroom, decorated with colourful examples of children's work, which is housed in an old building on Threemilestone School's site. Staff and committee work hard to make the premises a safe and child friendly environment. Staff carefully organise the inside space to be exciting and stimulating. Children move freely and in safety between activities, with good opportunities to access toys and resources from child-height storage units and toy boxes. Children play with a good variety of well-presented activities on floor level and at tabletop.

Outdoors, children use the school's facilities and have access to their own small enclosed play area. There is some damaged fencing to the small play area. Security is difficult to maintain when children use the school playground as the perimeter is managed by the school and is not fully secure at all times. However, when outside staff use good levels of supervision to ensure children are kept safe and teach children clear safety procedures, such as keeping to designated areas of the playground only.

Children benefit from a comprehensive range of measures designed to keep them safe, for example, external doors are fully secured and all access to the premises is carefully monitored and vetted by senior staff. All staff are vigilant in following the pre-school's safety procedures and carry out regular safety checks, as a result, risks to children are minimised. Children learn about personal safety by taking part in regular fire drills and through group discussions, for example, discussing steam and talking about keeping safe when standing close to kettles and hot appliances.

Children are protected from possible abuse or neglect. A designated co-manager co-ordinates child protection issues, she has a satisfactory understanding of the procedures to follow and is booked to attend local authority child protection refresher training. All staff are made aware of what to do if they have concerns about a child. The child protection procedure and incident record keeping systems are designed to keep children safe from harm. The pre-school has access to government guidance on reporting child protection concerns.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school. They spend their time purposefully. They concentrate well at their chosen activities and tidy away after themselves. They are developing independence as they choose between a variety of resources that are stimulating and developmentally appropriate. Children benefit from warm relationships with staff who are very interested in children, offering lots of praise and encouragement throughout the session. Children play very well together; they learn to be considerate and thoughtful of others. They dig in sand, manipulate dough, play with small world toys and construction sets, and act out scenarios from their home life experiences. Children of all ages take great delight in the large group activities where they join in with action rhymes and songs, moving their bodies and musical instruments rhythmically, and listening with pleasure to stories. Children are learning to help out in the group, for example, by tidying away mid-morning, and are encouraged and rewarded by staff for their efforts. Planning is designed to meet the needs of all ages by incorporating the Birth to three matters guidance with the Foundation stage curriculum.

#### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of children's teaching and learning is good. Children are well behaved; they follow instructions with confidence and know the pre-school routines well. They participate with enthusiasm in large group work, such as circle and registration time and show good levels of concentration when playing independently. Children are confident to initiate their own play; they work well together in small groups, in the role-play area, at the computer or in the sand play. Staff support children in developing self-care skills, for example, when visiting the toilet, washing their hands or putting on their coats.

Children can recognise their own name, finding name cards at self-registration and at snack time and children that are more able can recognise the names of other children. Staff are introducing initial letter sounds during group activities incorporating the 'Jolly Phonics' programme. Children enjoy many opportunities to develop mark-making skills, for example, using chalks and boards and when attempting to write Chinese characters. Staff value attempts at emergent writing. Children are introduced to the concept of number through group activities. All children can count and recognise numerals up to 10; many can predict the next number in a sequence.

Daily routines develop children's awareness of time and place as they discuss the days of the week and the weather. Children develop an interest in technology operating electronic toys and are competent computer users, completing simple programmes with skill. They construct and modify their own designs using construction sets and recycled materials. Children investigate natural materials, for example shredding and smelling a variety of vegetables. They begin to appreciate their own culture and the cultural traditions of others through planned activities, such as the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Children develop their imaginations, acting out scenarios in the role-play area, using a variety of delightful dressing up clothes and props and by playing with small world toys, such as cars and dolls houses. They use a variety of media to explore colour and textures, for example making coolie hats and vegetable collages. They enjoy singing songs and playing musical instruments, for example, marching to the song 'I am the music man' to explore sound and rhythm.

Children achieve well due to the staff's good understanding and use of the early years guidance, the Foundation Stage curriculum, to plan a very effective environment for care and learning. All children arrive happy and eager to participate. The managers have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and provide a wide range of activities and experiences to cover all areas of children's learning. Planning is clear and links to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff observe and assess children's progress using suitable systems. Developmental records show that children are making good progress and achieve well but records are not used to plan the next steps in children's learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are developing secure relationships with staff and each other. Individual key workers are designated to provide individual support for children and staff show kindness and concern to all. Children have access to a range of resources and a good variety of planned activities to learn about their local community and the wider world. For example, lots of visitors come to the group, the local doctor, fire fighters and paramedic and there are very good links with Threemilestone Primary School, children visit to participate in events such as celebrating Harvest Festival. Children with additional needs are well supported at the group, and the special educational needs co-ordinator for the pre-school is experienced in liaising with outside agencies to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children are well behaved, they benefit from good levels of adult support and interaction. Staff act as appropriate role models; they model suitable codes of behaviour and show consideration to all children. Staff reward children with warmth and praise for their participation and help; significant achievements are celebrated verbally and with stickers. Children respond quickly to staff, happily follow simple instructions and enjoy working together, for example, helping to tidy up and serve each other at snack time. As a result, all children are developing self-esteem and confidence whilst attending the group. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive sufficient information about the pre-school's operation through a prospectus and information on the nursery education curriculum is available on the notice board. Registration forms enable parents to provide good information on their child and they give appropriate consents to enable staff to care for children safely. Staff have friendly relationships with parents and they provide informal feedback on children's progress. Parents views on the effectiveness of the group are obtained through questionnaires but are not sought on their child's abilities before receiving nursery education. Formal review

meetings are arranged to discuss children's developmental records. As staff are not setting progress targets for individual children parents cannot become closely involved in developing their child's learning at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are employed and managed by a committee of parents. At the time of inspection, the committee was in breach of regulations, by not informing Ofsted of changes to the persons in charge. This put children at risk because of Ofsted's inability to make the appropriate suitability checks. However, children's safety and well-being has been maintained. The staff had previously been employed at the group as assistant play leaders and the committee used satisfactory procedures to assess all staff's on-going suitability, including obtaining enhanced criminal records bureau checks. The operation and organisation of the pre-school is underpinned by a suitable set of policies and procedures, written to demonstrate how National Standards will be met.

The leadership and management within the pre-school is good. The pre-school leaders and their assistants use time and resources well to provide an effectively organised environment. The extensive range of activities, supported by good staff interaction, means that children are stimulated and engrossed throughout the session. All staff are well qualified and experienced. They regularly attend training events organised by the local authority to up date their skills and knowledge. Good links between Threemilestone Primary School and the pre-school helps to promote children's learning. The pre-school managers work well as a cohesive team. Supportive links with local authority support staff is helping to evaluate and improve the quality of the planned curriculum and outcomes for children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the group was asked to improve various operational procedures at the group, these included ensuring that all committee members underwent suitable vetting procedures and ensuring that all staff files were kept securely on site, both have now been addressed. Information for and consents from parents was asked to be improved in order that children could be looked after more effectively. This included updating procedures and making accessible operational policies to parents, including the child protection, complaints and administration of medication procedures. Policies and consents have now been updated and suitable systems are in place to share this information appropriately with parents.

Since the last nursery education inspection a new management structure is in place. Staff now work effectively as a team to provide a stimulating learning environment for children, which includes a constructive snack time and regular opportunities for children to recognise their own name and learn simple mathematical skills.

## **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):

- develop the outside play areas to provide a safe, challenging and stimulating learning environment for children, which will aid their physical development
- ensure that Ofsted is informed about any significant events that relate to the operation of the pre-school including changes to persons in charge

#### 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):

- continue to develop the planning and assessment cycle, ensuring that information on children's progress is used to identify their next steps in learning
- develop systems to involve parents in children's learning by seeking information from them about their child's capabilities before receiving funded nursery education. Continue to develop the systems for working together with parents in order that they are kept up to date with their children's progress and can become involved with their children's learning in meaningful ways.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)