

Kirkby Mallory Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226425
Inspection date	17 April 2008
Inspector	Alison Edwards
Setting Address	The Old School Room, Church Road, Kirkby Mallory, Leicestershire, LE9 7QE
Telephone number	01455 850848
E-mail	
Registered person	Kirkby Mallory Pre-School 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 satisfactory. 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?

Kirkby Mallory Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1998. It is a committee run organisation and serves the local community within the Hinckley and Bosworth district of Leicestershire. It is registered to offer sessional day care to a maximum of 25 children from two to five years. It provides nursery education to funded three and four-year-olds. There are currently 36 children on roll, including 27 children in receipt of funding for early education.

The pre-school opens on Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 during school terms with an optional lunch club running until 12:55 on some days. Children attend a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It operates from the single storey former village school. Children use the playroom and adjacent cloakroom facilities. Kitchen and storage facilities are accessible to staff. There is an enclosed outside area for outdoor play. There are five regular staff working with the children. Of these, two currently hold recognised qualifications at Level 3 and a third holds a recognised Level 2 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean, warm and suitably maintained premises, so helping to promote their well-being. Available space and resources are used well to promote children's independent self-care practices. For example, children independently wash their hands at low basins in the playroom after using substances such as compost or sand and readily use liquid soap and paper towels at the cloakroom basins after using the toilet and before eating. They independently use tissues from a box on a low work surface when needing to wipe their noses and know how to dispose of such items in a covered bin after use. Staff are clear on the practices used when changing younger children's nappies, for example using disposable gloves and cleaning the changing mat between uses, so helping to reduce risks of cross-infection. First aid supplies are readily accessible and a rolling programme of training ensures that several staff with current paediatric first aid qualifications are always present. Parental consent is sought to obtain medical treatment in the event of any emergency. These arrangements help to ensure that staff are able to act in children's best interests in the event of any accident or sudden illness.

Children make regular use of the outdoor play area for energetic activities in the fresh air. They enjoy steering wheeled toys and begin to show growing control in stopping and starting at pretend traffic lights. They use a variety of resources such as balance beams, parachute, slides, balls and hoops to exercise a variety of large movement skills. They become aware of the effects of different weather conditions as they wear their raincoats and boots when exploring puddles on a wet day, as they use streamers on a windy day and also as they independently use sun hats and empty sun cream bottles as part of indoor sea-side role play. Children across the age range show growing dexterity for example, as they experiment with manipulating items like an Indian noodle tube to make playdough 'spaghetti' or as an older child independently draws an outline round a favourite teddy bear and carefully uses wax crayons to create a face and striped trousers.

Children's records contain clear information about any specific health or dietary needs, so enabling staff to ensure these are met, for example when providing daily snacks. These regularly include a selection of items such as bread and butter and chopped fresh fruit, with a choice of milk or water to drink, so helping to contribute to a healthy, balanced diet. Children also have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session, so helping to ensure they take sufficient fluids. Children are introduced to some simple food production and preparation activities, such as planting herbs and vegetables and making biscuits and cakes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are very settled and relaxed in the welcoming and secure premises. Available space and resources are generally organised well to meet their needs. For example, easy access to cloakroom facilities enable children to safely develop growing independence in toileting, and they make ready use of their own labelled low drawers to store items such as outdoor shoes or any small items brought from home. The playroom areas are generally effectively 'zoned' to enable children to move freely and purposefully between a range of activities. For example, children readily use the rear 'quiet' area to look at books on a comfortable child-sized sofa, or to independently use mark making materials or computer programmes at low work surfaces. They readily find their own aprons and paper when independently painting at a low easel, and

sometimes independently fetch a brush and dustpan to clear up spilt playdough in the 'sensory' area. Many well captioned displays of photographs of the children's activities, or of their independent paintings and drawings, create an attractive and stimulating environment and show children that their play and creativity are valued.

Risks of children leaving the premises unsupervised or of unauthorised adults gaining access are minimised because arrival and departure times are carefully supervised and external doors are kept secured with a buzzer access system. Many sensible precautions are in place to help maintain children's safety. For example a hinged safety gate is used to manage access to the kitchen and slam protectors are used to ensure children are unable to trap themselves in the toilets. Staff show a sound awareness of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency such as a fire or a child going missing. Experiences such as visits by local fire or community police officers help children begin to gain an understanding of some aspects of safety, such as how to drop and crawl to keep low in the event of a fire, or ideas such as 'stranger danger'.

Staff are aware of what child abuse and neglect mean. They recognise their responsibility to notify the relevant agencies in the event of any child protection concerns in order to safeguard children's welfare. A recently reviewed written policy confirms staff responsibilities to notify the local authority promptly of any concerns about a child and to notify Ofsted promptly of any child protection allegations against a member of staff in accordance with current nationally agreed procedures. However, staff are not immediately familiar with the specific locally agreed procedure and contact details to be used in the event of any concerns about a child, so potentially delaying their ability to act promptly in children's best interests in the event of any urgent situation.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children across the age range are settled and relaxed within the setting and are consistently engaged in their play and activities. Staff are caring and responsive in their dealings with children. This helps children to feel that their individuality and ideas are valued and helps support their overall development and learning. For example, staff recognise children's spontaneous interest in holidays and the seaside. They build on this by setting up a seaside role play area including an inflatable paddling pool and blue and yellow lengths of fabric with accessories such as beach toys and plastic fish and ducks. Children and parents then further extend learning opportunities by bringing in additional accessories such as sun hats and empty sun cream bottles, so promoting children's independent exploration of ideas such as sun safety.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning for the nursery education programme is satisfactory. Staff have a fair awareness of the areas of learning identified in the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. This helps them to organise space and resources and to plan focussed activities to support children's development across most aspects of learning. Staff are confident in using a variety of teaching methods to support children's learning. For example, they play turn-taking and naming games with small groups of children to encourage specific social skills, make effective use of 'big books' to encourage children's interest in stories and rhymes and encourage children to take responsibility within the setting by involving them in simple tasks such as snack preparation. Key staff, with particular responsibilities for small groups of children, take the lead in making regular observations of individual children's activities, skills and interests

and in using these observations to track children's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They are actively experimenting with a variety of methods to incorporate use of these assessments to inform their short-term planning. This planning now often includes a summary of some specific objectives for children's learning. However, it is not yet fully effective in identifying how experiences and activities can be adapted and extended to match individual children's learning needs to provide consistently high levels of challenge and progression across all aspects of learning.

Children show confidence and independence on their arrival in the setting as they greet staff and change into their indoor shoes. They are consistently interested and motivated as they quickly settle to their self-chosen play activities, such as holiday play at the seaside role play area. They show good levels of independence as they find and put on their own aprons before painting and as they wash their hands afterwards. Resources are usually well-organised to encourage children to act responsibly and independently. For example, children begin to show confidence in using a tape recorder and headphones to listen to selected stories in a quiet area. Staff actively promote children's understanding of what is expected of them by use of techniques such as simple signing and picture cue cards to supplement discussion and explanation.

Children readily talk to others on an individual basis about their experiences and needs. For example, children routinely notify staff when they are leaving the room to use the cloakroom, and older children begin to negotiate roles with each other in simple pretend play. However, planning is not yet fully effective in identifying ways to fully extend children's use of language for thinking, for example by exploring 'How?' and 'Why?' some seeds grow and others do not. Children are confident in their use of the wide range of fiction and factual books which are readily accessible within the setting. They have frequent opportunities for independent mark-making in the quiet area or within their pretend play and are encouraged to recognise their own names as they find their individual name cards for registration or at snack time. They begin to learn about rhythm and sounds as staff introduce structured clapping and rhyming games with them.

Children learn about shape, pattern and size as they build with various construction sets or use peg boards or threading beads for sequencing. They readily recognise numerals, for example when using a computer keyboard and sometimes spontaneously use numbers in their play. For example a three-year-old begins to sing about 'Five Little Ducks' as she plays with plastic toys at the 'seaside' whilst older children talk about how much things cost in the pretend café. They begin to combine and compare numbers in practical ways, as when they sort and group plastic animals by size and colour. However, planning is not yet fully effective in ensuring that all children are offered consistently high levels of challenge and progression in numerical and problem solving activities to fully extend their learning.

Children undertake a variety of activities helping them to establish their knowledge and understanding of the world. They show familiarity with aspects of technology as they use a mouse and keyboard to play simple computer games or as they use a tape recorder and headphones in the listening corner. They enjoy handling substances such as dough, compost or water, so experiencing the properties of different materials. They begin to learn about aspects of the natural world as they plant vegetables and sow seeds or as they experience different weather conditions in their outdoor play. They often use resources such as different types of paper and card, together with glue spreaders and sticky tape dispensers to explore different construction and joining techniques. They begin to explore their local environment as they occasionally go for walks within the village. They begin to consider some aspects of change

over time as they talk about the changing seasons or about events such as holidays in the recent past.

Children greatly enjoy acting out simple experiences such as going to the seaside or to a café within role play areas. They confidently explore form, colour and texture as they make use of a good range of freely accessible creative materials for their independent paintings, drawings and collages. They are familiar with a range of simple action rhymes and songs and explore aspects of sound and rhythm in simple clapping and musical activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children across the age range are confident in their relationships and engaged in their play in this friendly and welcoming environment. Staff actively help younger or less confident children to recognise and respect others and to learn how to behave in different situations as they encourage their participation in simple naming and turn-taking games. Children develop growing levels of independence in many simple self-care tasks, for example helping to spread and cut sliced bread into different shapes for their mid-morning snack, or finding their own aprons before painting. Children begin to acknowledge aspects of diversity as they see a range of posters reflecting different skin tones, hairstyles and abilities, or as they participate in activities linked to different cultures and festivals. Some newer staff are not yet fully familiar with specific legislation and national guidance underpinning aspects of equal opportunities and special needs. However, staff readily work with parents and other relevant professionals to support the inclusion of children with disabilities and/or individual learning needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents speak positively of the current staff team's friendly and open approach, helping them to feel confident in the care offered to their children. A revised prospectus is now in place to provide current information to parents about staffing, procedures and the range of learning opportunities offered to children. Staff seek information from parents about children's individual health, care and dietary needs and offer flexible settling-in arrangements to new children. This helps adults work together to ensure children's specific care and health needs are met. Staff are clear on the value of encouraging parents to discuss any queries or concerns so that any issues can be resolved promptly in children's best interests. However, the revised written complaints policy does not yet fully reflect all relevant details specified in the October 2005 Addendum. It therefore does not fully support the pre-school in managing any formal parental complaint in children's best interests.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Posters provide useful information about the areas of learning within the Foundation Stage. Displays of photographs and children's paintings are captioned to explain how these help support children's progress in different aspects of learning. Parents now have useful opportunities to share information about their children's progress with staff through use of weekly communication books and regular review of their children's developmental progress records. However, systematic arrangements are not yet in place to encourage parental involvement in identifying the starting points of children's development or in identifying the next steps in their progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Recruitment and clearance procedures are sufficiently robust to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and that there are a sufficient number of staff holding recognised child care qualifications. The recently reorganised staff team, which includes a number of new members are caring and affectionate in their dealings with children. They show a ready commitment to developing their knowledge, skills and understanding of current early years issues through planned attendance at local training events. However, as yet, they are not consistently confident in some aspects of how to implement legislation and nationally agreed procedures to full effect to underpin their policies, planning and provision. Staffing is organised to ensure that good adult:child ratios are maintained at all times, so helping to ensure that children are consistently supervised and cared for. Daily attendance registers clearly record which adults and children are present at any time. Clear records of children's personal, health and contact details are maintained, so helping to underpin their care effectively. Accident records are maintained and shared with parents, so helping adults work in partnership to meet children's needs. Available space and resources are generally organised effectively to support children's welfare and development.

The leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. The recently reorganised staff team are keen to make increasing use of available mentoring and advisory services provided by the local authority and to participate in a local early years forum in order to keep abreast of current issues. Staff are beginning to develop useful evaluations of the effectiveness of particular activities and areas in supporting children's learning. Staff and management now also draw up an annual development plan to identify priorities for continued improvement. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to improve day care provision by establishing procedures to check that staff were medically suitable to work with children. It was also asked to ensure that there were appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of any child protection allegations against staff and in the event of any formal complaints from parents. The provider was also asked to make observations of children's activities and use these to plan the next steps for their play, learning and development.

Staff recruitment procedures now include submission of a completed health declaration statement, so helping to ensure that adults working with children are suitable to do so. The recently reviewed child protection policy includes appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of any child protection allegation against staff. Staff show sufficient familiarity with this to enable them to act appropriately to safeguard children's welfare in any such circumstances. Senior staff state that the pre-school would investigate any formal complaint by parents and provide a written response within 28 days and that a written record would be kept of any such incident. This is fully in line with requirements outlined in the October 2005 Addendum to the National Standards for Daycare. A complaints policy is in place and has been recently reviewed. This contains a number of stages including specific procedures for investigating and responding to written complaints. However, these stages and procedures do not yet fully reflect all relevant details specified in the October 2005 Addendum. They therefore do not fully support the pre-school in managing any formal parental complaint in children's best interests. A further recommendation has therefore been raised on this issue. Staff now make frequent observations

of all children's play and activities. They make regular use of these observations to track children's progress across all areas of development.

At the last inspection the provider was also required to take a number of actions to improve the provision of nursery education to funded three and four-year-olds. It was required to ensure the curriculum was delivered effectively to all funded children, to ensure effective assessment records were completed for all funded children and to ensure planning met children's individual needs and included learning intentions for all children. It was also required to ensure that nursery education provision and the quality of teaching was monitored and evaluated and to ensure that there were appropriate systems for staff and parents to share information about the educational programme and about children's development.

The pre-school now provides more information to parents about the educational programme by use of posters outlining the six areas of learning within the Foundation Stage and by displays of captioned photographs showing how children's practical play activities support the different aspects of their learning. A revised parental prospectus has also been produced for distribution to new parents containing a summary of the six areas of learning. Useful systems for parents and staff to share information about individual children's development have now been introduced. Staff now act as the key person for a group of individual children, taking key responsibility for observing and planning their learning and for liaising with parents. Assessments are now regularly updated for all children, so helping to track their progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and to provide the basis for ongoing short term planning. Communication books are now used by staff and parents on a weekly basis to share written information about children's experiences, interests and progress, so supplementing informal daily discussion. Regular parents' evenings have been introduced to enable staff and parents to systematically review children's progress records. However, systems are not yet fully implemented to assess children's developmental starting points on entry, or to identify and share with parents the next steps in their learning. A further recommendation has therefore been raised on this issue. Frequent staff and committee meetings now provide a framework for adults to review the effectiveness of the nursery provision and to identify an action plan for further development and improvement, taking account of advice from local authority mentoring staff.

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 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 satisfactory. 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):

- develop the complaints policy to fully reflect current nationally agreed procedures with regard to the steps to be taken in the event of any formal complaint by parents
- develop staff skills, confidence and understanding of how to use nationally and locally agreed procedures and requirements to full effect to underpin their policies, planning and provision, for example with regard to child protection, complaints, equal opportunities and disability.

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):

- review use of planning to more effectively identify how experiences and activities can be adapted and extended to match individual children's learning needs to provide consistently high levels of challenge and progression
- review assessment arrangements to work with parents to more systematically identify the starting points of children's development and the on-going next steps in their learning.

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