

Mill Hill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 147584
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Inspector Gail Groves

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Mill Hill Pre-school opened in 1965. It operates from a purposely converted room on the ground floor of Mill Hill East Church Hall which is situated in a residential area of Mill Hill in the London Borough of Barnet. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. It is open each weekday from 09.15 until 12.00 and 13.00 until 15.30 during term time only. There is also a lunch club for children who attend the setting all day.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 30 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a number of children with English as an additional language.

There are four members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ level 2. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Well-developed knowledge of each child's individual needs ensures that staff promote most aspects of children's welfare and learning with success. The partnership with parents and other carers and professionals is a key strength and contributes significantly to ensuring that the needs of all children are met well and that they get any additional support they need. This means that children make good progress, given their age, ability and starting points. The systems for self-evaluation are generally effective and plans for the future are well targeted to bring about further improvement to the provision and outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that the planned learning intentions of activities are more clearly identified to ensure that teaching is consistent
- develop children's phonological awareness
- improve the systems used to monitor the quality of the provision and teaching; these should include the implementation of regular staff appraisals.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted well. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded and all of the

necessary documentation for the safe and efficient management of the provision and to meet children's needs is in place. The setting's policies and procedures are effective and are carefully shared with parents and staff to ensure that children are fully protected and safe. Staff know and understand child protection issues and procedures and all the necessary contact details are readily accessible should any concerns about children's welfare need to be reported.

The hard working and close knit staff team ensure that they are always effectively deployed to provide children with a high level of support and encouragement in their learning and play. The safe, stimulating and attractive environment allows all children to develop both independence and choice by offering them the chance to move freely from activity to activity and to decide whether they wish to play inside or outside. The pre-school's self-evaluation process involves input from all of the staff. This has allowed them to accurately identify areas for improvement and has led to changes in the nursery's practice that have had a positive impact on children's learning and development. For example, there is now a system for collecting and analysing children's work that allows their progress to be monitored over time and the outside play area is being developed to help involve boys in particular in early reading and writing skills. However, the setting's ability to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching through the use of systems such as staff appraisals and individual training logs is not yet sufficiently developed to be fully effective.

Parents and carers are provided with good quality information about the early years provision and their high level of involvement in the regular assessment, observation and planning processes allows them to play an active part in meeting their children's individual learning needs. For example, the home visits carried out by staff before children start to attend, allow parents to begin to develop a good relationship with their child's key person and to have an input into the initial assessment of their child's needs. In addition, if children also attend other settings or are cared for by childminders, the pre-school ensures that they are also offered the chance to have an input into the child's records and to share any information needed to ensure continuity in the pre-school's provision for their learning and development.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The pre-school promotes children's welfare, learning and development effectively. Robust hygiene procedures ensure that children's good health and well-being is well promoted and that all necessary steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection. Children are carefully encouraged to develop good hygiene routines such as washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet and take part in planned topic work and discussions with staff about the importance of healthy eating and of the need for exercise so that they can begin to understand the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle. Safety is prioritised and the thorough and detailed risk assessments made of the premises and outside play area ensure that procedures such as daily safety checks are in place to minimise the identified risks. In addition, visits from people such as the community police officer and a road safety officer form part of the planning to help children learn to keep

themselves safe.

Staff support children's learning well. Their careful questioning techniques help children to develop thinking and reasoning skills and they use visual strategies such as using a sand timer to support children's understanding of fairness and the need to take turns when playing on the bikes or using the computer. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-led activities that results in children showing good levels of involvement and social skills. For example, they play happily in pairs and small groups as they devise imaginative role play scenarios in the home corner or dress up and pretend to be fairies. They eagerly explore and experiment with a range of play materials such as sand, water and playdough to develop ideas about size and volume and have regular opportunities to use a computer and digital camera in order to develop an understanding about everyday technology. The stimulating and colourful outside play area is carefully organised to provide children with interesting opportunities to learn about the natural world by growing flowers and vegetables and to develop physical skills and coordination as they throw and kick, pedal, climb, balance and crawl.

Children enjoy using the comfortable book corner to look at books alone or to sit with an adult and listen to a story. They have daily opportunities to explore mark-making in the writing area and some children are beginning to write their names and show good pencil control. Most children require little help to quickly find their name card and put it on the registration board when they arrive at the beginning of the session. However, because children are not being sufficiently helped to develop phonological awareness they are not fully developing all of the required early reading skills. Children with additional learning and/or development needs are clearly identified and well provided for, and children with English as an additional language are well supported.

Regular observations and the records of children's achievements are used by staff to clearly identify and plan for the next steps in children's learning so that they achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities. When children move on, these records are always shared with the next setting to facilitate the continuity of care and learning. However, the planned learning intentions of activities are not made sufficiently accessible to all the adults working with the children to ensure that teaching is consistent and that children are receiving a broad and balanced curriculum.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.