

Maulden Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 219125
Inspection date 22/01/2010
Inspector Susan Marriott

Setting address Church Hall, Church Road, Maulden, Bedford, Bedfordshire,
MK45 2AU
Telephone number 07933 547763
Email soniagoss@hotmail.com
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Maulden Pre-School originally opened in 1977. The group operates from three rooms in the church hall in the village of Maulden, close to Ampthill, in Bedfordshire. The church hall is built on two levels with a large room upstairs and two smaller rooms downstairs. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school is open each weekday during term-time from 9.15am to 11.45am. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and receives funding for early education. A maximum of 24 children aged from two years to under five years may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 47 children on roll, of whom, 34 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the setting serves the local area. The group supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and can support those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting serves the local and neighbouring communities. A small number of children attend other settings such as childminders and other pre-schools. The setting provides for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are six staff members, of whom, five hold relevant childcare qualifications. One staff member is working towards a recognised childcare qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

This is a welcoming, friendly and inclusive setting where the children make good progress in their learning and development. Staff sustain high quality interaction with children to promote positive attitudes and to draw learning from play. Many aspects of children's welfare are promoted well and day-to-day management within the setting is well-organised. However, failures in the monitoring of the recruitment and vetting system at senior management level mean that leadership and management is satisfactory overall and safeguarding is inadequate. Good partnerships with parents and carers and home visits mean that staff have a good knowledge of each child's needs. The capacity of the setting to improve is satisfactory as staff have begun to use self-evaluation to support the ongoing review of their work.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- obtain an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure for each member of staff working with children. (Suitability of adults) 29/01/2010

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

- ensure that the identity of all visitors is checked before admitting them to the provision
- use self-evaluation and quality improvement processes as the basis of ongoing internal review, assessing what the setting offers against robust and challenging quality criteria, with particular reference to safeguarding and the recruitment process.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Most required policies, procedures and paperwork are in place to support the promotion of children's welfare and the setting staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to protect children appropriately. However, the senior management of the setting do not have clear and effective processes in place to ensure that appropriate checks are always carried out on each member of staff. Staff do not always check the identity of visitors before admitting them to the premises. These factors impact negatively upon the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and potentially compromise children's safety. Regular risk assessments and daily checks ensure that practical hazards are minimised. Good daily practice, such as regular fire evacuation drills and teaching children to hold the staircase handrail, reinforce children's understanding of practical safety issues.

Whilst the staff have to set out and pack away the equipment on a daily basis, the setting makes effective and efficient use of the building and resources to promote children's learning and development across all areas of learning. Staff acknowledge the differing learning styles of boys and girls and recognise the value of outdoor play. Staff work well as a team, are well-trained and deployed effectively to provide individualised support to their key children. When staff members attend external training, information is cascaded to colleagues, ensuring that knowledge and good practice is shared appropriately. This helps to create a positive environment, where children feel secure and happy.

Managers and staff have a clear understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to implement appropriate policies and provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. Good communication with parents means that staff are able to work well in partnership with them. Parents receive thorough information about the setting and their child's progress, for example, through newsletters, daily talks with staff and review meetings with key workers. The setting has established partnership links with other professionals such as speech therapists and the lower school. Managers within the setting demonstrate a clear vision for the future of the setting but have not yet implemented effective systems for self-evaluation to identify apparent weaknesses in the organisational systems and to take suitable action to drive continuous improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children make good progress in all areas of learning in this lively setting. They are well supported in their achievements because staff have a competent understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The staff have developed good procedures for observing and assessing children. This information is used to inform activity planning and ensure that children are offered activities that promote their individual development. Good use of the key worker system, including planned home visits before the child starts, means that staff know the children well and can therefore provide appropriate individualised support. Children have free flow access to the garden which is increasingly utilised to offer children an extended range of opportunities across the six areas of learning. For example, children are engrossed in scooping soapy water from a bucket and washing coloured balls down lengths of plastic guttering into a reservoir at the bottom. They ride bikes and cars around obstacles, explore sand and dig in the digging patch. Children enjoy the sensory experience of the herb garden, mashing the leaves of lemon balm into a pulp. They search for bugs in the wood pile and milk crates, stilts and pieces of tree trunk provide opportunities for children to practise their balancing skills.

Children's enjoyment is enhanced and their learning effectively extended because staff join in appropriately with their play and discussions. For example, children stack shapes into a pyramid and a member of staff supplies the word 'pyramid' and asks what might happen if they stack another shape on top. Children are beginning to use language confidently and imaginatively as they discuss the shop they have created. Children begin to recognise their own names as they register their arrival by planting their own named flower in the sand tray garden. Staff read stories to individual children and small groups and children also borrow library books. They develop early writing skills as they learn to use paint brushes and manipulate play dough tools. Children have many good opportunities to use their knowledge to solve daily problems. For example, staff encourage children to cut their own lengths of sticky tape whilst making models. Some children make 'tickling sticks' and staff ask how many straws they have stuck together to make the longer lengths.

Children use a camera to take photographs of activities they particularly enjoy. Children have opportunities to develop physical skills as they ride bikes around cones and climb the stairs to the upstairs hall. They understand healthy practices such as washing hands after sneezing and before touching clean plates when setting out the snack table. A rolling snack bar system is used well to promote children's learning, independence and decision making. For example, children recognise their names and claim a place at the snack table. Staff explain the 'open' sign to young children new to the setting. They provide support for children to 'read' the pictorial board which denotes that they may choose three pieces of cucumber and three carrot sticks. Staff oversee the spooning of dip onto individual plates to maintain good levels of hygiene. Children pour their own drinks and place dirty cups and bowls into a container in readiness for washing up. They develop their imagination as they dress up and enjoy shop role play. Children develop skills

for the future as they develop independence, share ideas and work together. For example, staff encourage them to try to fasten their own coats. Children develop a good understanding of appropriate behaviour as they discuss and implement the setting's rules. They show care and concern for each other, for example, older children readily involve younger ones in their play, often taking them by the hand to help them join in. Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel safe. They smile and laugh and form confident relationships with their peers and staff.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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