



## Mill Hill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	147584
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 September 2005
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<b>Registered person</b>	MILL HILL 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 good. 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?

Mill Hill East Playgroup opened in 1965, and changed its name to Mill Hill Pre-School in 2004. It is run by a Management Committee, comprising of parents. It operates from a purposely converted room on the ground floor of Mill Hill East Church Hall. It is situated within the residential area of Mill Hill East, located within the London Borough of Barnet.

A maximum of 22 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school

opens each week day during term time only. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00. Afternoon sessions run from Tuesday to Friday, from 12:50 until 15:20. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 37 children aged from 2-5 years on roll. Of these 17 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions. Children come from the local and wider catchment areas. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and a number who speak English as an additional language.

The Pre-School employs five staff. All of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The staff team currently has an additional member of staff to support the setting while working with children with special needs.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from clean, hygienic premises which are both warm and welcoming. Over half of the staff team hold a first aid qualification and would therefore be able to administer appropriate treatment in the event of an accident. Children's personal hygiene is given appropriate emphasis, they are encouraged to wash their hands before having snacks and after using the toilets. Staff are currently supervising the toilet routines to ensure that the younger, new children develop this good habit for themselves.

Children enjoy a healthy mid-morning snack consisting of a variety of fresh fruit and a choice of either water or milk. Their individual dietary needs are recorded and respected by the staff. The adult who supervises the snack table records what the children eat in order that parents can receive this information, and in order to monitor children's wellbeing as they experiment and experience different fruits, some for the first time.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to engage in physical activities and play out in the fresh air. The setting offers children direct access to the outdoor area for the majority of the session, so children can choose where to play, this fosters the development of their gross physical skills very well. The outdoor area is popular and the staff endeavour to provide the children with a good range of physical activities from climbing and running, and additional activities such as gardening and reading.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a very welcoming environment. They are greeted warmly by staff and clearly feel safe and secure within the setting. The physical environment is clean and bright and set out with children in mind. The walls are aesthetically displayed with children's art work and a selection of interesting posters make the

premises appealing to young children. The space is effectively organised and the children can easily access all of the resources, both in and outdoors.

Overall children are very safe and secure on the premises, access to the premises is monitored via the bell that visitors have to ring in order to be invited in. However the visitors' book is not always completed so the setting does not have accurate records of additional people on the premises.

Children enjoy using well maintained resources, which staff regularly check to ensure that they do not present any potential hazards.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect as staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibility with regard to child protection issues.

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

The provision is good.

Children clearly enjoy their time at the pre-school. The rich learning environment means that they are inspired to learn and spend their time purposefully. Staff knowledge and implementation of the Birth to three matters framework means that the younger children are developing well, and are effectively progressing towards the foundation stage curriculum as they qualify for nursery education funding. Staff are very skilled in child observation, they know the children well and support their individual learning at their own pace. The effective key worker system ensures that planning includes activities which are suitable for all ages, consequently children are making good progress in all areas.

The two to three-year-olds are developing their confidence and self-esteem. There is a good sense of fun within the setting and the staff are kind, attentive and gently spoken. Many of the children have only recently started attending and are already well settled and enthusiastic about coming to the pre-school. Children benefit from staff developing their confidence and sense of security. The current theme about families, encourages the younger children to talk about things that are familiar to them, while developing relationships with the staff. Staff ask lots of open-ended questions to further their thinking and communication skills, for example, talking about siblings. Children enjoy developing their imagination while they play in the home corner. They are learning to play cooperatively with their peers and they are very well behaved. They spend time enjoying adult-led activities such as identifying tactile fabrics from a feely bag and matching them to the board. They enjoy mathematical activities including: puzzles, matching shapes and observing and recognising different colours. Children are developing their physical skills well while learning to climb and while constructing large wooden blocks. Fine motor skills are also practised when peeling fruit and using pencils. Children's early writing skills are appropriately fostered.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good understanding

of the early learning goals and plan a stimulating well balanced curriculum. Staff make effective use of the daily routine. They offer children good amounts of uninterrupted time to fully engage in the learning opportunities presented to them. Activities are well presented and resources are purposefully grouped into the different learning areas. Children are very interested in the activities and enjoy moving freely between the in and outdoor play environment. Staff are enthusiastic and motivated, creating a good sense of fun within the setting. They strike a good balance between adult and child-led activities, skilfully questioning children's learning in order to progress their knowledge.

Children are enthusiastic learners who part happily from their parents. They are able to take turns and share fairly, especially when using the computer. They are developing good relationships with their peers. They are confident individuals who play well together, calling for friends to come and join them when an activity becomes even more interesting. They demonstrate good level of independence, especially when choosing their own resources. However, there are missed opportunities for children to further their independence during snack time. Children learn about their own culture and those of others as they celebrate a range of festivals such as, harvest time and Chinese New Year.

Children are confident communicators and enjoy practising their early writing skills. Children can write for a variety of purposes, either at the well resourced literacy area or when labelling their own work. They can choose to write their name or select a pre-written label to stick on their work. Some children can recognise their own name, placing their name card in the queue to take a turn on the computer. They listen attentively at story time, the props that the staff member used retained all of the children's attention and promoted some good discussion. Children enjoy using books independently.

Children use a range of mathematical equipment to support their learning in this area. Resources include: tape measures, rulers, scales and an abacus. They are learning to count, using number cards to support their learning. Children are learning to count as they place a prescribed number of eggs in their home made birds nest. More able children are learning the concept of time by comparing the clock to the egg timer.

Children enjoy exploring and experimenting. During a cooking activity they noted the changes in the chocolate as it melted. Children are learning to develop their computer skills and use of programmable toys with increasing confidence. Children can build and construct competently using a wide range of small and large equipment. They are learning about the world they live in. Children benefit from a wide range of activities which support their learning of natural things. They care for the pet fish and have observed the growth and development of a variety of living things including; worms, butterflies and growing their own strawberries.

Children are developing good physical skills as they participate in regular use of a range of apparatus, for example a climbing frame, bikes, bats and balls. The setting makes good use of the outdoor area for this purpose and the newly resurfaced garden will extend opportunities for large physical play further still. Children use a range of small equipment such as: scissors, dough cutters and the computer mouse with increasing skill and control.

Children have lots of fun as they participate in role play activities. They enjoy dressing-up and preparing food in a group situation. Children use a variety of materials to explore colour and texture within a wide range of creative art activities. These include: painting, collage and printing. They have regular opportunities to move to music, make their own music and listen to music.

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

The provision is good.

Children are effectively valued as individuals. Staff seek detailed information from the parents regarding their child to enable them to achieve this. An effective key worker system further promotes children's security and is especially effective when settling new children. All children feel safe and secure within the pre-school and settle quickly to an activity of their choice. They are very well behaved, have clear ground rules, a stimulating range of learning opportunities and calm, gently spoken staff who effectively promote children's very good behaviour.

The children enjoy an extensive range of opportunities to learn about their own culture and those of others. They regularly celebrate a variety of festivals and resources are culturally and socially diverse. Children are developing a positive sense of their own identity as the ethos of the setting promotes and values differences. For example all of the signs and labels are presented in a range of different languages. Children for whom English is an additional language are supported by staff acquiring knowledge of some key words in their home language.

The partnership with parents is good. Children's education benefits from the positive relationships between the staff and the parents. Staff ensure that all parents are kept well informed of their children's progress, this is especially effective when addressing children's special needs. They are kept sufficiently informed of the learning that takes place at the setting via curriculum planning and regular news letters. This allows them to participate effectively in complimenting and extending their children's learning at home. They are encouraged to participate in a parent rota and spend time in the setting, which further develops effective partnerships.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively fostered

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The setting is well organised and very good communication systems are in place.

Daily routines flow beautifully, children are offered good amounts of quality time to play and learn without interruption. The premises are organised for the children's pleasure, they are free to move between the in and outdoor space, both of which have been carefully set out to maximise their play opportunities. Documentation is highly organised and covers all of the legal requirements in appropriate detail.

Children benefit from highly skilled and qualified staff who work well together. They are confident in their role and have been a well established team for many years. All staff are committed to their work and regularly attend training to further their knowledge. They have recently embarked on a quality assurance scheme to further monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of the care and education they provide. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the previous inspection staff have attended courses and workshops on a wide range of early years subjects. This has further enhanced the curriculum and range of activities presented to the children. In addition they also enjoy a wide variety of opportunities to explore and observe features of natural and living things. Children care for the new pet goldfish and observed the transition of caterpillars to butterflies.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report.

## **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 good.

## **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):

- record all visitors attendance.

### **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):

- enhance children's independence at snack time by encouraging them to pour their own drinks.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)