



St Martin Under Fives Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	102949
Inspection date	16 November 2005
Inspector	Heather Tanswell
Setting Address	St Martin in Meneage School, St. Martin, Helston, Cornwall, TR12 6BT
Telephone number	01326 231447 or 01326 231069 (Leader)
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Registered person	St Martin Under Fives Group
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Martin Under 5's Pre-School is a committee run group. It opened in 1998 and operates from an Elliot Hut in the village primary school on the Lizard Peninsula, in Cornwall. A maximum of 10 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open 4 days a week, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00 until 11:30 and on Monday from 12:45 until 15:15, during term times only. All children share access to the school playground.

There are currently 13 children from 2 years to 4 years on roll. Of these 6 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs two members of staff. All staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 3. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from the Local Authority Family Services and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive on the healthy snacks of fresh fruit and vegetables provided for them in sufficient quantities for their growing needs. Children talk about and select which foods are 'good' or 'bad' as they play games designed to help them make healthy choices. Children have ready access to drinking water and recognise when they need a drink to quench their thirst. Additional drinks of milk and water are offered at snack time. Children eat together family style, help to peel and chop the foods, and are well mannered at the table. Specific dietary needs and customs are known and respected. For example, children use chopsticks as utensils at snack time.

Children are well cared for on clean and tidy premises where staff take great pride in the appearance of the setting. Children's health is safeguarded because staff follow very good hygiene procedures. Premises are cleaned thoroughly each day and parents help staff spring-clean at the end of each term. Although the toilet is situated in the adjacent school, staff manage access very well to keep children safe and enable them to be increasingly independent in their personal care. Children know when and why they wash their hands, and explain clearly that they have to wash away the germs. As a result, children stay safe from the spread of infection and learn to take good care of themselves.

Children take part in a wide range of activities that contribute to their good health and physical development. They benefit from daily exercise out in the fresh air or indoors in wet weather. Children run, ride, clamber over, under and through using a range of equipment. Children also develop their stamina as they take part in woodland walks and go on outings. They show great skill and co-ordination as they throw balls through moving hoops as they chase them about the playground. Indoor activities include music and movement and parachute games. Children refine their physical skills and develop very good hand-eye co-ordination by using a range of tools, such as scissors, pencils, knives, scrapers and brushes, to manipulate a wide range of media. They show their developing strength and determination to succeed as they roll out bread dough to make into a very thin pizza base.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely and securely because staff are vigilant and well organised. Staff monitor access to the premises, check identity routinely and shut the gates to the playground. Staff use walkie-talkies to stay in contact with each other as they manage moving about the school premises with groups of children. Risks of accidental injury are minimised as staff fully implement thorough risk assessments and carry out daily checks to reduce potential hazards. Staff set safe limits and carefully explain to children why they must stay in sight as they play outside. Children take part in practise evacuations and staff explain why fire bells and smoke alarms require regular testing. As a result, children learn what to do in an emergency and how to keep themselves safe from harm.

Children gain safe access and make ready use of the good quality equipment appropriate to their age and stage of development. Suitably labelled storage cupboards ensure children know exactly where to go to access the resources they want and put them away safely all by themselves. Space is set aside for rest and relaxation with comfortable seating and cushions in a quiet area. Children also play with additional resources borrowed from the Sure Start Library.

Children are well protected from harm by staff who have a good understanding of their child protection policies and procedures. Staff are clear about their personal responsibility and their role in promoting children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled at the pre-school. They arrive eager and show interest in the planned activities. Children know the daily routines well and enthusiastically take part in 'busy fingers' tidy up time. Staff plan together to provide a wide range of first hand experiences which build on children's natural curiosity. Activities include walks and outings to places of local interest where children learn about the wider world they live in. Children achieve because staff use their knowledge of early years guidance, such as the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and the Birth to three matters framework to provide good quality care and education.

Children's independence and inclusion is promoted effectively through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Staff organise one main adult-led activity to support the topic and planned learning intention each day. Children also have time to explore a range of resources in their own time and to their own ends. They mix their own paint colours before selecting tools to manipulate creative media to make paintings and models. Children carefully select additional activities from storage units clearly labelled to identify where toys are stored and replaced when finished with. Children benefit from warm relationships with staff who are interested in them and give them lots of praise and encouragement. Children are motivated to share what they do with adults who help them take the next steps in learning through sensitive interaction, explanation and questioning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are enthusiastic, curious and keen to learn as they play at a wide range of stimulating and relevant activities that are suited to their needs. They are independent learners, take responsibility for themselves, and show initiative and great pride in everyone's success. They play well on their own or with others. Children help each other put on coats and celebrate together when they achieve a new skill such as the first time they manage to zip a coat by themselves. Children know right from wrong and help tidy away with relish. They share, wait and take turns at snack times, routine activities and games. Children are confident and speak up; asking relevant questions that help them gain more understanding of their world. For example, when the fire bell rings several times during a test, children ask why this is necessary and how it works. Children appreciate their own culture and the traditions of others. Children learn about festivals and traditions and make some aspects part of their daily experience. Creative use of visual symbols enables all children to access the resources they need and become familiar with languages other than their own.

Children's good progress in personal, social and emotional development underpins their learning in all other areas of learning. Older children help younger ones. For example, they sound out the initial sounds in words to help them answer questions correctly. Children learn about nature and how the world works through meaningful activities. Staff comment on features of the weather as they look outside and then decide what clothes are necessary to keep them warm and dry. Children use marks readily in role-play as they serve each other in their café and are adept at writing their names. In groups, children listen intently to stories and predict what comes next and act them out using puppets. Children are imaginative and enjoy using their senses to explore a range of creative media with their hands and with tools. Children gain confidence in using numbers and extend their mathematical vocabulary in planned activities and daily routines.

Staff confidently use their knowledge of how young children learn to achieve a successful balance between adult and child-led activities enabling children to learn at their own pace. They plan a broad range of experiences and learning intentions that are suited to the range of ages and stages of children in their care based on observations of learning. They discuss progress with parents and set suitable targets to help children take the next steps in their learning. The curriculum reflects the community the children come from and the wider world. Staff carefully adapt activities and the environment to meet children's physical needs and abilities. They have high expectations of behaviour and carefully explain rules and manners.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about their own environment, their own culture and the culture of others through well-planned activities. They go on visits to local places of interest, such as the church and post letters home at the post office. Children celebrate a number of festivals from other cultures throughout the year. Staff find out more about children's cultural heritage and home experiences so that familiar experiences can be introduced into the setting. For example, children's coat pegs and menu's are in more

than one language and children use chopsticks at snack times. As a result, learning is enhanced and all children feel welcome and valued.

The setting have a Special Needs policy that is relevant and detailed. Staff develop individual education plans (IEPs) to meet the individual needs of children and share these with parents. There is a trained Special Needs co-ordinator in place to work in liaison with other agencies to meet the needs of all children.

Children play very well together. Children receive appropriate support from staff who have high expectations of behaviour. Rules of the setting and games are clearly explained. Children receive acknowledgment, reward and praise for what they do well or have joined in with gladly. Children are encouraged to offer an apology with a cuddle to show they are sorry. Children take care of each other by helping to put on coats and show pride in what they do. Children know the daily routines well and cheerfully help tidy away at 'busy fingers time'. Staff act as good role models through what they say and do. As a result, children learn how to develop good relationships and social competence. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff talk to parents about what their child can already do on entry to the setting but this information is not recorded. Parents receive useful information about how the setting is managed. However, details of the Foundation Stage Curriculum are not included in the prospectus to help them become familiar with terminology used in early year's education. Parents are encouraged to take part in their child's learning. They see copies of the records of achievement each term and help to set individual targets for development. Detailed plans of the week's activities are on display. Ideas for complimentary learning at home linked to the topic are not included in the regular newsletter to develop further the links between pre-school and home. Confidentiality is carefully, and sensitively maintained. Parents report relationships are very good and that staff are welcoming and friendly.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Suitably qualified and experienced staff look after children. Staff show commitment to continuous improvement and make time to attend relevant training which contributes greatly to the overall quality of the provision. Children currently benefit from care by an established, consistent team of staff, though the systems to appoint and check future staff and to ensure their continuing suitability are not sufficiently robust. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well as a team to plan worthwhile experiences where children have fun and learn through play in a well-organised, safe environment.

Records are well organised into files and folders and are readily available for inspection. They are shared with parents and are kept for the appropriate length of time.

Leadership and management is good. The registered person monitors the quality of care and education. Staff respond positively to ideas for new ways of working that

promote improvements in standards. They pay particular attention to individual children, by showing respect for their culture and personal needs by making sensitive and welcoming adaptations to the premises and curriculum. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure that; staff improved their knowledge of and implemented the policies and procedures, ratios are met at the start of the session, and children are able to access the toilets safely. Staff have attended a range of training courses and work effectively as a team to implement the settings policies and procedures. Management of behaviour is now consistent and children behave very well. Staff now keep the inner door locked until they are ready to welcome children so that ratios meet standards and children can be left in safety. Staff now make effective use of a walkie-talkie system to stay in contact as they supervise children safely about the premises.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to improve the; monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, staff's knowledge of what they need to do to plan and organise the learning environment to promote independent learning, and to develop the use of assessment records to help staff plan next steps in co-operation with parents. The registered person nominates a committee member with appropriate skills and experience to observe and evaluate sessions. Sessions are now better planned and organised by a strong team of consistent staff who have grown in confidence and ability. Staff have reorganised the learning environment to make resources accessible to children for self selection. Children have also learned to put them back where they belong which promotes their independence and self esteem. Staff now make effective use of the observations of learning and assessment systems. The information they gather is shared routinely and used to set appropriate targets for children's next steps in learning, in liaison with parents.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

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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):

- make sure effective procedures are in place to appoint and vet staff and to ensure their continuing suitability.

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 partnership with parents in recognition of their role as their child's main educator by; including information about the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage in the prospectus; developing an initial profile about what each child already knows, can do and understands on entry to the setting, and adding ideas for complementary learning at home to the newsletter.

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