



Mendlesham Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 508616

Inspection date 09 February 2006

Inspector Susan Smith

Setting Address Small Hall, Community Centre, Old Station Road, Mendlesham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 5RT

Telephone number 01449 766041

E-mail mendlesham.preschool@ntlworld.com

Registered person Mendlesham Pre-School

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day 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 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?

Mendlesham Pre-school is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It has been open for 30 years and operates from the small hall in the community centre in Mendlesham.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:45 to 15:15 Monday to Friday. A lunch club operates from 11:30 to 12:45

when children can stay for lunch at the school. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 35 children from 2 to under 5 on roll. Of these 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local community. The setting supports children with special educational needs.

The group employs two full time and six part time staff. Three of these staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is effectively promoted by good hygiene procedures, for example, staff clean the tables with anti-bacterial spray prior to snack time. In addition, staff follow the correct procedures for the administration of medication and recording accidents. Written parental consent is obtained to seek emergency medical advice or treatment if necessary, and comprehensive information is gathered from parents to meet any medical needs of the children. This enables staff to respond appropriately in the event of an accident. Children are learning how to keep themselves well by washing their hands before snack time and after using the toilet.

Children are increasing their understanding of the importance of a healthy diet through an excellent choice of fresh fruit and vegetables at snack time such as carrot, satsuma, apple or banana and milk or water to drink. However, drinking water is not freely available during the session to ensure children do not become thirsty. The group is involved in a healthy eating project with the school. All staff are aware of any special dietary requirements to ensure individual children's needs are met. Children's parents are able to choose between a school dinner or providing a packed lunch for those staying to the lunch club.

Children enjoy an excellent range of physical activities both indoors and outdoors all year round that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They have regular opportunities for play in the fresh air and to use their bodies in a range of different ways as they run, climb, play on ride on toys and kick and throw balls. Indoor activities include parachute games and music and movement. Children are provided with good opportunities to develop their small physical skills through using a range of tools such as scissors, threading activities, pencils and brushes, which they do safely and with increasing control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean, bright and safe environment. The play space is well organised with dedicated areas for a good range of role play activities and quieter activities, for example, book corners. This enables children to move around

safely. There is an excellent range of high quality toys and equipment which are well maintained.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures, for example, electrical sockets are protected, the outdoor play area is safe and secure and there is a safe procedure for the collection of children. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe, for example, through the regular practising of fire drills and gentle reminders from staff when walking around with potentially dangerous objects, "how do we hold scissors?", so they do not trip and hurt themselves.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have attended child protection training and know the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children spend their time playing purposefully with the stimulating range of toys and activities set out around the room. Staff spend considerable time preparing the room before children arrive to make it welcoming and child friendly, with a range of play opportunities for children to choose from to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Children are familiar with the routines of the session which gives them opportunities to develop their confidence as they freely move around the room.

Children make positive relationships with staff and their peers as they play happily together interacting and cooperating, for example, during role play and on the computer. The group do not currently use 'Birth to three matters' in their planning as there are very few children aged under three on roll. However, their practice with the younger children does reflect many aspects of 'Birth to three matter's' and they are currently considering introducing a key worker system to further improve practice with this age group.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good

Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to provide a broad and balanced range of activities across each area of learning. Children's progress through the stepping stones is monitored in their records of progress and used to inform planning. However, limited information is obtained to establish children's individual starting point to enable staff to build on what children already know and can do. Planning shows adaptation and evaluation, however, these are not consistently completed, this may limit children's progress or provide too high expectations of the younger children. All staff engage appropriately with children's play and use questions to promote children's learning. Children's participation in planned activities and use of the computer is monitored to ensure all children have an opportunity to participate in popular activities.

Children are happy and enjoy coming to the setting and have a positive attitude to

learning. They are confident and can play well on their own or with others. All children are confident communicators, initiating conversations with their peers and adults and enthusiastically talking about things that are important to them. They develop a strong sense of community through taking part in joint activities with the school. Children develop their skills in self care through encouragement from staff to put on their own coats. They have good opportunities to practise their writing skills in the graphics area, and staff routinely encourage children to write their name on their work. They enjoy listening and responding to books and have regular opportunities to recognise their own names and are beginning to identify the sound of the letters.

Children recognise and identify shapes during their play. They use mathematical language such as big and little and sort by colour, for example, playing the 'insey wincey' spider game. Most children can count confidently to 10 and many beyond. Children recognise shapes and use positional language and explore volume while playing with sand and water. Children recognise numerals during games using a dice.

Children learn about the natural world and life cycles through projects such as jungle, harvest and bugs. They practise their computer skills and have access to tills and calculators. They explore and investigate materials such as cutting up vegetables and are able to use all their senses. Children are developing an understanding of the importance of keeping healthy through topic work.

Children enjoy using their imagination in the home corner and initiate their own play, for example, being sharks and making birthday cakes. They explore musical instruments and enjoy singing and responding to music, for example, enthusiastically taking part in action rhymes such as 'The Wheels on the Bus'. Children take part in activities to explore colour and texture, however art and craft activities tend to be mostly adult led .

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the setting and are valued by staff who respect their individuality which helps them develop a sense of belonging. For example, staff provided excellent support to a child when he wanted to wear his newly found cycle helmet throughout the session. Children understand the routines and rules of the setting and are encouraged by staff to show concern for others. Staff are good role models and their calm and consistent manner helps children understand the expected rules of behaviour.

Children play harmoniously alongside each other, they share and take turns amicably and their behaviour is good. They play imaginatively in small groups and are making friendships as they seek out a preferred playmate. They demonstrate good levels of independence in personal care and take responsibility for their own learning in confidently self selecting activities. For example, seeking out resources to make their own story books.

The setting has effective arrangements in place to care for children with special

educational needs and staff have good knowledge and understanding of special needs issues. The setting works closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children's specific needs are met.

Children become aware of wider society through learning about other festivals, access to displays around the room and a range of books promoting a positive view of diversity. They develop a sense of community through visits to the school, walks around the village and opportunities to post letters to 'Postman Pat'.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents are very positive and complimentary about the group. Parents receive some information about the Foundation Stage and the running of the provision via regular chats, newsletters the notice board in the lobby. The group is currently reviewing the information pack for parents. Although, there are no formal opportunities to share children's records of progress with parents, they are aware that they can ask to see them at any time.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Systems are in place to ensure staff working with the children are safe to do so. Recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable and qualified staff with a secure knowledge and understanding of child development. Parents can easily recognise staff as they wear bright tabards.

Staff make good use of their time and resources to support children's learning. They work very well together as an established team and are aware of each others roles and responsibilities. Staff make effective use of the space available to provide children with a stimulating range of activities. The good adult to child ratios positively support children's care, learning and play.

Documentation is satisfactory, policies and procedures are in place which work in practice to promote children's health, safety and enjoyment. All the required written consents and records are maintained to ensure staff follow parents' wishes regarding their children's care.

Leadership and management is good.

The committee and the staff team are committed to continuous improvement. Regular staff meetings take place to evaluate children's progress and the effectiveness of the provision for nursery education. The group has strong links with the school including sharing children's records of progress to ensure a smooth transition from pre-school for the children. Staff undergo annual appraisals to identify strengths and weaknesses and areas for professional development.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group were asked to carry out regular fire drills, obtain parental consent to seek emergency advice and treatment and to improve the registration procedure. The group now carry out termly fire drills with the children, which are recorded and evaluated. They obtain all the necessary parental consents and have developed a system where actual times are recorded on the registration to ensure the health and safety of all children.

In addition they were asked to improve equal opportunities practices by obtaining more resources and to make it clear on their complaints procedure that Ofsted is the registering body. Resources such as books and posters are now in place providing positive images of difference and Ofsted is clearly stated as the registration body in their complaints procedure.

At their last nursery education inspection the group were asked to provide children with further opportunities to develop simple calculation skills in everyday activities and to ensure that suitable group sizes were used for activities. The group now offer children a good range of opportunities, through planned and routine activities, to develop their calculation skills. The group takes into account the age and developmental stage of the children when planning activities and ensure suitable group sizes are used to support all children's learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

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 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):

- ensure children have access to drinking water at all times
- provide parents with information on the service provided which includes information on the Foundation Stage and develop ways in which they can be involved in their learning(also applies to nursery education).
- take account of the 'Birth to three matters' framework when providing activities for children aged under three.

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):

- gather information from parents about their child's starting point to build on what children already know and can do
- further develop observation, assessment and evaluation procedures to ensure that the needs of all children are met.

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