

Merryfield Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	142953
Inspection date	12/11/2010
Inspector	Jennifer Cutler
Setting address	St Mary & St Peter's First School, Ilton, ILMINSTER, Somerset, TA19 9EX
Telephone number	01460 52574 or 07818 214 045
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Merryfield Pre-School opened twenty years ago in 1990. It is committee run and operates from a portacabin situated in the grounds of St Mary and St Peter Primary School in the village of Ilton in Somerset. The pre-school has sole use of the premises, which consist of a main playroom, kitchen facilities, storage rooms and toilets. There is an adjacent, enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school is open on Mondays to Fridays from 9am to 12pm, with the option of staying open for lunch club from 12pm to 1pm during term time only. The pre-school is registered to provide care for 20 children from two to five years of age. At present there are nine children on roll, five of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are five members of staff who work with the children. The manager, the deputy and one assistant hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the Local Authority and is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make good progress in all areas of learning because staff are good at encouraging speaking and listening skills. The pre-school is very inclusive and meets the needs of all children well. There is a good emphasis on valuing the uniqueness of each child. The partnership with parents and carers is good. There are also good relationships with the primary school and other childcare agencies in the area. A good range of policies and procedures are in place to ensure the efficient management of the pre-school. The capacity to improve is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that every child is encouraged to develop a positive disposition to learn
- consider the re-organisation of snack time to ensure that the occasion is used as an enjoyable developmental and learning experience.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children at the pre-school are safe from harm and abuse. Staff are up to date in their safeguarding training, and aware of their responsibility to make sure that

children are well cared for. Regular risk assessments make sure that the accommodation and equipment are clean and suitable for children to use. All these factors contribute to the secure and safe atmosphere in which children can play and learn.

The pre-school is well led. Evaluation strategies are good. The recommendations made at the last inspection have been vigilantly addressed, and some good improvements have been made over the past few years. For example, there are great improvements in the equipment in the outside area to help children further improve their physical skills. The manager knows the strengths and further areas for improvement needed to make the pre-school even better. Her high aspirations for on-going improvement are seen in her plans to keep everyone's training up to date so that children can make good progress in their learning and development.

Staff are good at making sure that children receive enjoyable experiences because there is a very good adult to child ratio in the pre-school. Staff enjoy chatting to the children and take time to talk to them at length. As a result, children are confident and curious, and ask lots of questions. Relationships are very good and this has a good effect on raising children's achievement. Children are valued as individuals. Lots of their work is displayed at their own height and demonstrates the staff's commitment to creating an atmosphere where everyone can enjoy each other's work and paintings on display. Because the group is small in number, staff are able to make accurate assessments of children's capabilities, plan accordingly and follow up children's interests. This helps children make even better progress. For example, one child is very interested in dinosaurs so an activity was designed, model dinosaurs were hidden in the autumn leaves and lots of fun was had as a result. Staff are keen to respond to children's interests so they can encourage them to develop positive attitudes to learning. The manager has good strategies in place to check that all areas of learning are covered in the planning throughout the year and that children have broad and balanced experiences.

The pre-school is highly inclusive and pays good regard to equality of opportunity for all children. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those with English as an additional language are very well cared for. There are good contacts with other agencies and support services, which are contacted when appropriate and to benefit the children's all-round development. Parents and carers trust the staff, who work in close contact with them. They receive good information about the children's progress on a day-to-day basis and through more formal meetings. All value highly the assessments and collections of children's work which are passed on to the primary school to aid the smooth transition to the reception class.

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

Children make good progress in all areas of learning because they feel safe and secure, and enjoy coming to pre-school. They trust the adults and have very good relationships with them. The ease with which the children chat to staff, ask questions and show their curiosity about the world demonstrates the adults'

commitment to valuing the individuality of each child. Staff give the children lots of attention and, as a result, pick up on individual likes, dislikes and interests. This has a good impact on the way children respond and on their enthusiasm for learning.

Children have a wide variety of interesting activities to choose from. Their creative development is encouraged by the plentiful opportunities for them to paint, cut out and stick pictures, play with play dough or dance and sing to music of their choice. Physical development is very well supported as children join in yoga and action games. The outside area is very well equipped and children play well together on bikes, on the climbing frame or in the sand. In particular they love getting messy and mix sand, water, leaves and paint to experiment with colour changes in the water. Staff join in enthusiastically and encourage children to investigate.

Children learn about simple hygiene procedures and can talk sensibly about the importance of eating fruit or washing hands after going to the toilet. They help themselves to water throughout the day, but sometimes it is not clear whether the plastic cups have been used or not. Children learn to make a positive contribution to the group by tidying up, remembering to say 'please' and 'thank you' and by helping one another complete puzzles. However, at snack time, adults lay the table and prepare the fruit for the children when some are eager to do this for themselves. In particular, some children are very curious about what happens in the kitchen area and want to help. The children do have opportunities to learn about handling equipment in a safe way and can competently use safety knives to cut up their own fruit. They usually respond well to reminders about keeping safe; for example, not to be over-boisterous and run in the classroom or to climb on the furniture indoors.

Children are well behaved and, on most occasions, join in enthusiastically when adults gather everyone together for registration or group activities such as learning the days of the week. However, when children are reluctant to take part they are not always given enough incentive or reward to encourage the appropriate behaviour. Staff constantly try out different ways to do this and keep in contact with parents and carers to make sure each child is being cared for appropriately. However, some miss out on times which are important to help develop their concentration and social skills.

Children successfully develop skills for future life by learning about the differences and diversity in the human race. They also learn about the importance of fund raising for others by taking part in such activities as 'The Big Toddle'. Overall, they are given a good start at the pre-school and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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	2
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met