



Marazion Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY333877
Inspection date	17 November 2006
Inspector	Heather Tanswell
Setting Address	School Lane, Marazion, Cornwall, TR17 0DG
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Pre-School Learning Alliance 4539003 306086
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Marazion Children's Centre Day Nursery opened in 2006 to serve the local area of Marazion. It is linked to and works with two other childrens centres at St Hilary and St Erth. The centre comprises of a day nursery, which is open each weekday for 50 weeks of the year from 08:30 until 16:30; a crèche to support parents and carers attending the centre; and space for a variety of courses and drop-in support groups for parents, carers and their families who live in the community.

All services are housed in purpose-built premises to the rear of Marazion Primary School. The school is situated close to the centre of the coastal village of Marazion, close by the town of Penzance, in Cornwall. All children share access to a secure enclosed play area. There are currently 26 children aged from six months to under five years on roll in the day nursery; nine of these receive free early education. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any

one time. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

The centre is one of more than thirty nurseries run by The Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) National Executive Committee. The PLA South West Regional Office oversees the operations of the centre, including the management of the budget and recruitment of staff. There is an overall centre manager. She is supported by a part-time Sure Start qualified teacher affiliated to the centre, a Children Centre Manager from Hayle, an advisory teacher from the Local Authority Family Services and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA). The nursery employs six staff. All staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 or 3. Two members of staff are currently attending additional training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children thrive on the healthy snacks made readily available for them in sufficient quantities to meet their growing needs. Children choose from a healthy variety of nutritious snacks such as fresh and dried fruits, cheese cubes, carrot sticks, French toast and plain popcorn. Fresh water is readily available at all times to quench their thirst. At meal times, additional drinks of water and full fat milk are provided. Staff sit snuggled up with babies closely as they are bottle-fed. Parents contribute to healthy eating by providing one piece of fruit for the group to share. Some parents also choose to send in additional snacks for babies. However, occasionally, the healthy option is not offered to under two year olds in the first instance to encourage good eating habits. Parents supply packed lunches, which are stored hygienically in the fridge to keep them fresh. School dinners can be arranged for those who prefer a cooked meal. Children receive appropriate care if an accident occurs because staff receive up-to-date training in paediatric first aid. All the required medical consents and records are in place and used correctly to ensure parents and staff know about children's specific needs and medical conditions ensuring children's health and welfare.

Older children benefit from exercise in or outdoors dependent on the weather conditions. They run about outside in the fresh air playing football, pedalling bikes, climbing over, under and through on appealing large apparatus. When it rains most children take part in music and movement sessions where they jump about like grasshoppers and crickets and spin like spiders which makes physical activity fun and enjoyable. However, not all participate which means some children take no exercise to develop their strength and stamina. The outside play area is not used well for the under two-year-olds and especially children not yet walking independently to develop their physical skills. Although these young children go outside regularly in the fresh air, they are held or sat in a buggy, which limits their movements on a larger scale. Babies receive assistance indoors from staff to walk about holding hands, learn to pull themselves up on furniture and crawl through and over obstacles as they play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children can safely access a wide range of very good quality, brand new toys and equipment to support their play. Staff lay out the rooms carefully, using see-through screens and low-level furniture to create a variety of smaller spaces for types of play and different age groups. This makes the setting very welcoming and encourages children to move about safely as they play. Babies particularly enjoy looking at themselves in the mirror panels, pointing to pictures of children they recognise and watching older children as they play safely away from harm in their own-carpeted area. Older children learn how to keep themselves safe whilst carrying scissors from one activity to another and how to manoeuvre safely about avoiding unnecessary accidents. Babies sleep peacefully in a separate room. Staff monitor them regularly through frequent visual checks, which are recorded to re-assure parents children are supervised closely.

Children are kept safe and secure through rigorously applied risk assessments. The setting correctly identifies areas where additional staff vigilance is required. Staff conscientiously conduct daily health and safety checks on equipment and the premises. They are particularly alert and vigilant about the security of the premises and keep all doors locked making sure they know exactly who has arrived before giving access to areas in use by children. Children and staff take part in frequent fire drills to ensure everyone knows what to do in an emergency. Children are further safeguarded from harm because staff are familiar with and understand how to implement the settings child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children experience a varied range of activities that contribute to their sound development. Daily routines in place throughout the nursery are adapted to fit in with the home routines of young babies, for example their usual sleep and meal times. Key workers plan to a central theme that threads through interesting activities suited to the age groups they care for based on the stepping stones and the Birth to three matters framework. Activities are suitably resourced and supported effectively with visits from people in the community. For example, as part of the theme about the emergency services, staff arrange for a visiting fire engine to call and children relish the opportunity to climb inside and use the walkie-talkies. The role-play area is imaginatively set up and resourced as a hospital where children act out experiences from their home-life, for example taking temperatures and giving injections. Babies and young children interact confidently with their key workers examining the texture of toys they scramble over and begin to stand and walk holding onto adult hands and pieces of furniture. They enjoy watching older children play in the adjacent area and snuggling in for a cuddle. However, very young children do not routinely play imaginatively with materials, exploring by using all the senses or play outside. Older children relish the opportunity to run about as they play outside. Children welcome story time, which is used effectively to create a calm and restful atmosphere in preparation for mealtimes and going home.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make sound progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of the Foundation Stage and interact calmly with the children creating a very peaceful and purposeful atmosphere. Children are keen to learn and concentrate well both in groups and when working alone at their chosen tasks. Children can find their own name card and occasionally attempt to write their names. Children are adept users of tools such as scissors. They cut off pieces of tape to stick the ends of a bandage in place on a patient's arm and cut up a long bandage to make a smaller plaster to cover a wound in role-play. Children use chunky brushes to spread paint on paper. There are no finer brushes for children to choose from and children who have the ability to make recognisable marks on paper are not refining their skills. Children do not write with a purpose in everyday activities or during role-play because they do not receive consistent support in this area. Children use books, leaflets and magazines for enjoyment and information. Children are beginning to learn about quantity and link how many pieces they have to the correct numeral in their free play, for example when completing number puzzles. However, staff do not plan day-to-day activities where children can learn to compare two groups of objects and what happens when one or two items are added or taken away. Children delight in role-play and enthusiastically create doctors surgeries and hospital wards, wearing rubber gloves and masks to get ready to treat their patients. They enjoy the feel of paint, wet sand and water and in particular, the effects of smudging one colour of chalk on black paper into another with their hands.

Plans are on display and clearly show the learning intentions of activities across all six areas of learning. These plans show that over the course of a term, a good range of activities will be provided linked to a central theme and supported by good quality resources sometimes borrowed from other centres and toy libraries. The assessment system is in the process of being implemented. Staff are beginning to make notes about progress in the 'Smile File', but it is not yet clear from these records, whether children are making as much progress as they might or if activities provide sufficient challenge. There is no indication of the next steps in learning or how staff will help individual children achieve through their plans of activities. However, staff are settling children in and getting to know them well enough so that they can liaise with parents and carers to set realistic targets. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and encourage children to become well mannered by being good role models. As a result, relationships are sound and children are content, happy and having fun.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to respect the needs and feelings of others through planned activities about their own and other cultures. For example, children help make a map of Cornwall labelled with places of interest to them. Children handle a wide range of toys that show positive images of people from other cultures and with disabilities as part of their everyday play. They learn about cultural festivals from the wider community throughout the year. As part of their celebration of Divali children dance to classical Indian music, listen to stories and make festival fudge.

Children are happy and most settle in quickly to play. Those who need additional time to feel secure receive additional support and encouragement. Staff are experienced in liaising with

local supporting agencies and this helps them to ensure that children who have additional needs are identified. Children are well behaved and co-operative. They know what is expected of them because staff take time to explain the rules as they plan and review activities. Staff reward children with warmth and praise for their participation and help. Children take great delight when their efforts are noted on the 'kindness tree'. As a result, children develop self-esteem and confidence to work independently or complete games where they have to take turns without the need for adult intervention. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive regular newsletters but no written introduction to the nursery as the prospectus is a piece of work in progress. Detailed registration forms record all the care needs and family background of children to enable appropriate care to be given with respect for parents' wishes. Staff also complete child profiles about children's stages of development with parents and carers on enrolment. However, none are recorded for children who only attend funded sessions. Advance notice about what activities children will be taking part in are on display. Key workers ensure parents share and receive daily feedback about important aspects of their child's day such as activities, sleep, food and toileting. An assessment system is newly in place but has not been used to set targets for funded children or share information with parents and carers about each child's progress and achievements to help parents be fully involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a suitably qualified, consistent team of dedicated staff who share their ideas for improvement and commitment to quality care and education for all children. Staff receive effective induction training that includes health and safety policies and procedures. Monthly reviews ensure the manager and staff have time to establish good working relationships and identify training needs. High staff ratios ensure children are secure, supervised closely at all times and that staff can easily step in and offer assistance where it is needed. All the necessary records, policies and procedures, which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision and for children's well-being, are in place and implemented by staff. The exception is the effectiveness of the system of assessing children's progress and its use to set realistic targets working in partnership with parents and carers and the provision of a prospectus.

Children are happy in the well-organised environment. The effective grouping of children into base areas resourced for their ages and stages of development ensures that children remain safe, secure, well occupied and interested throughout their day. However, younger children do not regularly use the messy play area and explore the outdoors because staff do not include creative and outdoor physical play opportunities into their daily routine.

The setting also offers crèche facilities, which are used by parents to enable them to attend training courses, and drop-in advice facilities organised by Sure Start. Parents and carers living in the community attend sessions such as 'Crafty Caterpillars' and baby massage alongside their children to enhance their parenting skills.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Regular meetings to plan and reflect on practice enhance children's learning experiences. Guidance is sought from local and regional staff from the Pre-school Learning Alliance, and qualified teachers from Sure Start and the Local Authority. Areas for improvement have been accurately identified, but have not yet been fully implemented as the emphasis has been on settling into and developing the confidence of the team of staff and ways of working effectively to meet the needs of children of all ages on the newly constructed premises. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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

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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):

- ensure all children are offered a healthy and nutritious option at snack time
- provide more creative and physical play opportunities for children aged under three through a range of planned and free play activities both inside and out

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):

- improve the use of the assessment system to give a clearer picture of children's learning; use the information gathered to set individual targets for next steps in learning; and to inform future planning to take learning and teaching forward

- ensure day to day activities give sufficient emphasis to calculation and making marks or writing for a purpose

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