

Martley & District Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205291
Inspection date	02 October 2007
Inspector	Valerie Fane
Setting Address	Martley First School (The Old Hut), Martley, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR6 6QA
Telephone number	01886 889127
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Registered person	Martley & District 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 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?

Martley and District Pre-School is a committee run group that was registered at these premises in 1991. It operates from a building adjacent to the primary school in the village of Martley and has a fully enclosed area for outdoor play. The pre-school serves the surrounding area.

The pre-school and associated out of school club are open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 in school term time. There are currently 19 children on roll in the pre-school. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. There are currently 41 children on roll in the out of school club.

Seven staff work with the children. Of these, three have appropriate qualifications to Level 2 or above. At least half of the staff working with the children at any time are qualified except in the breakfast club where there is no member of staff with a Level 3 qualification. One member of staff is working towards a higher level qualification and one is working towards a Level 2 childcare qualification. The pre-school receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the importance of good hygiene routines as they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Older children understand that they are washing the germs off their hands because staff talk to them about this in circle time. Children receive satisfactory care in the event of an accident or needing medication because most staff have current first aid knowledge. However, children's welfare is compromised because the accident records often do not include their full name and children's privacy is compromised because the medication records are not confidential. Children are protected from cross-infection because the pre-school has a clear policy not to accept children who are unwell and this is made known to parents before their child attends. Children with specific medical needs receive appropriate care because staff have obtained relevant training and written information on their treatment is readily available.

Children have excellent opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They learn how their body works as they take part in a programme of exercises called 'activate' at the start of each session. They make frequent use of the stimulating outdoor learning environment for physical exercise. They develop balance and control as they ride a range of wheeled toys suitable to their age and stage of development up and down the long drive. They improve their climbing skills on the low tree in the garden and balance on the logs. Staff support less confident children well and help them balance between the logs. Children also have exercise through regular walks in the local area. For example, they walk to the Millennium Green to feed the fish and the ducks. Children in the after school club improve their ball skills as they play games of cricket or basketball and also enjoy using equipment in the garden such as the swings.

Children in the pre-school develop their understanding of the principles of healthy eating as they enjoy a range of healthy snacks that includes toast or a choice of fruit such as orange, banana and strawberries. They have a drink of milk or water with the snack and they remain well-hydrated because they can help themselves to a drink of water at any time throughout the day. At lunchtime they learn to eat their sandwiches and other savoury items from their lunch boxes first. Their learning is reinforced because the group is working towards accreditation as an eco-setting so they know which material can be composted and they take part in activities such as making fruit shapes with play dough. Children attending the after school club choose a cooked tea from a wide menu but many children have not learned to make healthy choices from the options provided.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children use premises that are suitable and are kept clean and well-maintained. The layout of the equipment is very attractive and welcoming. Children see their own work displayed as well as information relating to the current topics and posters that support their learning but also reflect our wider society. Children use a wide range of equipment that is suitable and safe. This is because the staff provide child-sized furniture, equipment and toys that are appropriate for their purpose and are of suitable design and condition and are very well-maintained. Children self-select freely because toys are stored in clearly-labelled, low-level storage units that are easily accessible.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where all risks have been identified and minimised. Staff make good use of risk assessments to identify concerns such as older children being able to open the stair gates to the office and kitchen. Staff take action to reduce the risk and have installed new gates with bolts that are out of reach of children. Children are safe outside because staff carry out a daily risk assessment before children go out to play. They keep a written record of the checks including any hazards such as damaged equipment and what action is needed to remove the hazard. Children begin to understand how to keep themselves safe because they learn to use knives safely when they are spreading their toast at snack time and they know they must hold hands when going for a walk and use the rail when going down the steps.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of the symptoms of child abuse and the procedures to follow if they were to have concerns about a child in their care. Children develop their awareness of their personal safety because staff encourage them to be confident to speak out and to develop close relationships with staff so that they are able to confide in them should the need arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages settle well in the friendly environment of the pre-school and out of school clubs. They relate well to staff and to each other. The youngest children in the pre-school benefit from long periods of free play when they select independently from the wide range of toys available to them. They discover their environment as they explore different textures both indoors and outside. They dig in the sand or play with cornflour and water or with shaving foam. They make marks and improve their hand control with a variety of tools such as paint brushes and rollers. They develop hand-eye co-ordination as they make puzzles and become aware of numbers as they match the numbers on the puzzle. Children enjoy creative play and develop their imagination as they experiment with different musical instruments such as recorders and maracas and use the well-resourced role play area. They make good progress because staff observe and assess their development using the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Children attending the out of school clubs welcome time to relax. They have a snack and then choose what they want to do. They play co-operatively with the play station or join in activities such as clay modelling or a treasure hunt. Children develop good social skills because they mix with others of different ages and those who attend other schools. Older children are considerate of the younger ones and help them with activities such as the modelling.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a firm knowledge of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and they understand clearly the breadth of learning that children acquire from different activities. Children take part in suitable activities to support their individual learning because staff have assessed their starting points through a development record completed by parents when their child joins the group and an initial assessment during the child's first term by their key worker. Children enjoy a diverse range of planned activities that covers all aspects of the six areas of learning and is linked to the stepping stones appropriate for their age and ability. Staff make regular assessments of each child's progress and evaluate activities well. They use the assessments and evaluations to inform future planning. Throughout most of the day staff manage their time well and are involved with the children who generally

behave well and are enthusiastic learners. However, there are some occasions during circle time when children are not focused because they do not have adequate adult support.

Children learn to care for living things because they help to feed the fish in pre-school. They extend their knowledge as they talk to staff about what fish eat and the differences between the fish in the tank and the fish in the local pond. They extend their thinking and recall past events in their lives because staff go on to ask them about what they had for their own breakfast. Children initiate their own learning experiences because staff follow their leading. For example, they agree to a request to go for a walk to the pond instead of the planned outside play. Children develop independence in dressing themselves as they put on waterproof trousers and Wellington boots for their walk. Staff give good support to the less able children so that they begin to learn how to dress themselves. Children have great fun on their walk and have a marvellous time jumping and splashing in the puddles. Staff allow the children to experiment freely. Children feed the ducks and the fish and enjoy watching them. On the way home they come to a stile and staff make good use of spontaneous opportunities to develop children's use of mathematical language as they ask them whether they are going through the stile or over it.

Older children show sustained concentration as they play with materials such as cornflour and water. They enjoy exploring the textures and use tools to develop mark-making skills as they make marks in the cornflour with a spoon and a brush. They observe what happens when they drip cornflour off the spoon back into the tray and then see how it feels if they drip it on to their fingers. They try adding green paint and watch what happens to the mixture and then make it runnier and splash in it.

Children make excellent use of the superb outdoor learning environment. They use positional language as they line up because they discuss who is in front of them or behind them. They make a minibeast city in the garden and find out about the habitats preferred by different creatures. They learn about plants as they grow things such as tomatoes and sweetcorn and harvest the crops. They make bird feeders and watch the birds come to feed. Children develop good imaginative play as they build the house made of sticks for the three little pigs and later turn it into a den for Eeyore. They balance on the logs and learn numerals as they try to identify the number painted on each log. They develop a love of books as they sit outside and listen to stories such as 'Cuddly Dudley' and explore the emotions expressed in the story.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They improve their understanding of our wider society as they play with toys such as books, dolls and small world toys. They discover other cultures through topics such as 'Foods from around the world' when they taste foods from different countries such as croissants, pizza and Chinese food. They make pictures with noodles and play an Italian game called 'fruit eater wolf'. Children develop their individuality and self-esteem because they have good opportunities to initiate activities and develop independence and responsibility as they help at snack time. Children generally behave well at the pre-school. They learn to share toys such as bikes and to take turns with a jigsaw puzzle. Older children in the pre-school have a good awareness of the boundaries and sometimes help younger ones to respond to instructions such as to tidy up toys. Children attending the out of school club behave well and older children involve younger ones in their play.

Children benefit from the good relationship that the staff have with their parents. Parents receive a detailed and attractive brochure about the pre-school or the out of school club before their child attends. They receive ongoing information about their child's care through regular conversations with their key worker or with other staff. Children are protected because parents are made aware of how to make a complaint to the regulator and a log is in place to record any complaints that might be made.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Children benefit from their parents' involvement in their learning because the manager sends out topic webs for each theme that give details about activities linked to the theme and children are encouraged to bring things in for the topic table each week. Parents attend parents' evenings twice a year where they have a talk about the aims of particular activities and ideas to support children's learning at home through everyday routines. Parents are encouraged to become more involved in their child's learning by spending a morning helping in pre-school.

Effective procedures are in place to identify children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their needs are met because staff encourage parents to seek help from outside agencies and attend appropriate training themselves to increase their understanding of the support needed by such children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and welfare is potentially compromised because the manager and the committee are not fully aware of the requirement to notify Ofsted of significant events such as a serious accident at the earliest opportunity and the supervisor of the breakfast club does not have a Level 3 qualification appropriate to the post. However, an action plan is already being implemented to enable a member of staff to obtain the required qualification as soon as possible. In other respects children flourish in the generally well-organised environment of the pre-school and the out of school club. They are protected from harm because the recruitment procedures are thorough. This ensures that all staff have undergone Criminal Records Bureau checks and are suitable to be in contact with children. All of the required documentation which contributes to the children's health, safety and welfare is in place and there are effective procedures to ensure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. Parents also provide all necessary information and consents before their child attends the group.

Leadership and management of the funded children is good. Children benefit greatly from the strong leadership provided by the experienced manager and the oversight provided by the committee. The manager leads a team of staff who are committed to providing high quality nursery education in the pre-school and regularly attend training to update or improve their practice. Children experience ongoing improvements because the manager is using the self-evaluation form to identify areas of weakness and to take steps to improve them. For example children are enjoying more opportunities to use musical instruments this term because a specialist teacher is coming in once a fortnight to work with them. However, children and staff do not benefit from a regular system of appraisals to monitor and review staff development.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of care the group was required to ensure parents sign medication dosage records and accident records. Recommendations were to: ensure all adults working in the pre-school are familiar with the setting's child protection procedures and policy; improve the practice of the emergency evacuation procedures; improve the records of children's attendance; improve the deployment of adults at lunchtime and update the risk assessments.

Children's continuity of care is promoted in the event of an accident or needing medication because parents are asked to sign the appropriate records. Staff use a notice board to alert parents to the need to sign a record on a particular day. Children are safeguarded because all adults working in the pre-school are familiar with the child protection procedures. Children develop their awareness of safety because they have regular opportunities to practise the emergency evacuation procedures. Staff ensure that all children practise by holding practices on different days of the week. Children are safeguarded because staff keep accurate records of their hours of attendance. Children are supervised well at lunchtime because staff are employed effectively during pre-lunchtime routines and adequate staff are employed to cover lunch breaks.

At the last inspection of the nursery education key issues were to review the planning to identify learning objectives and differentiation for more able children, to review the assessment procedures and to ensure that the manager monitors the effectiveness of the nursery education.

Good progress has been made. Children benefit from planned activities that show clearly how the activity will be differentiated for more able or less able children. There are effective procedures in place to observe and record children's progress and to identify their next steps in learning. The manager monitors the observations done by staff to ensure children's development is recorded consistently and accurately.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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.

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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 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):

- improve knowledge of the requirement to notify Ofsted of significant events at the earliest opportunity
- continue to implement the action plan to ensure that the supervisor of the breakfast club has a Level 3 qualification appropriate to the post
- improve the security of children's medication records; for example, ensure that records are confidential
- improve the recording of accidents to include details such as the child's full name.

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 leadership and management of the pre-school to include regular staff appraisals
- improve the organisation of some circle times to ensure that all children benefit from these activities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk