



# Mepal and Witcham Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	221729
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 November 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Lorraine Hunt
<b>Setting Address</b>	Brangehill Lane, Mepal, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01353 778300 (Primary school)
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Mepal and Witcham Pre School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Mepal and Witcham Pre-school opened in 1996. It operates from a room within Mepal primary school. The group serves the local area. There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area and the group have use of the school hall and playground. A maximum of 20 children, aged between 2 years 9 months and 5 years, may attend the group at any one time. The Pre-school offers 5 sessions a week, from 09.05 to 11.45 during school term times. An optional lunch club is available 2 days a week

until 13.00 in the summer term.

There are currently 15 children on roll. Of these, 12 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language, but has none currently attending.

The Pre-school employs 4 staff. The leader has a level 3 early years qualifications. There are no staff currently working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning the importance of good personal hygiene through routines such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack or taking part in cooking activities. Staff follow good hygiene practices and have undergone training in first aid and food hygiene to promote children's health and to ensure children receive appropriate medical attention. Required parental permissions and record keeping systems are in place but are not always appropriately located.

Children enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities to promote their physical development and have lots of fresh air and fun in the garden, whenever weather permits. Children also have good opportunities for indoor physical exercise as they take part in planned activities in the school hall such as parachute play and PE sessions. Children are developing health and bodily awareness as staff encourage them to think about how they feel immediately after energetic exercise.

Children benefit from the staff's knowledge and understanding of nutrition. Information is gathered from parents about children's individual dietary requirements which ensures their needs are met. Children are offered a varied range of fruit and drink at snack time but are not able to independently access water to drink during the session. This does not promote healthy drinking practices.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean, bright, well maintained and inviting environment. Staff prepare the rooms with appropriate resources in readiness for children's arrival each session, which makes children feel welcome. Children use a wide range of good quality, developmentally appropriate resources which are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they are safe, clean and in good condition. Children are able to access some available resources from shelves and trays at child height, which promotes their independence. The enclosed outdoor play area is particularly well equipped with a sturdy wooden climbing frame which has been erected on a safety surface to reduce the risk of injury.

Children's safety is enhanced by staff's attention to risk assessments and their vigilance in the supervision of children. Safety on local outings is given high priority; an adult: child ratio of 1:2 is strictly adhered to, parental permissions are obtained and children learn simple rules, such as walking in a line whilst holding hands with an adult, in order to be safe. Children are protected as the staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities in line with Area Child Protection Committee procedures. Staff have identified this as an area to develop and all staff are booked onto forthcoming courses.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy warm and positive relationships with staff who praise and encourage their efforts and achievements. This promotes children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are happy and secure in the setting and feel valued because staff listen to their news and thoughts with interest. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs and plan a balanced range of meaningful activities that stimulate children's interest and promote all areas of development. For example, very good use is made of the local environment; they go for walks where they look for particular shapes, visit the post office to buy stamps to post their own cards, visit the church and collect leaves, tree bark and acorns in the autumn. Follow up activities such as collage and a "post office" role play area reinforce this learning.

Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff show good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how children learn. Planning is flexible, clear and covers all areas of learning. Staff have recently started using a new assessment system which links children's competencies to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Children's individual "next steps" are being identified and used to inform planning. Parents are being given the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and share what they know about their child's abilities, although information about the child's starting points is not sought.

Children make good progress through a range of adult initiated and child led activities. The range of resources is good; children are able to access many of these freely, although there are limited creative and mark making resources that children can select from independently. Children enjoy excellent opportunities to investigate and explore for example, they learn about light and dark when playing with torches in the tent, use words like "squelchy" to describe the feel of pumpkin seeds, and plant bulbs and seeds and watch them grow.

Most children are confident communicators; they ask questions and initiate conversations with adults and each other. Staff use open ended questioning effectively, and give children choices, which extends their language and thinking. Children are learning to enjoy books and to use them for information. They are being introduced to letter sounds through "letter of the week" and more able children are able to name letter sounds in their names. However, there are missed opportunities to follow this up through routines and practical activities. Similarly, although children

demonstrate good counting and number recognition skills there are missed opportunities for comparing and calculation of numbers. Children demonstrate a good knowledge of size, shape and capacity and there are many good activities and resources to reinforce this.

Children are confident and motivated to try new activities. Staff use visual props at group time to explain special activities and to capture children's interest. Children behave well and are developing good negotiating skills as they learn to share and take turns with popular resources. They are developing good levels of independence as they pour their own drinks at snack time and attempt to put on aprons for water or messy play activities, but are confident to ask for help if they need it.

Children join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes and are encouraged to contribute their own ideas in familiar songs. They enjoy good opportunities to use their imagination as they pretend to be animals that move in different ways and explore the sounds made with different musical instruments, but there are limited opportunities for children to listen and move imaginatively to music. Children have good opportunities to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings through role play scenarios and art and craft activities such as junk modelling, free painting and collage. Children learn about space and develop their coordination skills as they play with the parachute, use the climbing frame and enjoy riding on the outside wheeled toys.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children behave well; they are given lots of praise and encouragement and learn to take turns, share resources and play harmoniously together because staff use positive methods to help them understand the rules. All children are valued; staff respect their individuality and have a good working knowledge of their individual needs and personalities.

Children talk about their own families and are beginning to gain an awareness of the society they live in through discussion, activities such as making and tasting barfi sweets for Divali, and the use of appropriate resources. Local visits and visitors to the group, such as a guide dog with his owner, a nurse and dental nurse broaden children's experiences and learning in a meaningful way. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered appropriately.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents have access to good information about the Foundation Stage curriculum, both in written form in the setting's brochure and also by way of a presentation by the group's early years mentor. Staff ensure that all parents know, and have opportunities to discuss, how their child is progressing and developing. Regular newsletters also keep parents informed about what their child will be learning about during the term and gives simple ideas about how to support this learning at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled, enjoy activities and achieve well because staff create an environment where they have appropriate space and resources to do so. The good adult: child ratio enables staff to work flexibly to support and extend children's learning in small groups and on an individual basis, when appropriate. Staff show high regard for children's health, well-being and enjoyment. They know children well, have comprehensive underpinning policies and procedures and use appropriate forms of record keeping to promote children's care and learning.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The new leader shows commitment to moving the group on and has identified areas for further development. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities, work together effectively to plan and support children's learning and create an environment that promotes positive outcomes for children. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the children who attend.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to record risk assessments, to devise strategies to evaluate the setting's strengths and weaknesses and to develop the assessment system and ways of giving parents feedback about children's progress.

There is now a comprehensive written risk assessment system in place which comprises daily tick sheets, completed by staff, and a detailed termly risk assessment carried out between the committee and leader. Parents are invited to meet with staff to discuss their child's progress and they receive a report at the end of the school year. Children's assessments are now directly linked to the stepping stones and are used to identify what children know and can do and their "next steps" of learning. Planning is informed by these assessments.

The committee has developed a staff appraisal system since the last inspection and a parents questionnaire is being developed to help the provision assess its strengths and weaknesses.

## **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.

## **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):

- develop a system for recording significant incidents and ensure that medication records are suitably located
- ensure that children have access to fresh drinking water at all times.

#### **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):

- provide opportunities for children to move and respond to music
- ensure routines and practical activities are used for comparing and calculating numbers and to support children's understanding of the link between letters and sounds. Ensure that children can freely access materials to be creative and write for a purpose.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)