

Mepal and Witcham Pre-School

Mepal Primary School, Brangehill Lane, Mepal, ELY, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2AL

Inspection date	16/06/2014
Previous inspection date	08/12/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children benefit from and enjoy a broad range of child-initiated and adult-led experiences which actively promote their good progress in all areas of learning.
- The key-person system is very effective in obtaining information from parents, carers and other agencies so that children's individual needs are met. There is a strong ethos of working in partnership with parents and carers that fully supports the needs of the child.
- Children are prepared very well for the move on to other settings or school. Staff manage change sensitively so children feel confident about continuing their learning in a new environment.
- Children's all-round development is positively enhanced because good use is made of the well-resourced outdoor play space, which children can use whenever they wish.
- Staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding procedures and practice. As a result, appropriate action is taken to minimise risk and to keep children from harm.
- The leadership and management of the setting is strong and continuously evaluates, monitors and reflects on practice with a view to developing the setting further.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children are not always well supported to develop their independence and direct their own learning, because staff do not always enable children to do things for themselves.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the playroom and the outside play area.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and the deputy manager.
- The inspector spoke to the staff throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at the planning and the children's assessment records.
- The inspector checked the suitability of all the staff working with the children and the provider's record of self-evaluation.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of the parents spoken to during the inspection.

Inspector

Jayne Hogan-Birse

Full report

Information about the setting

Mepal and Witcham Pre-School opened in 1996 and is on the Early Years Register. It is a voluntary, charity-run setting and operates from a purpose-built classroom situated in Mepal and Witcham Primary School in Cambridgeshire. It shares a secure outside area with the school's reception class. The building is accessible to all. The pre-school serves children from the local area. There are currently 21 children on roll in the early years age range. Funding for nursery education is available for two-, three- and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9am to 12 noon with an optional lunchtime club that runs from 12 noon to 1pm. There are six staff members who work directly with the children, five of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or above.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance opportunities for children to develop their independence and drive their own learning, for example, by enabling them to select and read books for themselves and to prepare their own snacks.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The children who attend the setting benefit from a robust admission system. Before attending the setting, home visits are offered by the key person to complete admission documentation and meet the family. This enables a holistic and inclusive approach to the care and teaching of the children and provides staff with the knowledge and understanding needed to accurately determine a baseline of the child's development. Once the child begins their time at the setting, settling in is taken at the child's pace. As a result, children become familiar with the setting, staff and other children. This supports them in forming strong and secure attachments to staff and peers. Once in attendance, children benefit from a supportive key-person system. Their developmental starting points are established and staff plan effectively for their future learning, taking account of their individual interests and needs. Ongoing observation means that staff accurately assess children's progress over time. Staff use additional information from parents about their children's learning at home to inform their assessments and planning. Consequently, children make good progress in their learning and development because educational programmes tailored to their unique needs. Parents and carers are positively encouraged to be actively engaged and contribute to their child's experiences at the setting. Staff believe partnership working is key to children's all-round development. They take positive steps to engage the parents. For example, parents have made and installed chalk boards

in the garden. As a result, children are able to engage in spontaneous mark making that increases their literacy and writing skills.

Teaching is good and there are numerous resources that reflect the extent of the training staff receive. For example, staff implement a partially child-led educational experience, where for a large part of the session children are free to independently access a broad range of equipment and open-ended resources that encourage play and exploration. The focus is often the process rather the conclusion. In addition, the playgroup implements a rolling snack time to enable children to continue to play and sustain their interest. This enables them to follow their play to their own conclusion and remain active for a large part of their day. As a result, children demonstrate high levels of activity and motivation. However, the rolling snack does not provide children with opportunities to complete tasks, such as choosing and preparing their own food. Staff are skilled at supporting children to extend experiences when appropriate. For example, children use the large wooden blocks to construct a stage then staff support them to extend this experience into a small spontaneous dance performance with music. As a result of this support, children begin to develop creative and critical thinking skills.

The effective key-person system monitors and evaluates children's progress. If progress is not made as expected, or there are concerns, staff seek appropriate and timely interventions to enable them close any gaps in learning. The children enjoy story and singing time daily and sit together in their key groups for this. However, children have limited opportunities to independently develop their interest in books and make choices for themselves about what they would like to read, as books are not readily available for them to help themselves to throughout the session. The setting benefits from a partially covered outdoor area, allowing children access to the outside on a free-flow basis regardless of the weather. This area has a system of large gates that are rearranged so the space can be used more flexibly. For example, zones are created for particular activities, or all the gates are left open to make a large space for the children to use.

The setting benefits from staff being trained to a high level and accessing continued professional development. They implement initiatives, such as the 'Every Child a Talker' programme. Chatter sacks are used during group time and are shared with parents to help them guide their children's learning at home. Staff are skilled at speaking to children. They ask them lots of questions that require children to think, reason and suggest. As a result, children develop skills in creative thinking and problem solving. Staff implement a range of communication systems for children to convey their needs. For example, children chose an appropriate symbol from a board to show staff that they need to use the toilet, if they are unable to communicate this verbally.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The effective key-person system means that children are well supported in forming secure attachments with staff and are nurtured in their well-being and emotional security. Staff teach children how to keep themselves and others safe by supporting them in taking and managing their own risks. For example, the older or more-able children use the school's

climbing frame. This offers more challenge and requires children to consider how they move safely on the equipment. Children learn how to keep safe in the sun and remember to ask for sunhats when they play outside in the warm weather. This also helps children to learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They play outside in the fresh air each day and enjoy healthy snacks.

Staff have robust arrangements in place to help children to cope with the move on to school. They manage this change sensitively. For example, they visit the schools in the summer term and invite the teachers into the pre-school. Staff make photograph diaries containing pictures of the children's new classroom and teacher. This all helps children to become more familiar with their new environment and feel confident about the move on. The pre-school shares the outside space with the reception class, and the children frequently spend time outside together. As a result of this close working relationship with the school, children are familiar with the environment and transfer seamlessly on to the next stage of their learning.

Staff implement an effective behaviour policy where children are encouraged in a positive way. Staff continually praise children when appropriate, and promote positive behaviour. They are good role models and give clear and consistent guidance on what is acceptable behaviour. They deal with challenging situations calmly and appropriately. For example, when children enter into minor disputes over the resources, staff intervene sensitively, encouraging kindness, sharing and cooperation. As a result, children develop the confidence and skills to manage their own behaviour. Children demonstrate high levels of confidence supported through the nurturing attitudes of the staff and the robust educational programme. Because of this, children are emotionally well prepared for the next steps in their learning. Staff use effective communication skills, with children listening closely to them and taking what they say seriously. They are perceptive to children's needs and offer reassurance and ways of resolving problems if children are experiencing difficulty. As a result, children feel secure.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting benefits from a strong leadership and management team. Safeguarding is paramount and the systems to keep children safe are well embedded in practice. All visitors are asked to provide identification and sign in the visitors' book. Staff in the setting have a good knowledge of their roles and responsibilities to protect children and promote their well-being. The pre-school implements a robust recruitment process including Disclosure and Barring Service checks. The effectiveness of staff is monitored closely to ensure that the standard of teaching remains high. For example, they benefit from regular supervision, meetings and appraisals and have opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills through further training and professional development. As a result, the children are protected by a well-trained and skilled staff team during their time at the setting.

The staff have a shared vision and high aspirations for the development of the pre-school. This is driven forward by the proactive management team. The team reflect on their practice as part of their process for self-evaluation. They set out the strengths of the

setting and the areas for improvement, and implement effective strategies to address these. Staff meetings help to develop the staff as a team and create a cohesive approach to practice. For example, they regularly use this time to review policies and discuss their implementation. As a result, the setting is constantly moving forward to meet the needs of the children and to enhance the quality of the experiences they have.

Partnerships with parents are strong and work effectively to ensure that children's needs are met. There are a range of systems in place to ensure that information is shared between parents, carers and the staff. Parents are invited into the pre-school on both a formal and informal basis and are asked to contribute to the development of the setting. For example, there is a suggestion box, parent drop-in sessions and open-air meetings during the year, along with stay and play sessions. In addition, the setting operates an open-door policy where parents are welcome to call in at any time to speak to staff. Parents are encouraged to share information of their child's achievements at home. The pre-school has strong links with a broad range of other professionals, who they work closely with to ensure that children's individual care and learning needs are appropriately met.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	221729
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	854592
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	21
Name of provider	Mepal and Witcham Pre School Committee
Date of previous inspection	08/12/2008
Telephone number	07510 173 818

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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