

Magdalen Gates Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254166
Inspection date	14 January 2008
Inspector	Christine Eglinton
Setting Address	Bull Close Road, NORWICH, Norfolk, NR3 1NG
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Registered person	The Trustees of Magdalen Gates Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Magdalen Gates Pre-School registered in 1992 and operates from two classrooms within Magdalen First School in Norwich. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00-11.30 and 12.30-15.00 during school term time only. All children have access to a designated enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 62 children aged from 3 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, all 62 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school has experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment where they benefit from good levels of cleanliness and hygiene throughout the setting which effectively contributes to limiting the risk of cross infection. This is further supported through good daily routines which help children learn the importance of good personal hygiene. The setting follows appropriate exclusion procedures for specific infectious illnesses which helps to prevent the spread of infection. All staff have relevant first aid training and implement effective procedures such as recording of accidents and administration of medication appropriately to maintain good health and consistency of care.

Staff gather all relevant information regarding diet and medical history to ensure children's individual needs are being met. Children benefit from a healthy diet and enjoy a balanced selection of snacks which includes a daily selection of fresh fruit. They are able to freely help themselves to fresh drinking water during the session. This enables children to become independent and helps them learn to recognise when they are becoming thirsty. Children learn the benefits of a healthy diet through practical activities such as growing their own vegetables. Practical activities such as making soup from the vegetables they have grown encourages children to make healthy food options.

Opportunities for children to be active, learn control of their bodies and develop their physical skills are good. They have great fun using a good variety of equipment both indoors and outdoors which help to develop their balance and co-ordination. For example, children enjoy running around the outdoor play area energetically with coloured streamers and catching bean bags and balls. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They use a range of small tools when playing with the play dough and frequently use scissors and glue for cutting and joining.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move confidently around the bright and welcoming child friendly environment making choices about their play at every opportunity. Space is well organised and used effectively to allow children to engage in a varied range of activities. The outdoor play space is used daily to provide children with an extended curriculum which incorporates aspects of the indoor environment outside. Children are able to see photographs of themselves which are well displayed. This encourages them to develop a sense of belonging within the setting. Children use a wide range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. This enables them to become focused during their play and resist distractions. Equipment is clearly labelled and easily accessible offering children further opportunities of selecting their own toys and equipment.

Comprehensive safety policies and procedures are implemented well by the staff to ensure children's safety. For instance, staff use a daily safety check list along with risk assessments that are kept updated. This enables children to play safely without risk of injury from hazardous equipment or dangerous practices. Children regularly discuss the setting's safety rules and show a good awareness of possible consequences if these are not followed. They confidently explain that running indoors may cause them to 'fall over and hurt themselves'.

Staff show good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and are clear about appropriate procedures to follow if they have any concerns regarding children's welfare. This helps to protect children from harm and neglect and promotes their welfare. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and easily accessible. However, the procedure for allegations being made against staff is not in line with the Local Safeguarding Children board guidelines.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and they arrive happy and confident. They immediately involve themselves in play and many of them are eager to see their friends while offering each other a warm welcome. Children have built close relationships with staff and clearly demonstrate their affection. Staff make effective use of information gained from parents regarding children's favourite activities. They ensure these activities and toys are freely accessible when children first attend the setting to offer them familiar experiences to help them settle more easily.

Children are very competent in taking care of their own personal needs. They butter toast and pour their own drinks during snack time, and are learning to dress themselves independently. Children self-register when they first arrive and there are further opportunities to recognise their names during the session. These experiences enable children to develop positive self-esteem. Children are involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and overall learning.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage, the stepping stones and how children learn. This enables them to plan a broad range of practical and meaningful activities. Staff know children well and they use lots of praise and encouragement to build children's confidence and self-esteem. Consequently children are confident learners which help them make good progress in all areas of their learning. Staff plan a good range of practical activities enabling children to build on their natural curiosity as learners. However, staff do not always use challenging questions during children's play to encourage them to think, and do not always make full use of incidental learning opportunities to motivate further learning.

The environment is well-organised and appropriate use is made of outside play area and availability of a range of relevant resources. Staff use their knowledge of children's starting points and use the information gained from assessments to help inform planning and move children to the next stage in their learning. Children speak confidently to their peers and adults. They talk openly during circle time about their interests and know how to use some common expressions such as thanking staff for providing them with special bread sticks. Children are confident writers and they frequently attempt writing during role play and easily recognise everyday situations when writing is used. For example, they write shopping lists when shopping at the local supermarket for ingredients to make a birthday cake. They enjoy reciting rhyming songs and are helped to become aware of letters in their names when using the computer keyboard.

Children show a keen interest in numbers and counting. They eagerly use their fingers to demonstrate how many toys they have. They enjoy counting objects when they play computer games and number rhymes encourage them to count up and back. Children learn how to

recognise shape and size through practical activities. For instance, they are able to recognise the square toast which turns into a rectangle when cut in half. Children then use simple calculation skills to see how many pieces will be made when the toast is cut into further squares. Focused activities such as measuring their height and making charts cover further aspects of mathematics.

Children have good opportunities of learning about living things when they feed Flora and Freddie the resident goldfish. They enjoy investigating using their senses when they explore the feeling of touching the texture of the 'jelly bath'. Children are very confident in using the computer to aid their learning and enjoy pressing the keys of mobile phones. They have great fun exploring their footprints with magnify glasses, and have good opportunities of learning about their local community through outside visits and from various people who visit the setting. Children are able to recognise local features such as different buildings and shops, and have explored their houses and homes through topic work.

Children are able to express their creativity and feelings through using a wide range of different materials and media. They play imaginatively in the role play area pretending to feed the dolls and pretend to be doctors. They have built up a wide repertoire of songs and enjoy exploring the sounds of musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff encourage all children to participate in the activities provided which ensures children have equal chances to maximise their enjoyment and potential. Staff ensure the environment reflects positive images of diversity such as signs written in community languages, and photographs of different cultural families. Well-planned topics and activities help children understand and appreciate other cultures. This encourages children to develop a positive attitude towards diversity and learn to acknowledge and accept differences.

There are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensure all children's needs are well planned for and met. Staff are secure in their knowledge of the code of practice, which means they are able to plan for children's individual needs. Therefore, children are able to experience a range of stimulating activities appropriate to their level of ability. Staff set consistent boundaries for children and frequently discuss the setting's 'golden rules' during circle time. This ensures children understand why certain behaviour is not acceptable. Children show a good understanding of social skills and staff treat children in a respectful manner. For instance, children talk about sharing the resources and thank staff for their snacks. Staff respond by thanking children for listening to each other during circle time.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents contribute towards an initial assessment of their child which enables staff to have a good understanding of individual needs and achievements. This helps staff build on what children already know. There are both formal and informal systems in place for staff and parents to share information about children's individual progress and development. Parents are given appropriate information about the nursery through the prospectus and newsletters. The notice board and display boards offer parents further opportunities of keeping them informed about the early years curriculum. This ensures parents understand that play plays an important role in developing children's skills for

the next stage of their learning. However, staff do not continually provide parents with suggestions of activities that can extend learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by qualified and experienced staff who have sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Effective induction procedures ensure staff understand the policies and procedures so they can contribute to the safety and welfare of the children. There are suitable contingency plans in place to cover for absences, and staff are very vigilant regarding adhering to the correct staff ratios which ensure children always have appropriate supervision. Staff work well as a team and appropriate rotas enable staff to be clear about their defined roles and responsibilities. This guarantees the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare.

Children receive good support from staff who enjoy their company and know them well. This helps them feel secure and confident. The day is well-organised allowing children time for quiet and active play which includes regular opportunities for outside play. Management actively encourage staff to undertake relevant training which supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available. Information kept about children is relevant and helps to promote their welfare. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being are in place. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the nursery is good. The manager's vision of good quality child care and education steer the work of the setting. Staff are supported by management through regular meetings. They plan the curriculum together and receive appropriate support from other outside agencies to improve their practice. The settings aims are very positive with emphasis on providing a happy, secure and stimulating environment through which children can develop enquiring minds, and appreciation of the world around them. This is being achieved through effective delegation and staff frequently meeting to discuss the aims of the setting. There are appropriate systems in place for monitoring the quality of nursery education and the manager is pro-active in looking at ways of improving the overall service. She has liaised with other professionals and outside agencies which enables her to enhance the overall curriculum and learning experiences for all the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last integrated inspection the group were asked to review the organisation of snack time to further develop children's independence skills. It was also suggested that they develop further systems to keep parents informed of their children's progress towards the early learning goals. Children now take an active part in snack time by buttering their own toast and pouring out their drinks. They are also encouraged to help themselves to fresh drinking water during the session. This helps children to become more independent and helps to establish important self-care skills required before they attend school. Parents are now invited to attend two formal meetings with their children's key worker to discuss their child's individual progress. This helps to involve parents in their child's education and establishes strong and effective partnerships.

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 the parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 aspects of the child protection procedure in respect of allegations made against members of staff or volunteers comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

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):

- encourage staff to fully utilise every learning opportunity within spontaneous events
- develop further opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's learning at home.

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