



## Meppershall Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 219293   |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 09 November 2005   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Paula Jane Hayhow  |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Village Hall, High Street, Meppershall, Bedfordshire, SG17 5LX |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01462 817359   |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Meppershall 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?

Meppershall Pre-school opened in 1984 and operates from the village hall building located on the main High Street in Meppershall and serves the local community in a rural setting. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.00, term time only. The group has use of a main village hall and second room used for small group work. There is no dedicated outside play space but the provision use the public park to the rear of

the hall.

There are currently 41 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school can support children with special educational needs, or speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six staff . Two of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Five staff members are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment. Their special requirements with regard to health and diet are well documented and they are offered healthy and nutritious snacks. These include foods such as toast, crackers, dried and fresh fruit. The weekly menu is shared with parents to ensure children's preferences are met and healthy options are offered. The group operates a 'snack bar' system where children choose when they have their snack, who to sit with and help themselves to snacks and drinks. This promotes their independence and provides them with opportunities to learn valuable social skills. They are learning good hygiene practices, for example, they wash their hands before snack and regularly have opportunities to discuss the relevance of this, through project work and daily discussions.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in adult-led activities such as indoor races, parachute games and action rhymes. The children also regularly use the nearby outdoor play area where they enjoy playing on static equipment such as the slide, rocker and climbing frames. Children's independence is promoted and they are developing an understanding of their own needs, for example, pouring their own drinks and visiting the bathroom independently.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work is displayed and resources are appealingly arranged and easily accessible. Their safety is prioritised and staff carry out daily safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. However, the children's safety could be compromised as they potentially have access to the kitchen and boiler cupboard. Children have a good understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are consistently given clear explanations by staff and understand the importance of turn-taking and tidying toys away in order to prevent accidents.

Children's safety is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly sized tables and chairs. Children independently select toys and activities from a range of good quality play materials. Staff regularly check these to ensure that they are clean and safe, accessing additional guidance in this area through reference to the comprehensive resource inventory, which is divided into different areas of learning. Children's welfare is given a high priority as staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and are able to identify and follow up any concerns. However, this area could be improved by the introduction of a confidential recording procedure.

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

The provision is good.

Children are very happy, secure and settled, thoroughly enjoying their time at the pre-school. They are keen to participate and are enthusiastic about the activities and play opportunities provided. All children are confident in their relationships with each other and with staff. They have high self-esteem, happily discussing their activities and proudly showing their work. This is enhanced by the sensitive support and highly appropriate interaction from staff. Children and staff are often engaged in creative discussions about a variety of topics, such as the planets, shape and colour, enabling children to develop their social and communication skills. The staff offer regular opportunities for children to work in individual key worker groups or in a one to one situation, such as using the computer, and this further facilitates children's learning.

Children show a high level of independence as they competently choose resources and activities throughout the session. They are consistently offered new and challenging opportunities, which are always linked to their individual needs and capabilities, thus ensuring the promotion of all areas of development. An example of this is the teaching of key skills such as the use of scissors and name recognition, which children will then be able to use when they move up to lower school. All staff consistently make good use of open questions, taking every opportunity to extend children's learning and encourage them to think further.

Younger children's learning and development is carefully planned and promoted. Staff have a good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This is effectively used when assessing new children and then forms the basis of each child's individual play plan.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making very good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of the 'Foundation Stage Curriculum', planning and adapting activities appropriately. The majority of activities are child-initiated, with staff providing support and encouragement whenever needed. Staff are skilled in using this method, making judgements about when to intervene and when to allow children time to develop their ideas and determine their own learning. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use comprehensive methods for assessing children, using information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered and determine future

activities.

Children clearly show their enjoyment as they participate in a balanced range of activities. These include regular opportunities to participate in role play, crafts, construction and physical play. Staff use their experience and knowledge to ensure that children are purposefully occupied and are offered appropriate challenge in their play.

Children are motivated and fully engaged in their play and activities. They have a clear understanding of their own needs and the older children are confident in meeting their personal needs. Children have very good relationships with their peers, discussing activities and organising imaginary games and turn-taking. An example of this is when using the 'shoe shop' role play area, they decide who will be customers and shop keepers, alternating and sharing these roles. They count and use mathematical language in their daily play and conversations and staff are skilled in making the most of opportunities to increase children's knowledge, for example, discussing the longest and shortest pieces of clay. Children enjoy stories and have a good understanding that print holds meaning. However, some opportunities are missed to promote children's knowledge of written numbers, letters and words.

Children are gaining a knowledge of their community through the provision of a range of resources and activities. These include visitors to the setting, such as the lollipop lady, vicar, reception teacher and midwife as well as visiting local facilities including the shops, park, and church. They are developing an appreciation and understanding of the wider world through topic work such as 'the world', where children looked at different countries, cultures and ways of life.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full and active part in the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality. Children are offered a good range of opportunities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Hanukah, Eid, Divali and Christmas. Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. Their behaviour is exceptional throughout the sessions as they choose their activities and competently organise turn-taking and sharing. They respond very well to staff, and the positive approach and excellent staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this. The staff ensure that this is implemented, working sensitively with individual children and parents to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines.

The quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. There is a very strong commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are kept very well informed of their children's progress

through daily dialogue and regular meetings with staff. There are regular newsletters and an informative notice board containing information about a number of issues including the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, the 'Birth to three matters' framework, health and safety, and Ofsted's regulations. Parent-helpers are present at each session and are highly valued by both staff and children. The group actively seek parent's views, for example, through the use of a suggestion box. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and high quality care can be provided for each child.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Overall, the needs of all children who attend are met.

Children's care is enhanced by the excellent organisation and they benefit from the care provided by the dedicated and highly skilled staff. Thorough staff induction, appraisals, supervision and monitoring ensure that the pre-school's comprehensive policies and procedures are applied consistently.

Children's play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space, allowing them the freedom to move safely and independently from one activity to another. This enables them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Children's welfare, care and safety are consistently promoted through the staff's practical knowledge of the pre-school's policies and procedures. There are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children and this is supported by a sound induction process for new staff, ensuring that all are able to work appropriately with the children.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the clear understanding that the play leader has of her role and responsibilities, ensuring that she is aware of all regulations and changes in legislation. She acts as a very good role model and staff are highly motivated, furthering their qualifications and regularly attending additional training. Sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of opportunities throughout the morning. Children's progress is tracked through comprehensive ongoing assessments and parents are kept very well informed of this. Staff meet regularly to plan future work, ensuring that the needs of individual children are met and the development of all children is promoted.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The pre-school were asked at the previous inspection to review the organisation of all aspects of their practice and show how the needs of all involved will be met. They were also asked to further improve staff knowledge and understanding of the 'Foundation Stage' curriculum. The group was asked to demonstrate how the quality of teaching will be improved and how consistency will be achieved when dealing with behavioural issues, particularly with regards to the policy for special needs. The group were to ensure that staff receive suitable training on child protection issues

and to regularly review the range of activities to ensure that they are not gender specific. They were also asked to review the existing risk assessments and develop them further, and ensure that the fire log is detailed, effective and evaluative. Lastly they were asked to review the organisation of the sessions and the resources within the group to ensure the needs of all children are met.

The group has reviewed all their practices and have robust procedures in place to meet all the recommendations requested at the previous inspection. They have reviewed their policies and regularly monitor these in their staff meetings. They have an induction package for staff which includes all procedures and practices, monitored regularly through appraisals and regular team meetings. They have induction for all parents and this is further enhanced by a key worker system where individual children are assessed thoroughly through the use of the 'Birth to Three' framework and monitored daily to meet all needs of the children attending. Each child has an individual play plan and this is updated regularly and forms the basis of future activity planning. The curriculum has been revised and ensures all children can participate and there has been an emphasis on making the activities less gender specific and ensuring there is sufficient challenge for the more able children. The play leader has completed the SENCO training and staff have reviewed their special needs policy and all staff including the established workforce have undertaken full induction training.

All staff have carried out further training on the foundation stage and the early learning goals. Some have been on observation and teaching skills training, managing behaviour and child protection courses and this has been shared with the rest of the staff at the team meetings thus improving all staff's skills and knowledge. At these meetings the staff regularly assess the stepping stones whilst devising the future curriculum for the children. They have reassessed the play room, deployment and have made good use of the space, by the use of dividers creating specific play areas and effectively assesses the support needed for the children. This has benefited the children's behaviour. The group revised their procedures relating to risk assessment and safety for the children. They have an annual risk assessment and make use of daily hazard check lists. This ensures the play areas are safe for the children. The fire procedures have also been reassessed. The group have a detailed fire log with all drills, fire reports, procedures recorded and this is monitored on a regular basis. These measures further improve the safety and learning of the children.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are 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):

- ensure that there is a method to confidentially record any child protection concerns
- improve the children's safety by ensuring they cannot access the kitchen and boiler cupboard

#### **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):

- increase opportunities for children to view written letters, numbers and words.

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)