



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 219293

DfES Number: 580977

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 08/12/2003
Inspector Name Susan Marriott

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Meppershall Pre-School
Setting Address Village Hall
High Street
Meppershall
Bedfordshire
SG17 5LX

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Meppershall Pre-School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Meppershall Pre-School
Address Village Hall
High Street
Meppershall
Bedfordshire
SG17 5LX

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Meppershall Pre-school opened over 20 years ago and is a committee run sessional group with charitable status. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. It operates from the village hall building located on the main High Street in Meppershall and serves the local community in a rural setting. Most children live locally and reflect the economic and social cultural diversity of the area.

The group has use of an entrance area, toilets for staff, main village hall, bar area and toilets for the children at the rear of the premises. There is no dedicated outside play space but the provision use the public park to the rear of the hall.

The group will now be registered to provide sessional care for 26 children aged from two to five years and operate five morning sessions per week from Monday to Friday between the hours of 09:30 until 12:00. There are 34 children on roll altogether, including 16 funded three year olds and 9 funded four year olds. There are three children who have been identified as having special educational needs and none for whom English is an additional language.

There are eight staff who work with the children and five of these hold relevant qualifications. The setting has received some support from the advisory services.

How good is the Day Care?

Meppershall Pre-School provides a satisfactory quality of care for children.

Many aspects of the provision are in transition since the sudden departure of the previous supervisor earlier in the year.

Ineffective use is currently being made of the staff, space and resources to meet the needs of all children. The committee have worked hard to support the staff through the development of policies and procedures, but some further amendments are required.

Suitable consideration is given to ensuring children's safety within the setting, but

initial risk assessments and fire records have yet to be fully developed. Whilst practical steps are taken to ensure the good health and welfare of children, the policy for administration of medicine does not reflect the actual practice of the setting.

The pre-school is committed to its policy of inclusion for children with special educational needs, but currently lacks the appropriate resources to meet the challenges this presents without detriment to the majority of the other children.

There are suitable arrangements to protect children but staff await appropriate training to increase their confidence in their ability to implement these procedures.

A suitable range of activities are planned and provided to encourage children to learn through play. The staff work well as a team and encourage children to make independent choices and to learn effectively. However, the staff are frequently unable to interact effectively with children because of the disruption caused by some. Staff are not always consistent in their expectations for children's behaviour.

There is a good, supportive partnership with parents and carers and this has improved substantially over recent months. They know what is going on in the playgroup through regular newsletters and informal contact with staff. They are encouraged to join in with the activities through serving on the committee and fund raising for the group.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting was required to develop a policy for the safe conduct of outings and this has been completed satisfactorily.

What is being done well?

- There is a friendly staff team who know what they want to achieve.
- Children are happy and are developing confidence and beginning to build on their personal independence.
- The planned activities effectively support the development of links in children's learning in many areas, such as the 'roadway' linking the 'shop' with 'Grandma's house'.

What needs to be improved?

- procedures for lost and uncollected children
- the policy for the administration of medicine
- the group's documentation
- the organisation of the sessions
- the range of activities offered

- risk assessments
- fire safety
- the management of children with special needs
- consistency in managing children's behaviour
- the staff's knowledge and confidence with regard to child protection

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person must take the following actions by the date shown

Std	Action	Date
2	Devise procedures for lost children, and review the existing procedures for uncollected children	31/03/2004
7	Devise a medicine policy that reflects the practice of the group, and demonstrate how medicines administered to children will be recorded	31/03/2004
14	Review all documentation to ensure that the National standards are being met.	31/03/2004

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	Review the organisation of the sessions and the resources within the group to ensure the needs of all children are met.
3	Review and adjust the range of activities on offer to ensure that they are not gender specific and meet the needs of the more able children.
6	Review the existing risk assessments and develop them further, and ensure that the fire log is detailed, effective and evaluative.
10	Demonstrate how the policy for special needs will be reviewed to ensure that the interests and welfare of all children, staff and parents is taken into

	account.
11	Demonstrate how the expectations for children's behaviour will be reviewed to ensure that consistency in dealing with challenging behaviour is achieved.
13	Ensure that staff receive suitable training on child protection issues.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Meppershall Pre-School is acceptable but is limited by significant weaknesses across all six areas of learning. Children are making limited progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching has significant weaknesses. Children are happy and enjoy themselves. The group is lively and loud and the inconsistency of staff expectations for children's behaviour do not promote good behaviour and concentration in the more challenging children. Planning is generally good and gives appropriate guidance to staff, although the supervisor admits to limitations in delivery of the programme for mathematics. She has recently introduced an assessment system which is likely to be effective in practice. Despite their best efforts, the staff are regularly distracted from their tasks by the demands of particular children whose needs are not being consistently met. Group activities are frequently disrupted and the quality of learning for all children is diminished. The quality of interaction, discussion, questioning and explanation is variable according to the daily group dynamics.

Leadership and management of the group is generally good, although there has been much to do in recent months. The new supervisor has clear vision and the skills to guide the staff team to make the necessary improvements to the provision. The staff appreciate the support being given by the parent's management committee and relationships between staff and parents are reported to be improving quickly.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Many parents have come forward to support the group since the sudden departure of the previous supervisor. Newsletters and an information board ensures that parents are well informed about the daily provision, although more detailed information about the educational programme is yet to be produced. Many parents are actively involved in the running of the group to support their children's learning.

What is being done well?

- The staff team work well together to create a warm and friendly environment.
- The staff are beginning to establish links between each area of learning.
- The supervisor is able to lead the group forward. She produces clear plans and has devised a promising system for assessment which will track children's progress against the stepping stones.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation of each session.
- staff knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage and the early

learning goals.

- the quality of teaching for all children
- consistency of expectation for children's behaviour.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The action plan was not available.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children are confident, select their own activities and develop personal independence in self care tasks. However, they are not always interested and excited to learn. Whole group activities do not always sustain the interest of all children and the organisation does not presently support the development of concentration skills. Children's behaviour deteriorates when their needs are not being met. Daily routines do not sufficiently support children in the formation of good relationships.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Some children learn to listen and respond appropriately during group time and they learn new vocabulary through planned activities such as "Grandma's house". Some planned activities support children's learning in linking sounds and letters, reading and three letter word building. However, there is insufficient emphasis given to encouraging children to enjoy stories and to develop early reading skills. Children write their names but do not attempt writing for a sufficient variety of purposes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children have a good knowledge of two dimensional shapes and count well. The supervisor admits to weaknesses in delivering the programme for mathematics and insufficient emphasis is given to numbers as labels and to problem solving through practical activities. Children have good opportunities to develop calculating skills through number songs. Staff do not always remember to include mathematical language and learning within the daily routines.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate but staff are not always well deployed to support child initiated learning. Planned activities are often over directed and children do not select resources to build and design. The children gain a sense of time and place through discussion with staff when they are able to engage in conversation. Children do not yet have regular access to the computer, although they do use technological toys in play.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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The plans do not presently support the development of physical skills in a progressive way. Children move confidently around the nursery with control and co-ordination. However, daily use of the outdoor area is seen as purely recreational by some staff and this limits children's progress in the use of a range of small and large equipment. They use a range of small tools with increasing control. Health awareness is not given due emphasis.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Staff plan regular opportunities for children to experience an adequate range of media but these are often over directed and do not always encourage children to express their own ideas. Staff do not intervene appropriately to support imaginative role play. Music based activities are included on plans but these are always directed by staff. Children have too few opportunities to respond using their senses and to use their imagination in art and design, dance, role play and stories.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Review the organisation of all aspects of the pre-school and show how the needs of all involved will be met; to include staff, parents and children.
- Further improve staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals.
- Demonstrate how the quality of teaching will be improved.
- Demonstrate how consistency will be achieved when dealing with behavioural issues.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.