



The Mulberry Bush Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	125007
Inspection date	06 March 2006
Inspector	Ceri Ann Mills
Setting Address	St. Davids, Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 2XE
Telephone number	020 8660 4180
E-mail	
Registered person	The Mulberry Bush (Coulsdon) Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

The Mulberry Bush Pre-School is a registered charity which opened in 2000.

It operates from two buildings situated in the grounds of Byron Primary School, Old Coulsdon, Croydon, Surrey. The charity has a second provision located in South Croydon, Surrey.

Children are grouped by age and both buildings have an enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school is open term time from 08:15 until 18:00. Within these times the pre-school incorporates a range of different services, including a breakfast club, sessional care between 09:15 and 12:00, and then 13:00 until 15:30, an optional lunch club between 12:00-13:00, and after school care from 15:30-18:00.

The pre-school may care for up to 56 children from 2 years to under 8 years at any one time.

The pre-school also run a holiday club which operates during most school holidays. The club may care for up to 32 children from 3 years to under 8 years at any one time. The club was not observed at this inspection.

Mulberry Bush Pre-school serves families in the local area of Coulsdon and Kenley. There are currently 82 pre-school children on roll, of these 58 receive funding for nursery education.

The pre-school supports children with special education needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 14 staff employed, of whom 10 hold a recognised childcare qualification. Staff are based with a designated age group and work flexibly to cover the full range of the provision.

The pre-school receives support from the Local Authority Early Years and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean, spacious and well maintained environment. Children's good health is protected because staff have effective procedures in place for ensuring toys and equipment are kept clean and hygienic. For example, a new batch of play dough is made up every few days. Spills are quickly cleared up and tables are thoroughly cleaned with anti bacterial spray before and after refreshments.

Children learn about personal hygiene and are developing good skills in self care, such as blowing their noses and disposing of the tissues appropriately. Staff supervise younger children in the bathroom and promote their independence. Children benefit from having access to child size facilities such as small, low level toilets and hand basins. They know to wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack because staff talk to them about the importance of good hygiene habits. However, the current hand drying arrangements for older children does not consistently prevent cross infection.

Children's privacy is respected by staff during nappy changing routines and sound procedures are implemented to minimise the risk of infection to children.

Children's health and welfare needs are appropriately met because a high proportion of staff are trained in first aid. Accident and other health records are well documented and shared with parents. Staff act in the child's best interest if they are unwell and have clear procedures to follow in the event of emergency treatment being required.

Children enjoy a very good range of physical activities on a daily basis which keeps them healthy and promotes a positive attitude to exercise. Children negotiate space well as they confidently ride a range of wheeled toys; develop their climbing and balancing skills using outdoor apparatus and practise many different skills with smaller equipment, such as bats, balls and hoops.

Children's individual dietary needs are effectively met because staff are well informed about children's requirements.

Children greatly benefit from mealtimes which are a relaxed and social occasion. Staff and children sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each others company. They talk about the food in their lunch boxes or the snack provided by the setting, which includes fresh fruit. As a result children are beginning to understand why different types of foods are good for their bodies. Children receive a drink of milk or water at regular intervals, however, should they become thirsty at other times drinking water is not readily available.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety and security is ensured both inside the two buildings and within the enclosed outside play areas because staff are vigilant and take steps to minimise risks. Effective systems are in place to record children, visitors and staff to the setting and children benefit from being accommodated within the grounds of a primary school which has additional security systems in place.

Staff deployment is very good, which ensures children are well supervised at all times. Rigorous procedures at collection, arrangements for outings and entry to the buildings help contribute to ensuring children's safety.

The learning environment is bright, attractive, warm and welcoming to children and their families. It is well organised to ensure children move safely between areas and have independent access to a very good range of suitable and safe equipment and play provision. Older children are able to take themselves to the bathroom which helps to develop their independence.

Children demonstrate a growing understanding of keeping themselves safe from harm and benefit from the outside speakers, such as road safety, police and fire service, who visit the setting from time to time. Children listen attentively to the gentle reminders from staff and know why running in the classroom and riding tricycles outside the designated area can be dangerous.

Good fire safety arrangements are in place. Children are familiar with evacuation procedures because fire drills are regularly practices and evaluated.

Children are protected and safeguarded from harm because staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures. Staff regularly update their knowledge of child protection and the setting has revised the child protection policy following recent training. All staff have read and understood the amended document which is available to parents so they know that a child's safety and welfare is the settings first priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children in pre-school have a happy and purposeful time because staff have a very clear understanding of child development and recognise how children learn most effectively. Children are keen to participate in all activities and are confident to select tasks independently because the environment is wonderfully stimulating and child centred. Staff working with the children under-three carefully plan and prepare a broad and balanced range of activities to encourage them to develop skills and have fun. Children have many opportunities to express themselves and explore a variety of creative mediums such as painting, singing, pasta, sand and role-play.

Children thoroughly enjoy playing out of doors where there are exciting challenges for all ages and abilities. In preparation for going outside children are encouraged to put on their own coats which helps develop and refine their self care skills. Staff use effective strategies to support children's independence by giving lots of praise which makes them feel good about themselves and their achievements.

Staff use the Birth to three matters framework with increasing effectiveness to observe children's achievements. This helps to ensure children make good progress in all aspects of their development. Staff position themselves with the children so they are directly able to support their play. This helps children to sustain interest and concentration. Children happily talk to staff about what they are doing and staff are attentive to what children say and do. Staff make good use of open questioning to extend children's thinking and learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good or better progress in their learning because staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Systems for securing the links with planning are effective. Staff plan an exciting and stimulating range of activities and first hand experiences which link clearly to learning outcomes. Children's progress is monitored and observed. Staff use the observations and their knowledge about individual children to plan the next steps in their learning, ensuring good support and sufficient challenge is provided. Children's learning is enhanced because staff make good use of time and resources, and the environment enables children to freely access a full range of equipment.

Children are confident in initiating their own learning because staff allow children to interpret planned activities for themselves. However, children's decision making does not extend to whether they wish to play in or out of doors.

Children's independent skills are well developed. They put on their own coats, take themselves to the bathroom, wash their hands and pour their own drinks. They concentrate and persevere with their self chosen tasks. For example, after children draw family members they practice emergent writing and decide to turn their work into a book, competently handling a range of tools, including pencils, hole puncher and scissors.

Children have many opportunities to recognise numbers and letters around the environment and are encouraged to label their work when finished which helps to develop their pre-reading and writing skills. Children enjoy participating in group story sessions and make very good use of the "library" which is inviting and very comfortable. They handle books with care and spend time "reading" and sharing familiar stories with friends.

Children are guided well by staff who encourage children to observe, express their thought and develop their language.

Children use a good range of vocabulary to describe their real and imagined ideas through play and are able to recall experiences they have enjoyed, for example as they look through a photograph album they recognise themselves and their peers and talk about when they made a bird cake. Staff effectively responds to the children's interest by asking open questions to explore the children's recollection of the topic. The current dinosaur topic has introduced the children to many new words and the concept of time.

Children's understanding of number is well developed because staff make good use routines and incidental opportunities to encourage children to count and compare numbers. Children learn about shape, space and measure through exploratory activities and use appropriate mathematical language. For example, children pour rice into various size containers and talk about the pots being full and empty, then ask for a bigger or smaller container.

Children enjoy expressing themselves through art and craft activities and in a variety of role play situations. They show good imagination both inside and out of doors. They happily take on family roles or familiar situations like visiting the baby clinic or driving to a garage for petrol.

Children have regular opportunities to use technology. They confidently use the computer and demonstrate good mouse control. Children are well supported by staff who adapt their teaching techniques to suit the needs of individual children ensuring they are able to consolidate their knowledge and develop at their own rate.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle very well at the pre-school. On arrival they confidently hang up their coats on named pegs and find their name card for self registration. The familiarity of this routine and warm welcome given by staff, helps children feel secure as they separate from their parents and carers. The established key worker system enhances

relationships and helps less confident children develop a sense of belonging in the setting. Children are encouraged to be independent learners and make their own choices from the wide range of activities provided.

Children know where items belong and enjoy being given the responsibility to help tidy up. Staff acknowledge children's achievements by giving lots of warm praise, which helps build their confidence and self esteem.

Children benefit from the staff's consistent and positive encouragement of good behaviour. Younger children follow the example of the staff, who provide good role models for children, and their older peers. They recognise rules, such as wearing caps when playing in the sand and learn to share resources. Consequently, children's behaviour is good. Children play harmoniously together and negotiate taking turns without the assistance of staff, most of the time. Staff use positive strategies, such as the egg timer to help children's understanding of sharing, such as when playing on the computer or a favourite tricycle.

Children benefit from the strong relationship the staff build with parents, who are well informed about the setting and know what to expect because of the wide range of information available to them, including policies, such as complaints procedures and details of Birth to three matters framework for younger children. The setting values parental feedback and suggestions and supports parents who have varying work patterns by providing a range of different childcare options, including an extended day.

Children feel valued and good about themselves because staff treat them as individuals and with equal concern. An inclusive and welcoming environment is promoted with effective systems in place to support children with special needs and those who have English as an additional language.

Children have access to a range of resources which reflect most aspects of diversity. They learn about many different cultures and festivals through well planned and purposeful activities. For example, when celebrating Chinese New Year, older children were shown examples of Chinese writing and were able to use authentic Chinese writing materials to produce their own work.

This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is very good and contributes positively to children's learning.

Parents have good opportunities to share information about their children with those caring for them, so staff get to know the children well and provide appropriately for them. Information about the Foundation Stage curriculum for the development of funded children is prominently displayed on the parents notice board. In addition, the setting works with the Pre-school Learning Alliance and Adult Education who organise information meetings and workshops for parents on site.

Staff involve parents in their children's learning by providing activities that can extend

learning at home, such as a book loaning scheme. Children's achievements are shared with parents on a daily basis. Meetings are arranged for a fuller discussion about their child's progress and next steps for learning. Parents receive clear and regular information about the setting through, for example the prospectus, newsletters and displays.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit because the management structure of the pre-school is secure and all staff work extremely well as a team. Management promote an inclusive environment in which every child matters and there are clear aims for the provision which are implemented effectively by staff through the operational plan.

The premises are very well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities and the schedule of the sessions allow children plenty of time to see activities through and achieve positive results.

All staff working in the setting are suitable to do so because of the robust recruitment and induction procedures in place, which are overseen by the board of trustees. Children benefit from the commitment of a well qualified and skilled staff team who effectively support children of varying ages and abilities in their development. Staff fully understand their role and are familiar with the settings policies and procedures which they implement well to promote good outcomes for children.

All legally required documentation which contributes to the children's health, safety and well being is in place. Records are clear, up to date, easily accessible and stored securely.

Children's care and learning is enhanced by the effective implementation of a key worker system. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of how children learn and have a developing system in place which makes good use of the Birth to three matters framework with the younger children. Children are carefully grouped which ensures activities are suited to the different age of children attending. Children have an allocated key worker who secures good links between home and the setting. As a result staff are fully aware of children's individual needs and their family circumstances.

Children's developmental progress is regularly monitored and shared with parents.

The leadership and management is good, which has a positive effect on children's learning.

Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a secure knowledge of the foundation stage and a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children. Through regular assessments of children's progress, staff plan a rich and stimulating education programme which is monitored and evaluated.

The setting has clear aims, which include a commitment to identify areas in which further development could be made for the children and the wider community. Management influence practice on a daily basis and a high priority is placed on staff development. Staff have opportunities to attend training which supports them in their role and information is often cascaded at team meetings which means staff maintain their knowledge of current practice. Annual appraisals allow the management to assess staff performance and identify ongoing training to further enhance the expertise of staff and the rich experiences offered to children. Staff recognise the benefits of working together with parents and make very good links within the community and with outside agencies. As a result the setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were no significant weaknesses to report in care or education, however the provider was asked to consider improvements to how parents are informed of activities and topics.

The provider has evaluated the settings methodology for sharing important information with parents and the way in which it is presented. As a result parents regularly receive a newsletter, advising them about events and activities, whilst posters and notices are prominently displayed on the parents board. The setting has an arrangement in place to ensure parents who do not speak, read or write English receive the relevant information.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standard 11- Behaviour. An allegation was made about an incident of physical punishment.

The provider quickly carried out an internal investigation and established the incident had not occurred before an unannounced visit was made by a childcare inspector. The complaint and how the pre-school had handled and resolved the concern was discussed. As a result Ofsted found no evidence that the provider was not complying with the national standards and no action was taken. However, a recommendation was made to improve the complaints procedure in line with new regulations.

A full account of the alleged incident is maintained on file and the complaint is recorded in the complaints log.

The provider remains qualified to be registered .

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.

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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 children have access to drinking water at all times
- improve hand drying arrangements to prevent cross infection
- extend the range of resources to fully reflect diversity by including family compositions and disability.
- continue developing the Birth to three matters framework for the younger children

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):

- extend opportunities for children to choose whether to play indoors or out

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