



Mucky Pups

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY316938
Inspection date 16 March 2006
Inspector Anne Daly

Setting Address The Scout Hut, Magnolia Road, Ashingdon, Rochford, Essex, SS4 3AD
Telephone number 07944162953
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Registered person Mucky Pups 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Mucky Pups Pre-school is privately owned and operated by an informal partnership of Susan Castle, Sally Rolph and Debbie Purkiss. It opened in 2006 and operates from a scout hut on the border between Ashingdon and Hawkwell, Essex. All children share a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday morning from 09:15 to 11:45 for 39 weeks of the year.

There are currently 20 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, three children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and surrounding areas and attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school is run by the three partners, who all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and from the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the importance of effective personal hygiene through daily routines. They understand the need to wash their hands, because they know that their hands carry germs. Children carefully dispose of used tissues after wiping their noses to avoid cross infection. They are protected from the spread of infection by the setting's written sickness policy being shared with parents and carers, to ensure that they know when to keep their unwell children at home. Children are protected as all staff hold first aid qualifications to ensure that they can effectively handle any minor injuries. Staff are able to act in children's best interests if they are ill or have an accident as parents have given their written permission for them to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment.

Children's dietary needs are met, because staff request information from parents and carers about their children's dietary requirements and allergies. Children are encouraged to eat healthily as the setting's healthy eating policy is shared with parents and carers. Children have healthy options at snack time, such as fruit, with a biscuit. They eat well and enjoy their snack time together, but staff do not use this daily opportunity to promote children's understanding of healthy eating through conversation, such as comparing the benefits of fruit to a biscuit. Drinks of water are freely available on request during the day.

Children enjoy physical activity and show great enthusiasm when invited to play outdoors, where they can practise and refine their skills of peddling small ride on toys or scooting. Indoor apparatus allow them opportunities to balance and climb. They enjoy developing their fine motor skills with some exciting activities, such as threading foam pieces to make friendship bracelets.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a generally safe and secure environment. The hall is spacious, but with only limited opportunities to create a welcoming environment by displays of children's work and posters at eye level. Children can freely select from a range of toys and equipment meeting their developmental needs and safety standards.

There are satisfactory procedures to minimise the risks of accidental injury to children, with staff undertaking daily written risk assessments to safeguard them from some potential hazards. Steps have been taken to minimise some hazards when children play outside by ensuring that the area is securely fenced and that the main gates are padlocked. However, insufficient steps have been taken to minimise the risk from some hazardous materials, such as bricks and a trailer within the outdoor play area.

Children's welfare and safety receive careful consideration. They learn to keep themselves safe by practising emergency evacuation procedures. Staff remind them to walk rather than run within the setting. They are well supervised by staff, who ensure that most of the daily preparation is completed outside the opening hours. This enables them to be actively involved with the children at all times to reduce the risk of injury.

Children's safety is safeguarded by vigilant staff carefully monitoring any visitors and only allowing their collection by authorised persons. Partners are aware of their child protection responsibilities and there is a named person responsible for ensuring that any concerns are dealt with promptly and sensitively. Children benefit from being cared for by vetted staff, who update their knowledge and skills through regular training. However, the child protection statement does not reflect current Government guidance to ensure that parents are fully aware of the setting's child protection role and responsibility.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children new to the setting are helped to settle by staff being sensitive to their individual needs. Children demonstrate good levels of confidence and are beginning to develop friendly relationships with their peers and the staff team. They can freely choose from the activities on offer and are curious and interested in all their tasks. Children are purposefully engaged throughout sessions, working and playing either alone or with others. They are well behaved and are developing an awareness of right and wrong.

The caring staff show an interest in what children are doing and saying, such as spending time with young children sharing photographs and making a book 'all about me'. Children's knowledge, understanding and vocabulary are developed through conversation with staff. Children participate in a variety of creative activities and show pride in their achievements. A range of themed resources allow them to act out role-play scenarios, such as at a Post Office or at 'the vets'. Staff are beginning to know the younger children well through effective operation of a key worker system. The majority of the children attending the pre-school are aged under three years, but staff are not yet using the 'Birth to three matters' framework for planning their learning opportunities to support and encourage their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All three partners are developing

their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are involved in the planning and delivery of the curriculum. They provide an acceptable range of activities linked to all areas of learning. Children acquire new knowledge and skills by completing tasks linked to themes and topics. The partners meet regularly to plan activities to meet the children's needs for their next stages of development. The planning does not yet show the children's expected learning outcomes; therefore children's next steps are not clearly identified to challenge and support them to achieve. The partners are beginning to monitor children in preparation for recording their achievements to help them move children to their next learning stage. Therefore, at this moment in time, there are no full records of what children can do to inform the planning to meet children's individual needs.

Children are building relationships with staff and each other. They can freely choose their activities to enable them to learn through free play. Circle time is also used to reinforce some concepts, such as learning about calculation through number songs and rhymes.

Children enjoy listening to and participating in stories, benefiting from staff taking time to share books with them. They are learning to recognise their names when they self-register in the morning. They have daily opportunities to practise their writing skills, with good support from staff.

Children's mathematical development is promoted through a range of daily activities, using their fingers to count when singing songs, such as '10 currant buns'. They solve problems, compare sizes and practise counting when completing jigsaws. Children can explore with a range of toys and resources. They are beginning to learn about capacity in a practical way. They feel and explore dried rice, realising that tools, such as a spoon, have a useful purpose when filling a cup and a tea pot.

Children are beginning to enjoy playing imaginatively with small world play equipment. They are learning to recognise different dinosaurs when playing in shaving foam with them. Staff set out a café, but it only offered children limited stimulation as many role play items were not available, such as a till, money and a telephone, to enable them to remember such experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. They are aware of their own needs and are beginning to show concern for the needs of others. Staff, parents and carers work together to share information to ensure that children's individual needs are met. The partners are developing their knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice to enable them to support children with special needs.

Children are able to feel a good sense of belonging, playing with or alongside others, while making choices and decisions. Calm and polite staff are providing good role models for children. Children are freely praised to ensure that they are developing confidence and self-esteem, while understanding that they have done well. They respond with enthusiasm to requests from staff for help to tidy up.

Children are beginning to learn about the local environment through everyday activities and experiences, such as observing trees in the winter and discovering what changes happen to ice when brought inside. They are becoming aware of the wider society and starting to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, through celebrating different festivals and traditions from around the world. Children have access to some toys, puzzles and books reflecting positive images of gender, culture and ethnicity.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. They are made to feel welcome and are kept informed about the setting through newsletters and information displayed in the hall. Children benefit from their parents receiving some policies and procedures, although the complaints procedure requires review to ensure that they are fully informed on how to make a complaint. Parents and carers share what they know about their children's achievements and learning by completing an initial child profile to enable the partners to be aware of children's interests and development. There are some opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's learning, such as by providing items for junk modelling activities. Key Workers are available at the end of the session to share children's achievements with parents and carers, but they are not fully informed as the partners are still developing the recording of children's progress. Parents and carers are all happy with the care and education their children are receiving at the pre-school.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are supported by a caring, well qualified staff team, who have all been vetted and cleared. The pre-school opened at the beginning of 2006 and the partners are working well together to complete their duties and responsibilities. The children benefit from the partners attending training to keep up-to-date with current childcare issues and trends. The required documentation for the safe day-to-day management of the pre-school is available. Some of the required policies and procedures require review to ensure that the operational plan is an effective working tool for the promotion of children's welfare and care.

The day is organised to give children the opportunity to experience a varied range of both inside and outside activities. The staff:child ratio is maintained and good use is made of the available play space to ensure that children are able to move freely and independently.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is satisfactory. Children are cared for by motivated partners, who convey their enthusiasm. Sessions run smoothly as all three partners are well aware of their roles and responsibilities. Regular partners' meetings are held, but there is no formal system to ensure the effective monitoring of the quality of education being provided.

Overall the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints to Ofsted since registration.

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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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):

- assess the risks to children in relation to the outside play area and take action to minimise them
- continue to develop the range of learning opportunities on offer to children aged under three years, by using the aspects and approach of the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- continue to develop the operational plan and review policies and procedures to ensure that they meet the revised National Standards.

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):

- continue to develop planning and assessment systems to ensure the effective implementation of the stepping stones, including clear learning intentions and more detailed daily activity plans
- continue to develop children's assessment records to include details of what they need to do next to progress towards the early learning goals

- consider how the provision of role play can be extended to enhance children's learning in all areas

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