



Mulberry Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511344
Inspection date	19 June 2006
Inspector	Clare Moore
Setting Address	Mulberry Road, Marchwood, Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 4WB
Telephone number	02380 660354
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Registered person	Mulberry 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?

Mulberry Preschool opened in 1991. It operates in a recently refurbished self-contained building on the edge of the army camp in Marchwood near to Southampton. Children come from the village of Marchwood as well as from army quarters. The pre-school is a registered charity and is managed by a voluntary committee.

The setting opens five days a week in term-time. Sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45

and from 12:30 to 15:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 80 children on roll aged between two years six months and five years. This includes 49 children who receive funding for early education. At present the pre-school supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and also a small number of children with English as an additional language.

There are eight staff who work with the children and six of these have relevant early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance is a member of the Hampshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is very effectively promoted. At snack times they are served with a selection of fresh fruit and are offered a choice of water or milk to drink. Children are reminded of the importance of drinking plenty of fluids when the weather is hot. They are protected from the sun by wearing hats and sun cream when they are exposed. Specific needs of children such as allergies and sensitivities are carefully recorded and very good systems are in place to ensure their needs are met.

Children enjoy fresh air, exercise and physical play in the garden every day, weather permitting. They take part in a variety of activities which gives them opportunities to climb, bounce, slide, balance, see-saw, use ride-on toys and play games. This helps children to develop physical skills and to keep fit and active. Finer movements are refined through using tools such as pens, paint brushes, scissors, rolling pins and cutters as they manipulate malleable materials.

Children are cared for in a comfortable clean environment and they understand the need for good personal hygiene. Children's toys and equipment are clean and well maintained. Children become independent by managing their toilet needs then washing and drying their hands as soon as they are able to with sensitive support from staff. Environmental and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures are promoted. An effective sickness policy helps to prevent the spread of illness and cross infection.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Risks to children are minimised effectively because the setting has a high level of security. Daily premises and equipment checks are carried out regularly both indoors and outside and all cleaning materials are stored safely. Children know about fire safety procedures as they are practised regularly. The first aid kit is well equipped, maintained and is easily available. Staff are qualified in first aid so that action can be taken to treat children in the event of an emergency. Children are carefully

supervised during the time they spend in the care of the pre-school. They learn to become aware of safety issues such as walking rather than running indoors and road safety which helps to prevent injury to themselves and others.

On outings a first aid kit, mobile phone and contact details are carried, a higher staff ratio is maintained, staff wear conspicuous clothing and do regular head counts. This helps to keep children safe.

Staff are trained and have a secure understanding of child protection procedures which helps to ensure that children's needs are met.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed and happy at the pre-school due to carefully considered settling in procedures and attention to individual needs. Children are confident and demonstrate a sense of belonging as they arrive, exchange greetings with staff, collect their name labels and put their belongings in their drawer or the communal box.

Children spend their time purposefully in a variety of ways which helps them to enjoy their time at the nursery and maintain interest. They enjoy play-doh, construction and small worlds and benefit from good resources and an exciting programme of activities. The book corner is easily accessible and is a popular and well used resource. A selection of toys, equipment and activities are stored or set out so that they are easily accessed by the children. Children have frequent opportunities to explore different textures and enjoy sensory experiences, for example with toys such as shakers, exploration using a "feely" bag and to use natural materials such as leaves for collage and wooden building blocks. All children are supported in developing language skills because staff talk and listen to them. They enjoy songs, rhymes, books and stories. Frequent observations and records about progress are written by staff and shared with parents ensuring continuity of care for the children. Children are very enthusiastic, so much so that a considerable volume of noise is generated which is sometimes detrimental to concentration and development.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Three and four year olds are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a clear working knowledge of the foundation stage of learning. They provide a broad range of activities and experiences, give clear explanations, ask questions and offer praise and encouragement. Children enjoy their activities and are intrigued as they try out the boats they have made to see if they sink or float. Children use their imagination during role play when they use the area set up as a travel agent, make marks, use the keyboard and select their choices from a holiday brochure. They explore paint, play with small worlds such as a model village and a train set and move to music. Staff meet together and pool their ideas to make activity plans and also to evaluate and develop them.

Children are motivated and interested in what they do, for example joining paper, plastic and straws together with sticky tape to make a model boat. They eagerly take their contribution out of the box at circle time and describe it in words. They enjoy working with play-doh, construction when they build with different sorts of multi-link bricks, and digging in the sand. They water the plants they are growing and look forward to sampling strawberries and tomatoes if the crop is successful.

Children are becoming confident speakers and listeners. They practise and develop skills as they take part in conversations with staff and other children. Their vocabulary is extended through talking about their activities, families and a range of topics in the group. Children learn about number through rhymes, games and practical activities such as counting, weighing ingredients for cooking and working out how many more bricks are needed to make the shorter tower the same height. They explore space and shape as they build with interlocking plastic bricks and explore small worlds with cars and a roadway. They also use trains with a rail track and a dolls house with furniture and people. They practise reading and writing skills when they identify their name cards, make marks, draw and share books and stories. Children are very enthusiastic, so much so that a considerable volume of noise is generated which is sometimes detrimental to concentration and learning.

Written assessments and records show children's achievements and these are clearly linked to the areas of learning. Planning builds on what individual children already know to encourage their development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Most children behave very well, they enjoy playing together and they develop a sense of responsibility by helping to clear away at tidy up time. Appropriate support is given to children when there is conflict, with encouragement to share and take turns which helps them to work harmoniously with others. Children and staff use discussion at snack, group and individual one to one times and also a positive reward system to help with observing rules. They take turns on a rota to be helpers for the day, to give out food at snack times and take the numerals and hang them on the door at registration time. This helps to give children feel part of the group and consider the needs of others. Children develop a positive attitude to difference when they explore different homes and families then relate this to their own experiences in topics. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are valued as individuals and are often independent in selecting their own resources from those set out. They make free choices within the space available to them. Children are happy and settled in the well planned environment. They play together, enjoy each others company and are at ease with the staff. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcomed and are supported effectively as staff are experienced in this area. They also have established links with other agencies for support and further expertise.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting to help settle children and provide information about home routines, allergies, likes

and dislikes. This helps to ensure continuity for children between the setting and the home.

Parents have frequent opportunities to discuss their children's progress, share and contribute to records and there is a voluntary parent rota to help out during sessions in the pre-school. Parents are given information on a parent notice board and through monthly newsletters. They are also given information about the Foundation Stage of Learning and about what the children are doing at any one time. This helps them to become involved in their children's learning. Parents are frequently very involved through fund raising and projects, for example developing and planting the garden which has recently been made ready for use by the children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children who attend. Space and resources are very well organised. Staff arrive in good time to set out the activities and this is organised to be accessible to all the children. They spend most of their time working directly with the children which helps children to develop positive relationships with one another. Areas are used for different activities for example the book corner, role play area, and messy activities. Some storage is child accessible so that children can help themselves to resources such as pens, stencils, crayons and paper when they wish.

Policies and procedures are clearly set out, shared with all staff and made available to parents which contributes to children's well being in the pre-school. All the required documentation is in place and there are effective induction procedures for students and training for new staff. Staff are clear about their responsibilities through written job descriptions and effective support. They are encouraged to share their ideas and take an active role in their development. There are measures to cover staff absence so that if staff are away ratios are maintained. Children can be treated in the event of an emergency because permissions have been obtained from parents to cover medical treatment or advice.

The leadership and management are good. The management and staff teams work well together, support each other and share knowledge. They are committed to continuing to develop, reflect upon and improve education and care through training, working with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and local schools.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to develop learning in maths, language and literacy. They were also asked to develop aspects of managing documentation.

Maths has been developed through planning a wider range of activities, making more use of practical activities such as snack times, cooking and gardening. Language and writing have been improved through the extensive use of books, the linking of sounds

to letters such as children's names and providing plenty of opportunities for children to make marks and write. This has helped to move children on in their learning.

Children's personal information is stored securely in the office and if the time that children depart is not the usual drop or collection this is written clearly in the register which helps to ensure confidentiality and protect children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been 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.

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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):

- continue to explore ways to reduce noise levels so that this is effected

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):

- develop the role play so that staff are more actively involved in supporting and developing imagination and learning

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