



Elmore Kindergarten - Middlewood

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289488
Inspection date	11 October 2006
Inspector	Yvonne Victoria Facey
Setting Address	The Gatehouse, 601 Middlewood Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S6 1TN
Telephone number	0114 2348 998
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Registered person	Elmore Kindergarten
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Elmore Kindergarten at Middlewood operates in Sheffield and is one of three nurseries run by Elmore Nurseries. It opened in 2004 and operates from four playrooms and associated facilities in a converted and purpose-built building. A maximum of 100 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 71 children on roll, of whom 35 receive nursery education funding. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery serves children and families from a wide catchment area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs eight staff, of whom five hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

All areas used by the children are clean and hygienic and there are suitable hygiene policies and procedures in place which most staff follow appropriately. However, staff are not always vigilant in maintaining hygiene standards between nappy changes as they do not consistently wear gloves or wash their hands after all changes. As a result children are not protected from the spread of infection. Children are beginning to understand simple health and hygiene practices as they are regularly reminded to wash their hands after meals and toileting. Accidents and medication are suitably managed and records are shared with parents to ensure children's health needs are managed appropriately. However, there is no written permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment to ensure correct procedures of care in the event of an emergency. There are suitable procedures regarding illness, which are shared with parents. The staff inform parents of any sickness so that children do not attend the nursery.

All of the children have their health and dietary needs met because the nursery works with parents to provide what is required. Children have an awareness of healthy food as they are provided with a satisfactory and balanced diet. Snacks consist of fresh fruit and vegetables and meals are freshly cooked on the premises. Children's social skills are promoted as they sit together and engage in conversations as they enjoy their meals and comment to each other that they like the food provided. Children are beginning to be independent as they help themselves to food and drinks at mealtimes and are eager to help clear away when they have finished.

Children enjoy a range of physical activities which contribute to their health as they enjoy the many indoor and outdoor opportunities which promote their good health. Children benefit from outdoor play each day in the nursery garden. They play enthusiastically as they enjoy climbing over the wooden climbing frame, balancing and jumping off beams and running as they chase after each other. They develop their fine movements as they use a wide range of tools and materials, such as chalk, paintbrushes and construction, with increasing control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are welcoming and attractively presented to the children. Children play safely in a clean and secure environment. Access to the premises is monitored to keep children safe. Staff ensure that the doors are locked and they use swipe cards to move to different areas of the building. Visitors are admitted only by a member of staff and are required to sign the visitors' book. Children play with a satisfactory range of toys and equipment that meet their needs. Most resources are organised in accessible shelving or containers so children can access it and make some independent choices. Children are protected as staff ensure all required safety equipment is available; for example, safety gates are sited to prevent children accessing some areas unsupervised.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as they have discussions about the Green Cross Code and staff give them gentle reminders to keep themselves safe in their environment. For example, to be careful of slipping on wet leaves outside and explaining the hot and cold taps. All fire safety precautions are in place and children are learning about the procedures for evacuating the building in an emergency through the regular drills completed. The children benefit from a suitably safe environment because the staff are consistent in their supervision of them and ensure they are kept safe during the day. Babies are frequently monitored when they are asleep, with their sleep room being adjacent to the playroom so that they can easily be heard. Children's welfare is promoted adequately as staff understand the procedures for child protection and they know how to refer their concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children in all areas of the nursery are developing secure relationships with staff and each other. They arrive at nursery keen to take part in the activities. Children are provided with adequate play opportunities which are mostly appropriate for their age and stage of development. However, younger children are grouped with the older children and activities and expectations are sometimes too high, resulting in children not being able to make their own choices and decisions about their play. Children's activities are planned using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff are beginning to link the assessments to the framework in order to improve the monitoring of children's progress. Babies enjoy the opportunity to express themselves with musical instruments and creative materials. For example, they enjoy shacking maracas and are curious as they squeeze paint between their fingers.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a reasonable understanding of the Foundation Stage. They provide activities and experiences for the children include all areas of learning. Children's next steps in learning are mainly identified from information from parents and observation and assessments. However, this is not consistent for all children. For example, some children's records are not up to date. As a result not all children's areas of learning are clearly identified. The children are eager to participate in activities and are able to express themselves well. Most staff generally support children's learning by sitting with them and talking about their play. However, some children are not engaged in activities and staff do not recognise this or include them in activities. As a result opportunities to extend children's learning are missed.

Children are confident and independent and they play well together. They are generally well behaved and follow staff instructions. They access resources for their own needs and share and take turns. However, children have limited independent access to the range of creative materials. They enjoy listening to stories and join in with songs enthusiastically. They cheerfully speculate about what comes next in the story and move their bodies to the tune of the song. Children enjoy role play and use their imagination to develop pretend games. For example, they pretend to eat in a café and go on a teddy bears' picnic.

Children use their language skills well as they ask questions and have conversations with each other and staff during the session; for example, when sitting together at circle time. They enjoy writing their name and ascribing meaning to marks. Some children are forming letters correctly and confidently link sounds to letters as they link 'W for Wednesday and Wiggle'. Children confidently use simple mathematical language, such as 'big' and 'little', spontaneously in their play. Most children show an interest in numbers and more able children can count objects up to 10. However, they show little evidence of using number to calculate. They use their design skills as they readily join materials, for example, bricks to make train track. Children access the computer and use the mouse with developing degrees of competence and skill.

Children are showing an interest in the natural world, such as through 'Sydney the snail'; they help feed him and have conversations about what he eats. They take care when washing him, showing a gentle and caring attitude. They discuss home and learn about past and present as they discuss days, months and seasons at circle time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Relationships between the children are generally good and they are starting to learn respect for each other. Children are effectively cared for by staff who work with parents to meet their individual needs and ensure they are fully included in the setting. Procedures to keep parents informed about the provision are suitable. Effective arrangements are in place for children with disabilities and learning needs. Children behave generally well. However, the strategies used to manage children's behaviour are not appropriate for their age and stage of development. The children learn about the community and cultures as they take part in activities which promote their understanding. Children enjoy playing together and learn to share, to work together and to be kind to each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are suitably informed of their children's learning. There is an information leaflet regarding the care and education practices of the setting. The staff involve parents with their children's education through information displayed on the parent noticeboard. Parents access noticeboards which inform them of the planning and information regarding the nursery. Parents learn about their child's development as staff share observations and development records with them. Parents are informed about the Foundation Stage through the policies, and plans are displayed in the rooms.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff organise the setting and their time sufficiently well to ensure that children feel settled and are able to initiate their own play and learning. Adult to child ratios are maintained at all times. However, the deployment of staff during lunchtimes is not sufficient to maintain all the children's needs. There is a key worker system in place to ensure children's needs are met. There are satisfactory policies and procedures which generally work in practice. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The manager oversees the planning of activities and is responsible for promoting satisfactory levels of progress and monitoring. However, there is not a sufficient system for recording children's developmental progress. Staff meetings are held to evaluate the setting's provision for the care and education of the children. The nursery have liaised with the local authority advisory teacher. They regularly attend meetings in the local area to gain up to date knowledge and skills to improve the standard of nursery education. The nursery is beginning to use these strategies successfully. For example, they have just rearranged the space so children can access all activities freely. Children's welfare is promoted as a sufficient number of staff hold qualifications and have experience in early years. Further training is encouraged for all staff to increase their knowledge and skills to improve their practice and the care and education of the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was agreed that the setting should seek advice from Environmental Health regarding the position of the washing machine, and provide an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. The provider has made satisfactory progress. They have contacted Environmental Health and acted upon the advice received, which ensures children's health needs are met. Children are provided with a suitable range of activities that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. This ensures that children's development and health needs are suitably met.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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):

- ensure children's health needs are promoted by maintaining suitable hygiene practices and obtaining written parental permission to seek emergency advice and treatment
- ensure that the person in charge and staff increase their knowledge of behaviour management
- ensure that staff are suitably deployed, particularly at lunchtime
- improve the range of activities that enable younger children to develop their independence and extend their own learning.

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 a more effective system to monitor children's learning and the quality of teaching
- plan further activities to develop children's skills in calculating
- support children's creativity by improving independent access to the range of creative materials.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk