



Mary Seacole Day Nursery & Family Support Unit

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY297552
Inspection date	20 September 2006
Inspector	Marie Thompson
Setting Address	Mapp Community Centre, 22 Mount Pleasant, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2TD
Telephone number	01189 168418
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Registered person	Mary Seacole Day Nursey & Family Support Unit
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 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?

Mary Seacole Day Nursery & Family Support Unit is a registered charity, it opened in 1991 operating from the Wolseley Street, Reading on the grounds of Coley Primary School. The Mary Seacole Day Nursery is in partnership with two other projects, PHAB and APPOLO which are all housed in a purpose built community centre. It caters for the needs of all three projects. The day nursery expanded in 2006 and now operates from MAPP Community Centre. The nursery serves the needs of the local community.

The nursery opens every week day between 8.00 and 17.45 for 51 weeks a year. There are currently 31 children on roll aged from three months to five years. This includes 15 three- and four-year-olds who receive nursery education funding. The setting supports children with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

There are 10 staff working with the children. Seven of the staff have early year's qualifications. One administration officer, a chef and two volunteers. Three members of staff are currently undertaking training in early years qualifications.

The nursery is working towards Quality Assurance, which includes the Investors in Children Award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The provision to help children be healthy is outstanding. Children's good health is promoted effectively by staff who demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the nursery's health and hygiene procedures and attends appropriate training. Children thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet children's physical, nutritional and health needs. The exceptional adult support and guidance helps children gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. Children brush their teeth after lunch and understand the importance of having healthy teeth. Suitable hand washing facilities and positive images displayed aid the children's development in hand washing and independence skills such as using a soap dispenser and paper towels to wash their hands. Children actively contribute to the development of the health and care routines such as tidying up after lunch and preparing themselves and the room for snack times which develops their sense of responsibility and pride in their surroundings.

Children's healthy growth and development are extremely well met as staff show a good understanding of their dietary requirements. They are aware drinking water is available to them at all times which prevents dehydration. Older children show confidence in pouring their own drinks at snack time and taking turns to serve the lunch to each other. Meals are well balanced and take account of the individual and cultural needs of the children and they enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables at snack time.

Children explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences. Staff have a keen knowledge of Birth to three matters. Their excellent understanding of each child's stage of development means the youngest children are confident to try out new skills, ask for help when needed and set their own limits within the safe environment. For example, two-year-olds are thrilled as they successfully achieve climbing on the apparatus in the garden without adult help for the first time. Older children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise. They delight in the challenges of a versatile range of activities, such as dances from around the world, which they tackle enthusiastically.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The provision to protect children and help them stay safe is good. Children's safety needs are well met. They access a vast range of toys and resources in a well planned child orientated environment, where most potential hazards have been identified and minimised effectively.

However, the tape recorder wires are not securely fixed or placed out of children's reach. Good routines and gentle reminders help children learn about safety within the setting. Staff are vigilant of the children's safety at all times. The premises are very secure and there are good procedures in place to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access.

Children feel confident and secure in their environment through good deployment of staff working directly with the children. Staff's awareness of children's developing abilities helps to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place to avoid dangerous situations and minimise risks. All policies and procedures are individual to the setting and promote the children's safety and wellbeing, supporting all to develop their full potential.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and know how to proceed if they have concerns about a child in their care. This supports children's wellbeing. There are effective child protection procedures which promote and safeguard children's welfare within the setting.

Children's development and well being is effectively promoted through the very well organised space. They access an excellent range of choice in toys and resources to develop some of their own ideas in their play and learning. The extensive range of safe and well maintained furniture, equipment and resources meets the varying development needs of the children attending.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at nursery. They arrive happy and confident and quickly settle into the routine making their own choices about their play. A visual prompt and support from friendly, dedicated staff helps the younger children settle and become familiar with their surroundings and the daily routine. Children are interested in activities and involved in their learning. Practitioners know children well and talk to them about their family and what they have been doing at home. This interaction, and the implementation of a successful key worker system, helps to secure relationships between children and staff developing a strong sense of trust.

Younger children develop very good communication skills as they contribute to group discussions and become competent learners. For example, they self-select activities such as puzzles and shape blocks helping to increase their manipulative skills. Children enjoy opportunities to express imagination through role-play and telling stories. They experience a range of media and materials, encouraging them to explore their senses, such as planting herbs and tomatoes in the outside area and talking about 'feelings' during circle time. Practitioners talk about how each child is progressing and plan their next step for development. They recognise the value of play in a child's development and introduce a range of experiences, enabling all children to learn to play and work together in large and small groups as well as independently.

Children are adept in their physical skills. They move confidently between areas both indoors and outdoors. They have good co-ordination and awareness of others, particularly when riding bikes and wheeled toys outside. Children take part in a wide range of activities in all areas of learning, which help to develop their fine and gross motor skills. They are able to control pencils, scissors and paintbrushes with a good range of activities to develop their manipulative skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good individual progress because practitioners have a secure understanding of how children learn effectively and use their self-chosen play to extend their learning. They adapt their questioning techniques, according to the age and ability of the child, and implement a varied range of teaching methods to introduce an exciting range of activities and experiences to all children. Practitioners encourage children to lead their own learning and this is successfully achieved by a well developed routine, with a good balance of child and adult initiated activities.

Children are confident in self-care skills, as they receive praise and encouragement from staff. They take themselves to the toilet and wash their hands having an understanding of why they need to carry out the process. Children are confident and competent in selecting their own cutlery and crockery at snack and mealtimes. They serve themselves fruit and pour their own drink, clearing away when they have finished.

Children are eager to learn and concentrate well showing good perseverance with activities. They co-operate and negotiate roles, for example when acting out their imagined ideas in role-play and value one another's ideas. However, not all activities are extended to encourage children's free thinking and development of their own ideas, such as when the home corner is changed to represent something else; the staff have not developed the theme to its full potential. Children listen with excitement to stories and are encouraged to interact with the story through discussion, questions and comments about the text and pictures. Children enjoy independently choosing books as they are attractively displayed and easily accessible. They confidently search for items beginning with the same sound and notice letters in familiar words around the room. Children independently use a range of tools and materials and freely access a variety of resources, which they use to represent their own ideas, such as writing letters or numbers during their play.

Children gain confidence in using numbers and compare the weight and size of objects, as they predict how many small Lego bricks will fit on one large piece of Lego. They confidently use good mathematical language, for example children help each other find the biggest, middle size and smallest tigers in the animal box and discuss the differences together.

Effective use is made of time and resources to provide children with opportunities to engage in physical activities, including dance, musical movement, and explore creativity using a wide range of media such as paint, water, and sand. Through taking part in cooking activities, the children learn about different ingredients, weight, measures and quantity. Children show great interest in examining and smelling the plants in the planters outside area which the children helped to plant. This leads to a discussion about how to care for living things, the different smells, textures and colours of the plants. They learn about themselves and their families through discussion and topic work, and talk about their local community and the wider world during circle time.

Practitioners observe and monitor children's progress regularly in a variety of different ways and this is used to identify individual targets for children to work towards each half-term. A realistic expectation of children and good individual knowledge helps them to consolidate their

learning before moving onto the next stage. As a result, the curriculum is tailored to individual children's needs and abilities, which ensures effective support and sufficient challenges are provided to help children achieve their individual potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The provision to help children make a positive contribution is outstanding. All children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context of each child. The play and education provision is organised and monitored extremely well to ensure children have access to the full range of activities, both in doors and outdoors. For example, all toys and resources are at child height and amenable to children; the home corner, dressing up and the book shelves which are indoors. The climbing frame and toys, which are in the outside play area, provide the children with stimulating accessible activities. Children arrive at the nursery happy and confident. They are welcomed by the staff and eagerly look forward to the days activities. Children's individual pegs and labelled drawers provide them with a sense of belonging as they store their pictures and personal belongings.

Children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the wider world through planned activities and discussions, for example around a variety of cultural festivals and dance and music from around the world, helping them to understand and value the similarities and differences between themselves and others. They enjoy trips to the local parks and outings to places of interest, such as Children's Museum in London and the Natural History Museum. This is a positive approach. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Children benefit from good relationships and working partnerships with parents, which contributes to their wellbeing and the relationships they develop at the nursery. Staff work well together with parents and carers to share relevant background information, play activities and children's specific needs. A clear and informative notice board with relevant, up to date information is accessible to all parents. The nursery promotes good and effective partnerships with parents and carers, who are welcomed into the nursery to help and support the children. The open door policy for parents to speak to staff on a daily informal basis works effectively. This is reinforced through newsletters and parents evenings. Parents have very good opportunities to contribute to the assessments made on their child and to be involved in their learning. As a result, parents and carers have a good understanding of their child's progress. Parents are well informed about the routines, curriculum and all aspects of the nursery.

Staff are proactive in ensuring the needs of all the children are met and demonstrated a very good knowledge of the individual needs of the children in their care. Staff offer good support for children with special needs. They adapt activities so that all children can experience a wide range of stimulating activities appropriate for their level of ability. The special needs co-ordinator and the manager demonstrate sound knowledge of the fundamental principals of the Code of Practice. As a result, staff work together with parents, carers and other professional bodies to

organise the environment and plan appropriate activities to ensure the children take part at a level appropriate to their needs.

Children benefit very well from staff who adopt a consistent and positive approach to the management of their behaviour. Their behaviour is exemplary. Staff support younger children in sharing and turn taking. They have high expectations and set consistent boundaries for the three- to five-year-olds, which helps them to learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. They become aware of the nursery's routines and procedures and know what is expected from them through response to the routine changes in the day. Children are given clear guidelines, know the routine well and are encouraged to take care of the environment. Children know right from wrong, they are sensitive to the needs of others, readily share toys and resources and co-operate with each other.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the provision is good. Children's care is significantly enhanced by the nursery's good organisation. Children's care and learning is reinforced by the effective deployment of staff and good leadership and management of nursery education. Staff working with the children are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and consistently promotes the children's wellbeing in line with the comprehensive and robust policies and procedures. They demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding for the Standards of Full Day Care and the Foundation Stage. All relevant documentation is in place and maintained to a very good standard which includes a daily record of the children's attendance. However, children visiting one of the other rooms are not signed in and out of the room on the corresponding register.

Staff observe children's development and learning and keep detailed records that help meet their needs. Children's records are openly shared with parents and their contributions valued.

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities with relevant induction procedures and opportunities to receive further training available. This is used to help develop their skills in organising a provision that meets the children's needs.

Leadership and management is good. The manager is enthusiastic about the nursery and early years, which results in a happy team who work effectively together where children feel safe and secure in their environment and make good progress towards the early learning goals. The manager and her team's vision of the quality of early years care and education is evident through its aims, good relationships with children and their parents and carers and has a positive impact on the children's learning. There is a strong commitment to improvement, training and development of the staff, which enhances and maintains the very good care, learning and well being of the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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 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):

- make sure children visiting another room in the nursery are signed in and out of the room on the corresponding register
- ensure the tape recorder wires are out of children's reach

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):

- ensure all activities are extended to encourage children's free thinking and development of their own ideas through continued evaluation of the theme

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