



Mickey Star Nursery & Play Project

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY312270
Inspection date	29 June 2006
Inspector	Catherine Greene
Setting Address	St Michaels Street, London, W2 1QD
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Westminster Childrens Society
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?

Mickey Star Neighbourhood Nursery is one of a group of nurseries run by Westminster Children's Society. It opened in 2005 and operates from two group rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated in Edgware Road. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday for sessions from 09.00 to 12.00 and 13.00 to 16.00 or full time from 08.15 - 17.45 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play

area.

There are currently 30 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, several children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. Staff follow thorough hygiene practices and have undertaken health and safety and first aid training. This ensures that children receive appropriate medical attention if they become unwell or have an accident. Required documentation is in place to support children's care, appropriate records and written parental consents are completed and procedures followed to promote children's health and well-being. The setting's policy of not caring for sick children means that the risk of infection to children is minimised.

Children learn about health through varied experiences and topics covering aspects of health and personal care. For example, before going outside to play children ask staff for their hats and sun cream to be applied. They follow good hygiene practices when washing their hands in the bathroom, after using the toilet and before eating. They understand the need to do this because staff give clear explanations about why it is important. Children take responsibility for tidying up; communal bowls and towels in the group room are used by children to clear away plates after lunch.

Children are provided with a wholesome, nutritious and balanced diet. Meals are freshly prepared using fresh fruit and vegetables. Staff sit with children at meal times, and explain to them what unfamiliar ingredients are. They can help themselves to drinking water throughout the session.

Children are using their bodies to explore space; they enjoy physical play on a daily basis outdoors in the playground. They are developing large physical skills as they run, jump, play with balls and climb and balance on outdoor equipment. Staff are creative using a tarpaulin as a parachute. Children learn a sense of space and have great fun as they work as a team to keep the parachute in the air and run underneath enjoying the feeling of enclosure.

Children have good opportunities to develop fine motor skills as they use equipment such as rolling pins, cutters, pencils and scissors confidently. They learn to dress independently, for example, when putting on and taking off their cardigans and sweatshirts to come in from outdoor play and when independently using the dressing-up clothes during imaginative play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment where they are well supervised by staff. The environment is organised well to meet children's needs and provide space for them to play, move around and use play materials safely. Children have access to a good selection of play equipment and materials which are in good condition and stored safely so that children can access these independently. There is plenty of resources and good quality furniture for children to play, eat and relax in safety.

Staff are well deployed and clear about their roles, which means that children are well supervised. The clear procedure, of a member of staff monitoring the door and admitting parents and carers, during children's arrival and departure ensures their safety. Children's safety is enhanced by an effective system of risk assessment, which incorporates evaluating recorded accidents. Children are learning to take responsibility for their own safety by being reminded to be careful when negotiating the space, using equipment and playing. Children negotiate the stairs with confidence under staff's careful guidance. The outdoor curriculum is currently being reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of both services using the space. Use of the outdoor playground is restricted to times when the after school provision are not using the space. Staff are vigilant when supervising younger children at lunch time, for example, children are reminded to chew thoroughly before swallowing food. Staff support children closely, cooling food and cutting it up into manageable pieces.

Children's welfare is protected by staff's understanding of child protection issues and the clear procedures that are in place, detailing action to take if there are concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very secure with the staff in the nursery and have good self-esteem. They enjoy a good range of well planned, interesting experiences and activities, such as cooking, music and drama sessions. They are keen to participate in all activities and select tasks independently.

The under two-year-old children are effectively integrated into the group and they play confidently with older children. Babies delight in the attention they receive, particularly from the older children who are very responsible and caring, offering to bring toys for the babies to enjoy. Staff are starting to use the 'Birth to three maters' framework for assessing and working with the younger children.

Children's confidence and self-esteem is enhanced as staff praise and encourage children's efforts and achievements and show respect and interest in children's views and ideas. Children are well supported in their play by good interaction with staff. They enjoy getting together in a group for the 'meet and greet' session. Staff facilitate this very well, using questions to encourage children's language and involving quieter children by asking them to contribute with similar experiences. Staff achieve a

balance between supervised activities and allowing children freedom to create from their imaginations, for example, in painting and role play.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to plan a stimulating learning environment for children. Language, questioning and praise are used effectively to encourage children's learning. Staff use the important information that they obtain from observations and assessments to promote children's learning individually. Children's development is recorded and used to identify when children need support.

Children socialise and work well together during activities, such as building small world houses and making volcanoes. Children help each other with tasks, for example, one child showing another how to start her volcano, placing the small cup on top of the bigger cup. They are learning to express their feelings through discussion saying what they do and don't like, one child negotiates with another, "You can have it in five minutes". They are learning to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings and are confident to talk to adults.

Children have good opportunities to recognise letters and their names through displays and books. They talk about the letters in their names and point to displays with letters from their name. Writing materials are easily accessible and well used by children who help themselves to pencils and paper and draw recognisable pictures. New words are introduced in familiar contexts, such as children learning the names of a caterpillar during its different stages of growth. Books are easily accessible to children and they look at them independently. The nursery library has been successful and children talk about their favourite books that they want to take home. They interact very well with each other and talk as they play. Children are gaining confidence in speaking in small groups, when contributing during circle time.

Children are beginning to use numbers confidently, for example counting the number of marbles for the marble run and responding by holding up fingers to show how many when a member of staff counts. They have lots of opportunities to recognise numbers from books, discussion about less and more and from displays that are also in other languages such as Arabic. Children learn simple mathematical concepts when singing number rhymes and when weighing and measuring using a funnel suspended above a water tray. There are limited opportunities for children to access new technology.

Children have good opportunities to develop their creative skills through arts and crafts, such as painting, play dough and papier mache. They enjoy activities that introduce them to shape; they are learning to group and match objects as they sort a variety of large and small objects into boxes. They problem solve as they construct intricate marble runs. They use their imagination when playing with small world figures and animals. One child comments "This is like Narnia" as he constructs using the blocks to build a house. Children have opportunities to enjoy music daily and during planned music sessions. They enjoy singing 'shake off the sillies' when they jump, hop and shout with delight. Children learn about colour and texture when

designing their flags for the World Cup celebrations.

Children are developing an interest in the world around them as they design world flags celebrating the different countries competing in the World Cup. Children have good opportunities to share their own lives through discussions about their holidays and from parents' contributions to topic work. They enjoy science and explore with natural materials such as shells, earth and sand and water. They consider growth in the life cycle of a caterpillar and have enjoyed making cocoons for a display.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children take part enthusiastically in activities that help them develop a positive view of their local community and the wider world. Visitors to the nursery, such as the English National Ballet's Education and Community Unit, broaden children's experiences and learning in a meaningful way. Children thoroughly enjoyed four weeks of dance, music and storytelling activities. English National Ballet wrote thanking the manager and staff for their contribution in enabling a successful event that was thoroughly enjoyed by all those involved.

Children's individual needs are very well met, staff know the children very well and have good communication with their parents and carers. Children have good opportunities to develop confidence, independence and self-esteem as they make choices about what to play with from a range of activities and play materials. They are able to sit quietly in the book area if they choose to. Babies are very secure in the calm environment as they are gently settled for their afternoon naps.

Children behave well and respond to the positive behaviour management strategies of the staff. On the day of the inspection a staff member from another nursery was covering for a permanent staff member. The children responded extremely well to her because they recognised and understood the strategies she was using. This gives a very encouraging view of a procedure that works very well across an organisation. Staff give children easy to follow instructions in a steady, polite manner making good eye contact. Praise is honestly earned and staff comment on achievements encouraging children gently when they know they can do better.

Children's home languages are recognised by staff who are enthusiastic about working with children who have English as an additional language. Their work with children using makaton and other valuable methods of communication is fundamental in giving those children very good opportunities to make themselves heard. Good communication between home and nursery combined with very good strategies for communication builds children's confidence and raises their self-esteem. Children have access to good resources, such as books that reflect diversity and they learn simple words in other languages during regular language sessions; displays and posters in other languages give children the opportunity to see other languages written down.

During the topic 'Exploring the world around us' staff and children celebrate other cultures. Parents and children took part enthusiastically bringing photos in from home

so that staff can use them in activities and displays, mapping everyone globally. Children have opportunities to talk about their feelings during discussions at circle times when they are also encouraged to listen to each other. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Effective systems are in place to support children with special needs; staff ensure children can fully participate in activities at their own level. Plans are in place to meet any special needs that are required and the nursery benefits from very good support and advice from the speech and language therapists from Chelsea and Westminster language department.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents speak highly of the setting and praise staff. They comment very positively on the 'warm atmosphere' and 'advice available for them' from an approachable and caring manager and staff group. Parents are kept well informed about what children do at the setting which enables them to continue their child's learning at home. Parents are encouraged to participate in events and have recently showed a great deal of support, welcomed by the manager when they came and helped with the planting in the beds at the front of the nursery on a Saturday.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The Manager and staff have clear roles within the nursery, this helps staff feel secure and supported. They are well organised and make sure the nursery is well resourced with good quality play materials and equipment.

The manager has plans to develop a staff meeting area in order to provide staff with a calm and relaxing space. This will enable them to have time out from the group rooms to evaluate, plan and study. The strong staff team work closely together and enthusiastically undertake new initiatives and training to develop their practice.

Westminster Children's Society initiatives for staff's personal development include very good access to training to increase and update their knowledge. Staff keep up-to-date with developments in childcare and changes in legislation through good support and strong links with the local community and Early Years development workers. Written documentation is well organised and in line with current legislation. 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

There have been no complaints made 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):

- undertake a risk assessment of the outdoor play area, to ensure that the space is safe and adequate for the number and age of children in attendance.
- continue to develop the outdoor curriculum and outdoor play space.

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 new technology.

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