



## Beechwood Childcare - Mill Lodge Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	250013
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 September 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Bernadina Laverty
<b>Setting Address</b>	Mill Lodge Infant & Junior School, Aqueduct Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 1BT
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<b>Registered person</b>	Beechwood Childcare Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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](http://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?

Mill Lodge Day Nursery opened in 1997. It operates from a purpose built building located in the grounds of Mill Lodge School in the Shirley area of Solihull. Facilities include three base rooms, kitchen, toilet and office. There is a fully enclosed garden area available for outside play. The nursery is part of a privately owned group of childcare facilities and serves the local and surrounding areas. The setting also operates an out of school and holiday service from the main school building.

There are currently 28 children from birth to 5 years on roll. This includes 3 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language. The group opens 5 days a week all year round, closing only for bank holidays and a week at Christmas. Sessions are from 07:30 to 18:00. The out of school service operates 5 days a week during school term times and

school holidays. Sessions are from 07.45 to 09.00 hrs and from 15.30 to 18.00 hrs, during term time and 08:00 to 18:00 during school holidays.

There are 11 members of staff who work with the children. Most of the staff team have recognised child care qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because good health and hygiene practice is promoted. Children know when to wash their hands as 'picture prompts' help younger children understand about hand washing. Children are cared for appropriately if they have an accident or become ill because there are detailed procedures in place and all staff are first aid trained. Children's health needs are clearly recorded and discussed with parents. Children's specific dietary and religious requirements are acknowledged sensitively and vigilantly. Staff discuss with parents before children start nursery about allergies, likes and dislikes and religious needs. Children play with a wide range of toys and equipment that are clean, safe and age appropriate. Children benefit from a flexible routine that give them opportunities to rest and enjoy relaxation according to their individual needs. Sleeping babies are checked regularly and their individual sleep needs are well respected because a quiet area for rest is provided.

Children enjoy physical exercise and this helps contribute to a healthy lifestyle. At mealtimes and snack times, children are self-sufficient and manage their cutlery very well. Children slice, roll and cut play dough expertly with plastic tools. They talk about making 'thin' slices. Babies are learning to acquire physical skills such as crawling, climbing and balance because they have regular access to soft play apparatus such as, baby walkers and soft play equipment. Frequent use of the outdoor play area offers good opportunities for children to enjoy fresh air. The outdoor play area is used as an extension of the playrooms and they have opportunities for growing and digging in the garden using tools such as spades and trowels. Children learn and improve their physical skills such as pedalling, skipping and climbing. Whilst playing with a 'parachute', children squeal with delight as they run underneath it.

Children learn about healthy living through topics and daily discussions. Healthy eating is encouraged and healthy snacks provided such as yogurt, cheesy bread sticks and fruit. During snack time children talk about fruit being good for them. At mealtimes, children are given time to eat and enjoy their food, and talk about what they are eating to each other and staff. Children are regularly provided with drinks and older children can access water from jugs within the rooms.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children play in an environment which is effectively organised and potential hazards have been assessed by staff. Daily checks and risk assessments are carried out by staff. However, the risk assessment does not include assessing the depth and replenishment of the impact absorbing

surface (bark chips) underneath outdoor climbing equipment. This increases the likelihood of serious injury occurring if a child falls or slips on the apparatus. Access to the premises is monitored and identification of all visitors is checked by staff. Children's daily attendance is accurately recorded because children are signed in and out. They are kept safe on outings as they are escorted safely to places such as the local shops and to 'Stratford Butterfly Farm'.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as potential hazards are pointed out by staff. For example, children are reminded to sit on their chairs correctly so that they do not fall and hurt themselves. Topics such as 'People who help us' develop children's awareness of the police and fire service and their role in promoting safety. Children are developing their independence as they make choices about their play and learning. They are able to select equipment from a wide range of quality resources that are clean, safe and developmentally appropriate. Evacuation procedures are practised regularly and children evacuate the building calmly and sensibly. This helps children learn how to react in an emergency situation.

Children are well protected from potential abuse or neglect because staff understand the importance of child protection. Child protection procedures have been updated to comply with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and staff are clear about what the procedures are if an allegation is made against them.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and enjoy their time at the setting. They arrive very confidently and make themselves 'at home', even children new to the setting, settle down quickly. Children have sufficient toys and equipment because staff have a good understanding of how to meet their needs. Children's confidence and self-esteem are well developed due to consistent use of praise and encouragement. Children's work is displayed throughout the nursery including chalk, collage and crayon pictures. Children are gently encouraged to complete tasks and offered appropriate support if they need assistance. For example, during a cutting activity, some children are encouraged to cut around shapes, others encouraged to try and cut along a straight line, with plenty of praise from staff for their efforts. Children tidy up very efficiently and know where every thing goes and take responsibility for putting things away. Staff respond promptly and with genuine interest to children's questions and conversations about their homes and families. This helps children to feel valued and appreciated.

Staff plan a good range of activities for younger children to incorporate the 'Birth to three matters' framework which is regularly reviewed to ensure that staff are confident in its implementation. Babies and young children are able to explore various materials because these are easily accessible to them. These include 'spaghetti' and 'corn flour' play.

Children attending the out of school facility get on very well together and enjoy a stimulating and challenging range of activities. Examples of craft activities include, 'decoupage' pencil holders, wooden Christmas trees and wooden bird feeders. The out of school children enjoy outside play on the fixed play equipment and have use of playing fields. Staff enhance outdoor play by giving children opportunities to play with bats, balls and skipping ropes. Children enjoy the skipping activity and count how many skips they can do. Activities indoors include knitting,

sewing and children making model people out of pipe cleaners. They include very individual details such as curly hair and bows.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and early learning goals. They are very calm, patient and tolerant and have good, trusting relationships with children. Staff interact effectively in their play and ask challenging questions, such as, "What sort of hat do you think 'Hattie the Hippo' will need today?"

Children's behaviour well is managed well by staff. Children are very well behaved and are encouraged to sit and listen at story time. Staff are very flexible and adapt activities for younger children who find it difficult to sit and listen to a story. Children help each other to resolve disputes and encouraged to kiss and hug if they hurt each other. Positive behaviour strategies are used such as, negotiation and compromise. The learning environment reflects the local community and the wider world. Resources and equipment reflect positive images. For example, the current theme of 'around the world', involves children finding out about Australia and Africa. They look at maps to see where the countries are and make passports. Planned stories link to this theme such as, "Koala Lou".

Planning for focussed, small group activities clearly identifies learning intentions. However, systems for evaluating and reviewing planning and assessments do not always ensure information gained is used to help plan for the next steps of learning in all areas and provide sufficient challenge for all children. Staff with responsibility for special needs and English as an additional language have a sound knowledge of the procedures and have developed good relationships with parents and other professionals so that all children are included in all aspects of nursery life and make good progress.

Children form good relationships with staff and each other. At registration time children say good morning to each other and staff. They have opportunities to share, take turns and co-operate with each other whilst playing in the water tray and chuckle when they tip pasta out of buckets. Children communicate effectively, they say 'please' and 'thank-you' and enjoy conversations with each other and staff about all sorts of topics including starting 'big school'. Staff use 'Persona' dolls at circle time to help children understand their feelings. Children are articulate and developing their vocabulary, for example, a child refers to a gazelle, cheetah and leopards when looking at pictures of safari animals. Children help themselves to books and ask staff to read them stories and they sit and listen attentively. Children are starting to recognise their names by hanging coats on their peg when they arrive and finding their names at snack time. They practise writing skills, including tracing and can write their names, with many letters correctly formed.

Children use mathematical language such as 'big' and 'little' when playing with play dough. Children are learning about shapes as they roll play dough in their hands and talk about making footballs. They count confidently up to 25 whilst playing with building blocks and use their fingers to represent numbers, such as 5 fingers and 5 fingers make 10. They explore objects and are interested in how things work such as, the interactive seaside display with shells and magnifying glasses. Visits from the 'Animal Man' help children appreciate and care for animals

such as stroking guinea pigs and looking at bugs and snails. Children show interest in technology as they have access to a computer, which they use competently. They are developing a sense of time and recognise the days of the week from story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar'.

Children move with control and co-ordination. They can adjust their speed when playing outside and avoid obstacles and each other whilst running underneath the parachute. Children use tools with skill and competence whilst playing with dough, they can roll, pinch and flatten dough and use cutters to make shapes. Children experience different sensations by playing with various materials. They recognise and describe the properties of sticky pasta, dry pasta and dry rice. Children use music, dance and role play to communicate ideas and enjoy playing with the role play area. Children enjoy playing with instruments and practice different beats and rhythms, other children dance and move spontaneously. One child bangs a tambourine and says he is 'making music'. Children are learning to differentiate between colours through painting activities and spontaneously mix colours and comment on the changes saying, "Look I've made brown", whilst painting safari animals.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children play very well together. They develop respect for others because they talk about being kind to their friends. Children's behaviour is good. They understand responsible behaviour and help each other resolve disputes. They work very harmoniously together and share equipment whilst playing in the water tray, sharing buckets and spades. They develop self-confidence and self-esteem as their work is displayed attractively throughout the nursery.

Children understand their own needs and respect the needs of others because they have access to positive image resources and cover topics that look at other cultures and celebrations. Displays include dolls in different costumes from around the world and a good selection of books including, 'A is for Africa'. Visits are organised from people who help in society such as police and fire service to show that jobs can be done by men and women. This ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers regarding nursery education is good. They are given detailed information about the early learning goals and stepping stones. There is a good and effective partnership with parents throughout the rest of the nursery and out of school facility. This ensures that children are happy and confident during their time at this setting. Staff liaise with parents ensuring that children's records contain information which enables appropriate care to be given. Children's achievements and daily routines are discussed regularly ensuring their children's needs are met. Policies, procedures and other relevant information are available to parents. Staff welcome parents into the setting. An 'open door' policy encourages parents to feel settled about their child in the setting and fosters a sense of trust and partnership. The entrance hall is very inviting with plenty of relevant information for parents. The setting has made links with the local community including the 'Health Visitor Service' and is piloting a project to help parents understand and access this service. Staff build good relationships with parents which enables them to resolve concerns quickly and informally.

Systems for seeking all parents' views regarding the quality of day care, such as questionnaires are in place. The complaints policy makes parents aware that they can see the complaints record on request. Recording of complaints is clear and concise and all complaints made to Ofsted by parents have been recorded.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from attending this well-organised, friendly nursery. Children enjoy and participate fully in activities because space and resources are well-organised. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are cared for by suitable staff, who follow the setting's policies and procedures. Staff are very friendly and approachable and make children feel happy, settled and secure. Children benefit from a cohesive and stable staff team who work together with enthusiasm to create and maintain a caring environment for children in all areas of the provision. Staff have access to good training opportunities and the staff ratios and group size supports children's learning and play.

Children's personal information is stored securely, which helps to maintain confidentiality. All required documentation is very well-organised which ensures that parents are well informed about their child's achievements and progress.

Leadership and management is good. This contributes to children making good progress towards the early learning goals. The management team are committed to continued improvement and regular staff meetings enable staff to share good practice. Staff performance is closely monitored and relevant training provided to develop skills, knowledge and understanding. The management team ensures that staff feel valued and included in all aspects of planning. The setting has support from a teacher employed by the 'Beechwood' organisation and staff receive advice and support on all aspects of delivering nursery education. The senior staff have a clear vision for the nursery and recognise areas for improvement which are identified in the development plan. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The nursery has made good progress in addressing the previous recommendations relating to policies and procedures for the nursery and out of school provision. These have been reviewed and updated and new working practice introduced. This ensures that children are safe and their welfare promoted.

## **Nursery Education**

At the previous inspection of the nursery education the setting agreed to improve the book corner. This is now an inviting, well-utilised area enjoyed by children. The nursery also agreed to ensure that planned activities meet the individual needs of all children. Planning and

assessment formats are in the process of being reviewed and the team are having to adjust to the new systems, therefore this links a recommendation carried forward from this inspection.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. In July 2006 concerns were raised with Ofsted regarding the management of the setting, deployment of staff, safety of children in the outdoor play area, accident procedures and working in partnership with parents. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to the provision on the 27 July 2006 to investigate these concerns under national standards 1 (suitable person), 2 (organisation), 6 (safety), 7 (health) and 12 (working in partnership). The visit showed that the provider was meeting the standards required for staffing ratios, deployment of staff, accident procedures and working in partnership with parents and carers. The setting had already addressed some concerns raised about safety aspects and Ofsted is satisfied with the action taken. However there were a couple of areas where attention was needed, an action was given under standard 6 to "assess the risks to children in relation to the outdoor play area and take action to minimise these". During the inspection the inspectors found that the provider had accurate registers for children attendance but staff had not always completed the forms accurately for themselves. An action was given under national standard 2 to "ensure that an accurate system for registering child and staff attendance on a daily basis, including the hours of attendance is maintained". Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider remained qualified for registration at the time and the investigations were closed.

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 provider has recorded all complaints made to Ofsted by parents.

## **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):

- update the risk assessment to ensure children can play safely outside on the climbing apparatus.

#### **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):

- review planning and assessments, ensuring they are used to help plan for the next steps of learning in all areas and include sufficient challenge for older and more able children.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)