

Merritime Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY242225
Inspection date	19 January 2007
Inspector	Tonia Chilcott
Setting Address	Military Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 3BY
Telephone number	02392 542229
E-mail	adventurous.beginnings@virgin.net
Registered person	Adventurous Beginnings
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Merritime Nursery opened in 2002 and operates from within converted premises on HMS Sultan, a naval base in Gosport. The accommodation consists of four main playrooms for the use of different age groups, as well as office, toilets, kitchen, sleep rooms and staff facilities. There are also two secure outside play areas.

A maximum of 40 children aged under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 50 children on roll, including 16 funded three and four year olds. Children attend from a wide area and all have family links with the naval base or neighbouring military establishments.

The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery opens five days a week for 51 weeks of the year, from 07:30 to 18:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are 11 members of staff who work directly with the children, nine of whom hold early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from the Hampshire Early

Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is a member of the Preschool Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a range of healthy and nutritious snacks and meals that are prepared on site daily. Their individual dietary requirements and likes or dislikes are taken into account when planning and preparing all meals. Effective systems are in place, to ensure that all staff remain fully aware of all children's individual needs. Children enjoy sitting with one another at meal times, talking freely to one another and adults. They willingly try a range of different snacks, such as dried prunes and apricots, confidently choosing the fruits that they know they enjoy.

Children are encouraged to wash their hands throughout the day, for instance before eating and after using the toilet. However, they do not consistently learn the reason behind good hygiene, as staff do not frequently discuss hygiene practices with all children. Children are not fully protected from the spread of illness and infection as staff do not consistently follow hygiene procedures when changing nappies, or whilst children are using potties. Whilst a good level of staff have completed first aid training, no permission has been obtained from parents, to allow staff to seek medical treatment or advice in an emergency, although this is referred to in the setting's policies.

Children negotiate space well, creating space for others to join them whilst sitting for group activities. They enjoy music and movement activities, which enable them to move freely around the room, dancing and jumping in response to the music. Children adjust speed and direction to avoid one another whilst playing in the garden or dancing in the room.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled within the warm and welcoming environment. Examples of children's work and posters are displayed around the nursery and ensures that children feel valued. Occasionally, displays of children's work are situated within reach of babies, and are secured with staples, that at times become loose, posing a risk to younger children. Children access a range of toys and materials, most of which are stored within easy reach of children, allowing most to freely make choices. However, occasionally, younger children are unable to easily reach all toys and materials of their choosing. Toys and materials are checked regularly to ensure that they remain clean and safe for children to access them.

Fire drills are completed on a regular basis, although do not consistently provide opportunities for all children to take part and develop their understanding of the procedures. Details of the fire drills and checks completed on fire safety equipment are, however, clearly recorded allowing staff to monitor the regularity of checks and practises. Risk assessments are completed on a regular basis, to ensure that all areas accessible by children remain safe. However, the risk assessment has not identified all potential hazards including the use of staples on low level displays, and the security of the building when windows remain fully open. Staff have a secure understanding of child protection. They are confident in the procedures to follow should they recognise that a child is at risk, consequently protecting children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled within the nursery. Younger children benefit from the staff's understanding of the Birth to three matters framework, which is used to plan a variety of stimulating activities to meet the needs of younger children. Children of all ages are confident and respond well to staff, laughing and giggling throughout their day in the setting.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn, enabling them to plan and present a stimulating range of activities for the children. Planning of the sessions and activities takes place, and clearly links to the early learning goals, detailing the expected learning outcome for children. Staff know the children well, and plan informally for their next stage of learning, which at times, contributes to staff missing opportunities to extend children further. For instance, children have an exceptional knowledge of the alphabet, and confidently name the sounds of all letters, confidently linking the sounds to words that they know. However, children have limited opportunities to extend their understanding of letter to begin to recognise familiar written text, such as their names or labels. Evaluations of the planning and activities do not always identify if the learning outcome has been met, or what the children have learned, consequently not recording children's progress.

Observations of children's progress are recorded regularly and the information gathered provides a picture of children's learning within the setting. However, occasionally, the observations are not consistent with the recorded information of children's progress, nor do the records clearly identify the next steps in children's development, although staff know the children well. Children develop a good understanding of what is right and wrong, and an understanding of the daily routines, through gentle reminders from staff.

Children are confident and settled, having developed good relationships with one another and staff. They are keen to learn, concentrating intently during large group activities, such as story time and group rhyming activities. They confidently match sounds to all the letters of the alphabet and enjoy matching rhyming words to pictures on puzzles with staff. Many children enjoy looking at books, some choosing to access the book corner throughout the session. Children concentrate well during large group story time and some have learned to handle books correctly whilst reading in the book corner, carefully turning the pages one by one.

Staff encourage children's imaginations well, for instance, water play becomes an exciting activity, with children hunting for buried treasure. When the coins are discovered, children experiment with different materials to see which cleans the coins more effectively: cola or water. Many children can count confidently to six, and do so regularly whilst counting one another. Some count beyond 10 whilst using their imaginations in play. For instance, whilst counting the buried treasure in water activities, children count from one to 10 and then count backwards to one when putting the coins away.

Children have developed good relationships with one another and staff, seeking out friends within the setting to share experiences with and work well together as part of a group, taking turns and sharing. They talk freely about their home and events that have happened both inside and outside of the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated as individuals and learn about the wider world through a range of activities and resources. Staff gather information from parents about the children's individual needs. Children with identified special educational needs or English as an additional language are supported by staff. Effective links have been made with outside agencies, for instance the Area SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator), to enable staff to assess and meet the needs of children. The nursery's SENCO has completed the necessary training and has a sound understanding of her role.

Children behave generally well in response to praise and encouragement from most staff. Younger children benefit from the positive procedures to celebrate success when potty training, for instance. Rewards are given and displayed to acknowledge the children's achievements in this area. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are provided with information about the nursery's policies and procedures, ensuring that they are fully aware of the nurseries practices. Parents are involved in their children's learning as they are kept informed about topics and themes and their children's development. Parents find staff friendly and approachable. Although parents have regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress with staff, children's development records, occasionally, are not wholly accurate, consequently not providing an accurate picture of progress. Parents are welcomed into the setting at any time and value the opportunities to support their child within the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The staff team are suitably experienced to work with children, with a high level of staff being fully qualified; they are fully committed to updating and furthering their knowledge and skills. Effective procedures for the appointment of staff and a thorough induction programme are in place. Whilst the required ratios of adults to children are maintained throughout the day, staff are not deployed effectively to ensure that, at all times, sufficient staff are working directly with children.

Most records relating to day care are in place and remain securely on site; however there is no written permission from parents, allowing emergency medical treatment or advice to be sought, and the accident records, at times, do not contain sufficient information to ensure that all are accurate.

Overall the setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides care.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The management team and staff, display a commitment to improvement, for instance through taking an active part in the inspection process, welcoming the opportunity to identify areas to develop further; however the nursery's continued evaluation of the setting is not wholly effective in identifying areas to improve.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to amend the child protection policy to include procedures to be followed in the event of allegations against a member of staff. the child protection policy has now been updated to include the required information and has been made

available to staff and parents. The nursery was also asked to consider ways of enabling parents to become more involved in their children's learning. Parents are provided with a daily diary that details information about their child's time at the setting. They are also now provided with further information about topics and themes for activities, and ideas for activities that they can undertake at home with their children. The nursery was also asked to ensure that confidential information is stored according to current Data Protection legislation. All information is now stored according to Data Protection. The nursery was also asked to ensure written permission is obtained to seek emergency medical treatment or advice. This has not been completed and as such, a further recommendation has been raised.

At the last inspection of nursery education, the nursery was asked to review the system of recording children's progress, to reflect more clearly the early learning goals and identify the next steps for children's learning. Development records now clearly link to the early learning goals and provide information about the progress that children have made. However, the records do not clearly identify the children's next steps in learning, and as such, a further recommendation has been raised. The nursery was also asked to consider ways of re-organising sessions to allow children more opportunity to use imagination, make choices and develop independence. Sessions are now arranged to allow children opportunities to partake in free play regularly, allowing them further opportunities to make choices and increasing children's independence. The nursery was also required to provide more opportunities for children to learn the links between sounds and letters and to use writing to communicate their ideas and record their findings. Children now enjoy learning about the sounds of letters and confidently identify the sounds of all letters in the alphabet. However, children do not have regular opportunities to practise writing. The nursery was also asked to provide more opportunities for children to use simple calculation and problem solving in daily routines. Children now access a range of activities and resources throughout the day that enable them to practise simple calculation and problem solving.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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Ofsted visited the provider to discuss the concerns raised and as a result raised actions under National Standard 2, requiring the provider to develop and implement an action plan to show how staff ratios will be maintained at all times throughout the day, and to implement effective procedures to ensure an accurate record of children's and staff attendance is maintained. An action was also raised relating to National Standard 14 requiring the provider to implement procedures to ensure records regarding children's sleep patterns, toileting and food intake are maintained and available for inspection. As a result the provider took suitable measures to meet the actions set. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider remained qualified for registration at the time 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.

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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 that children are consistently protected from the spread of illness and infection, with particular regard to nappy changing procedures and the use of potties
- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure that details of accidents involving children are recorded accurately at all times
- complete a risk assessment of the building, using the information gained to identify hazards and take action to minimise the risks, with particular regard to windows, and low level displays
- evaluate the fire evacuation procedures, ensuring that all staff and children have regular opportunities to take part in fire drills
- ensure that all staff consistently manage children's behaviour positively
- review the organisation of staff deployment to ensure that children are supported at all times

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):

- further develop the systems to assess children's progress, ensuring that the information gained is used to clearly identify the children's next steps in learning
- further develop the planning and use the information gained from children's assessments to ensure that children reach their full potential
- improve systems to monitor and evaluate teaching, the curriculum and the setting in order to identify areas to develop further

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