

# Mendip House Nursery & Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | EY219881  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 22 March 2007   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Timothy Butcher   |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Mendip House Nursery & Pre-School, 17a Bedford Road,<br>Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset, BS23 4EJ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01934 629584  |
| <b>E-mail</b>                  |   |
| <b>Registered person</b>       | Mendip House Nursery & Pre School   |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated  |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](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?

Mendip House Nursery and Pre-School opened in 2002. It operates from a self-contained building in the south ward of Weston Super Mare. It is situated near Weston Hospital and local schools. The day nursery has a rear garden and serves the local and surrounding area.

There are currently 62 children from seven months to four years on roll. This includes 25 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. The group opens five days a week for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 08:00 to 18:00. A total of 10 staff members work with the children, nine of whom have at least early years qualifications to NVQ level 3 and two members of staff are currently working towards a higher qualification.

The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association quality assurance scheme and has achieved the highest level of award. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Local Authority. The nursery has Neighbourhood Nursery status and has qualified for Transformation Funding Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because there are highly effective procedures and practices in place to very closely meet children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Children receive excellent support and guidance to become increasingly independent in their own personal care. Children confidently follow good hand washing routines. Staff are very well organised to provide appropriate guidance to those children just developing these skills. A three-year old child proudly ensures that adults have noticed that she has carried out each of the steps in the procedure of hand washing after using the toilet.

Babies have their physical needs and well-being closely monitored. They receive plenty of warm interaction during nappy changing procedures so that they remain comfortable and relaxed. Babies routines are closely followed. Staff are vigilant and very regularly check sleeping babies. They are meticulous in keeping detailed records, that are shared with parents, about individual sleeping, waking, feeding and nappy changing events.

Children have their dietary needs exceptionally well met. The three week menu is displayed for parents. Well balanced meals are of high quality, nutritious and portions are substantial. Parents report very positively on this aspect of the setting. Clear records of dietary needs or allergies are kept as parents are closely consulted. Children enjoy very social mealtimes as all age groups, including babies, have mealtimes together. Children enjoy the warm interactions with the staff who sit with them. Individual children are eager to be chosen to be responsible to help hand around fresh fruit at snack time. Children over two years are also encouraged to develop independence through pouring their own drinks and are sensitively supported to learn these skills. Children under two are equally well supported to progress, for example, a child is encouraged to try just the last few drops of a drink without a lid, in order to develop the skill. Specific activity topics strongly contribute to children's understanding about healthy eating, for example, in topics on growth and spring, children plant seeds and beans.

Children have a positive attitude to physical exercise. A child squeals with delight as he practises the new skill of successfully stopping the trikes without touching the fence. Other children confidently steer, manoeuvre and pedal at speed, a very good range of sit-on and stand on trikes. Children's profiles from both the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage demonstrate that staff have an excellent understanding of child development in this area of learning.

Babies and younger children from the under two's room have regular opportunities to play and get fresh air outside. Children thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities to take their play outside as staff keenly exploit opportunities for them to do so. Children learn to put on their coats so that they can happily explore making blue bubbles from a tray of liquid. They use a range of wands and a bubble machine. They are free to explore further the texture of the mixture and the effect of wet hand prints on the floor and walls.

There are stringent procedures in place to gain parental consent and guidance for administering medication. All medication and accidents are carefully recorded and confirmed by parents. A sufficient number of staff have current first aid certificates and others are booked to attend courses, therefore children may be appropriately treated should any minor accidents occur.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because all staff are extremely vigilant and an exceptionally comprehensive risk assessment is carried out. This is backed up by a highly effective system to ensure that identified control measures continue to successfully reduce risk and any new hazards are reported and quickly addressed.

Children have a very safe and welcoming environment in which to play that is made very attractive to them with many examples of their work on display. Eye-catching labelling and visual information is also displayed well. Children benefit from the thoughtful use of space throughout the whole nursery. Rooms are very appropriately laid out for their purpose, for example, toy and resource trays are at low level. This effectively supports children to exercise choice and have easy access to the wide range of high quality resources on offer. Resources are discerningly collected to build on variety and all areas of the nursery flexibly share resources that meet children's age and stage of development. Upstairs in the under two's room a versatile room-divider is used to separate non-mobile children from others. 'Sitters and Standers' cosily explore bearing their weight, reaching and wriggling, while older children thoroughly explore paint in a tabletop activity.

Children have their welfare safeguarded because staff have a clear awareness of their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children and a thorough knowledge of how to recognise the possible signs and symptoms of potential abuse. There are robust procedures in place should they have any concerns about a child. The premises are secure and entry is stringently monitored so that only those persons who can be identified and are clearly authorised to do so, gain access to children.

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

The provision is good.

Children are eager to attend, are happy and are settled in a very welcoming and often vibrant learning environment. Babies and children under three years make good progress because they are cared for by skilled staff, who sensitively interact with children and have a very good knowledge of child development for this age group. They have a secure understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and this is used effectively to plan for children's good general all round developmental progress. Children's learning profile folders show carefully documented observations of children's achievements. The system of planning for under three's is currently under review as staff wish to more closely link the planning of activities to the skills and competencies of the Birth to three matters framework and to follow children's interests more closely. The setting has already sought guidance from their Local Authority Advisory Teacher. A new system is to be implemented when planning for children's next steps in development. A group of under twos explore paint at a table. All children learn from the activity as staff are discerning about the brushes provided and carefully match them to the development of each child. Children enjoy the experiences as they thoroughly explore the textures, colours and shapes. They develop their small muscle and coordination skills as they thoroughly cover small cardboard box junk materials in paint.

Nursery Education.

The quality of learning and teaching is good.

Children are motivated to learn and are enthusiastic. Activities provide a broad range of experiences for children that are well matched to their needs and are sufficiently varied to maintain their interest. They grow in confidence because they are encouraged to express what they are thinking throughout the day in many ways. Their views are sought and respected. In 'show and tell' several children confidently explain what interests them about the item they have brought in. Others are skilfully and sensitively encouraged to become more confident to share in discussions. They are drawn out to talk about their ideas and answer in response to questions from 'Mary the puppet'. Staff use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and to promote language skills.

A creative and varied range of activities are planned around a topic, for example, 'Spring'. At least one stepping stone is planned to be covered from each area of learning, in one activity, on each day throughout the week. For example, in an activity promoting children's creative development, children test their senses during a 'smell test'. They are asked for their ideas about what it is and what it reminds them of. They take turns and listen to each other. In other linked activities during the week, stories and books about spring are put out to be read, flash card resources for maths have spring images and in cut and stick activities, children use craft materials to make flowers and to discuss the natural world.

Teaching is rooted in a very secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Staff have a clear understanding of how children learn and progress. Teaching is often inspiring and provides realistic challenge for all groups of children. Assessment is thorough and used effectively to guide the planning of small group activities and to contribute to the learning profile for each child. Staff know children well and key workers have a particularly good understanding of their children's development. The learning profiles for the Foundation Stage show that children are making at least good progress in all areas of learning, given their starting points.

There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities throughout the day. Children are keen to offer their own ideas and they are often able to take their play in the direction that they choose, within these activities. For example, during role play the home corner is set up as a garden centre and children use the props to buy and sell packets of seed. They count packets of seed and spontaneously name the colours on the packets. They choose to make shopping lists and make marks with the pencils and the paper made available. They then choose to draw flowers. Children seek out a member of staff to help them access drawing materials and to get a lid off but their play goes off in another direction. However, planning overall is not always responsive enough to provide the widest range of choices and fully take into account their individual interests. Children do not play enough of a dynamic role in the planning of their activities. Planning for children in receipt of nursery education is currently under review as the setting wishes to fine-tune its processes for identifying children's next steps in development. This is in progress and the setting has developed a system to be implemented.

Staff help children use technology such as the interactive programmes on the computer. Children draw pictures, count and match using the mouse and practise hand-to-eye coordination as they do so. Children use mathematic skills in a host of everyday activities, for example, they spontaneously count cars during free play, bubbles and coat buttons when outside and each other when lining up. Most children are able to count one to five and several one to 10, ordering numbers correctly. They learn to follow instructions, count one to five and some simple addition and subtraction when using 'Pixie', a programmable toy. Children are developing their literacy skills. Children have many opportunities to make marks in meaningful situations and are well supported to recognise their own names, such as on their coat peg labels. They are taught well

as they build the necessary skills to begin to write their own names, for example, on their own pieces of art work. They thoroughly enjoy the action songs and rhymes and have regular opportunities to sing along to favourite tunes accompanied on a guitar. Children confidently name musical instruments and play them with excitement and with concentration to keep a beat.

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

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued and respected by a caring staff team who are all committed to ensuring that each child's needs are identified and met within the setting. There is an inclusive ethos throughout the nursery. Children benefit from the high levels of communication between staff that ensure children's needs are closely met and attention to detail is not overlooked. For example, information about what children have done in free-play activities is shared to promote learning. Care arrangements are very well documented for babies and young children and the staff discuss the detail to ensure that sleeping children do not miss out on experiences, activities or opportunities to get fresh air. Staff have high expectations of children. They provide good role models. Children develop confidence and self-esteem because staff provide praise and ensure that children know when they have done well. Children are provided with appropriate close physical contact if they become upset. They learn to share and to take turns as they have many planned opportunities to practise this during the day. They generally play together harmoniously. Children are beginning to learn how to negotiate. Staff manage children's behaviour well and sensitively use simple explanation.

Planned activities such as the celebration of the Chinese new year successfully introduce children to the wider world and to different cultures through meaningful activity. Children also learn about diversity through the positive images they encounter and use a range of multi-cultural resources including some authentic items from around the world that are made available.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities have their specific needs appropriately met. Children with individual education or other plans are well supported by knowledgeable staff who work very constructively to carry through specific plans. They work closely with carers and the other professionals involved. They are proactive in seeking out resources for children and develop their own knowledge through attendance at cluster meetings and training courses. All children are helped to join in activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. An exemplary partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being and learning in the nursery. Staff actively seek parents' views about children's needs and interests through very effective procedures when the child starts at the setting. Comprehensive information about the needs of children and the wishes of carers is secured. Documents are well recorded and kept up-to-date. An information booklet for parents and carers is kept on display. It gives very good information about the setting's policies and procedures. Parents comment positively about how the initial procedures help children to settle quickly. Parents also report very positively about the family run nursery, the friendliness of its staff, the information provided about the care of their children and the good progress that their children make. They speak very positively about the excellent information shared through the 'red book' daily diary for babies and young children. They express great confidence in the systems to share information with them if a child becomes ill or has an accident. Newsletters provide regular information about forthcoming events. A raft of appropriate consents are gained in regard to such things as medication, visits

out to the beach and for sun cream. The setting highly values and actively seeks out the views of parents and carers through the use of a comprehensive questionnaire. The setting formulates an action plan to address issues raised. As a result, parents are very closely consulted, play a real part in the decisions about their child and are kept very well informed. A formal complaints procedure is in place and a complaints log is held.

An effective key-worker system ensures that all parents and carers have good access to the information provided about how their child is progressing. Children's learning profiles and regular parents evenings provide clear information about a child's progress along the stepping stones for the Foundation Stage. Parents are strongly supported to be active in their child's learning, through such things as the story sacks and books that are available to take home. Information is also provided through newsletters and display boards. It is planned that parents will have easier access to additional information through the materials on display, once the new planning systems that have been identified are deployed.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The care of children is greatly enhanced by the very well organised environment. The principals and manager are passionate about the quality of care provided. A strong ethos, shared by staff, places children's learning at the heart of the setting. The excellent operational plan very comprehensively sets out the policies and procedures that cover all areas of practice. It is part of the quality assurance scheme documentation. There are clear recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure children are protected and are well cared for. The majority of staff are already a well qualified and an experienced team that work well together. There is a clear commitment to the on-going training and professional development of staff.

The quality of the leadership and management is very good. The principals and manager have a very clear vision for the provision of nursery education that has a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children. Information from the observation and assessment of children's learning is well presented to parents through the learning profiles and clearly indicates that children make at least good progress in nursery education, given their starting points. The provision of nursery education is monitored to evaluate strengths and areas for improvement. The group has been proactive in seeking guidance on the refinement of the assessment and evaluation processes to more effectively identify the learning objectives for children when planning activities and to more closely follow children's interests when planning for children's next steps in development.

The premises are bright and attractive and offer a secure, stimulating and well organised environment. Children are happy, confident and have a clear sense of belonging. Children are safe, secure and cared for in line with their parents and carers wishes. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection it was agreed that improvements would be made to the record of accidents and to the developmental progress reports for children.

Since the last inspection the nursery has comprehensively addressed the recommendations through an action plan. A consistent and clear record is now kept of all accidents and an

acknowledgement is confirmed in writing by parents, that information has been shared with them. As a result children's health is better protected should they have an accident.

The nursery now undertakes written observations and assessments of each child's developmental progress, using the Birth to three matters framework for children under three years and the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance for children over three years. A learning profile is formulated for each child. An action plan is agreed with parents and carers that also identifies specific developmental targets for individual children and these are regularly reviewed. Children are now offered increased choice to take their learning in the direction they wish through such things as free-play activities. Some structured activities are planned and presented to be more flexible and not to have pre-conceived outcomes so that children have more freedom to explore in the direction that they choose and at their own pace. Children are provided with a good variety of resources that they are mostly able to independently select, for example tools and other construction equipment. Staff routinely plan activities to create suitable challenge within key-worker groups. Greater challenge has also been provided through a few specific resources, for example, some mathematical resources for those children more skilled in maths.

### **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.

## **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):

- develop further the planning and evaluation of activities to more closely identify the specific learning needs of children under three years and to plan for their next steps in development.

#### **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 further the planning and evaluation of activities to more closely identify the specific learning needs of children in receipt of nursery education to plan for their next steps in development and to provide further opportunities for children to influence the



planning of activities that so that they are more able to play a dynamic role in their own learning.

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