

# Old Macdonald's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	129381
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Gail Groves
<b>Setting Address</b>	Darley Ash Farm, Chipperfield Road, Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP3 0JW
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<b>Registered person</b>	Old Macdonald's Day Nursery Ltd
<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?

Old MacDonald's Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by Old MacDonald's Day Nurseries Limited. It opened in 1998 and operates from a large two storey detached property with a separate pre-school unit. It is situated close to Bovingdon village in Hertfordshire. A maximum of 62 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 07.30 to 19.00 all year round and both full time and sessional care is offered. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 160 children from three months to five years on roll. Of these 46 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 23 staff of whom 18 including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification and five staff are working towards a higher level of qualification.

The setting receives support from a qualified early years teacher.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff carefully follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, cleaning rotas for each area of the nursery are completed daily to ensure that a hygienic environment is maintained. Parents are warned if any children in the nursery have become ill with infectious diseases, such as chicken pox, so that they can monitor their children's health and prevent the spread of the illness and many of the staff have attended food hygiene training so that they understand how to prepare and serve food and snacks to children hygienically and safely. Children have an excellent understanding of a range of simple, good health and hygiene practices and are developing very good hygiene routines for later life. They learn how to brush their teeth properly using a giant toothbrush and a large set of teeth and clean their teeth every day after eating lunch. They have easy access to tissues and learn that they must wipe their nose and then put the tissue in the bin. They learn a song about washing their hands to remove the germs and sing it whenever they wash their hands to reinforce the reasons for doing so. Also, anti-bacterial hand wash dispensers are mounted on the walls in the dining rooms and in the outside play areas so that children can easily clean their hands if they need to do so during meal times, cooking activities or playing outside. Children understand that germs are present on items and that putting dirty things in their mouth might give them a tummy ache and make them ill.

Children are offered an interesting, varied and well balanced diet and are therefore very well nourished. Water is available at all times from water coolers or jugs in each room and water is always taken outside when children go out to play so that they never become dehydrated. Meals are planned over a four week cycle and there are interesting vegetarian options available for each meal so that children have opportunities to make choices about what they would like to eat. Children have excellent opportunities to learn about healthy eating and healthy living through planned topic work and discussions about practical experiences throughout their daily routine. For example, children learn to understand what food contains and what their bodies need to be healthy by completing a topic on healthy and unhealthy foods. They learn that vegetables are good for helping them to grow and that meat contains protein which makes them strong. Staff constantly discuss the need to eat healthily at meal and snack times and when children are taking part in cooking activities and there are fruit bowls in each room so that children can help themselves to fruit whenever they are hungry. In addition, colourful displays help children to learn about a different fruit and vegetable each week and consequently they have an extremely well developed understanding of which foods are fruit and which are vegetables.

Children have their health and dietary needs well met because staff work very closely with parents. Allergies and parental preferences are listed clearly in all rooms and are also identified on children's place mats so that it is very obvious to any staff who are serving a meal if there are any particular foods that should not be given to that child. Babies feeding routines are closely adhered to and staff work closely with parents to ensure that they are encouraged to try a variety of tastes and to eat well as they move on to solids. Most of the staff hold current first aid certificates and written parental permissions and records of medication given to children are carefully maintained to ensure that their health needs are met safely.

Children take part in a range of regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors and are therefore developing very good large muscle skills and coordination and are learning to enjoy exercise. The attractive outside play areas provide large open areas for energetic and active play, such as running, playing ball and cycling, as well as areas for using large scale climbing equipment, trampolines, slides and swings. Inside children use the soft play area with its large foam shapes and ball pool to balance, climb, slither, crawl, jump and roll. In addition, the two to four year old children have a weekly session called 'Yoga Bugs' in which they are taught some balancing and stretching activities by a yoga teacher who uses stories and imaginative play scenarios to extend their motor skills in an exciting and fun way. Active play is balanced by less energetic play so that children can rest and sleep according to their needs and do not become over tired and fractious. For example, babies sleep routines are carefully discussed with parents before they begin to attend and are modified in conjunction with their parents as the children develop and grow. Toddlers and older children who need to sleep do so after lunch and the remaining children are encouraged to rest by looking at books or playing quietly.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment in which the risks to their safety are minimised. For example, health and safety risk assessments and daily safety checks are completed and some staff have completed formal health and safety training to ensure that they have the relevant experience, knowledge and skills to keep children safe. Unannounced fire drills are carried out every three months and detailed graphs are compiled to analyse the monthly accident records in order to identify any underlying trends or particular safety issues. Outside play areas are secure and there are safety surfaces in place under equipment, such as the swings and climbing frame. In addition, children use good quality, suitable and safe equipment which meets their differing needs. Resources are checked regularly and any broken items are quickly repaired or replaced. As a result, children can move around and play safely and independently.

Well devised and consistently carried out procedures ensure that children are kept safe on outings. An outings bag containing a mobile phone, first aid kit, wipes, gloves and nappies is always taken with the group in case of an accident or emergency and the names of the children and staff and where they are going is logged in the outings book in the nursery office. Children learn to keep themselves safe because staff discuss practical issues as they arise within their daily routine. For example, they learn road safety rules as they cross roads during their walks to the village and the farm and think about why they should not throw a toy in the air or why it might not be good idea to sit and play with a toy on the floor near the doorway. Some planned topic work, such as on road safety awareness, reinforces and supports their practical experiences.

Children are also safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. All the staff have recently attended child protection training so that they have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and there are clear and appropriate procedures in place for recording or reporting any concerns that they may have about a child's welfare. Appropriate vetting procedures are used to ensure the suitability of all adults caring for or having regular contact with the children.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle well and are happy in the setting. Staff are quick to offer support and distraction to any children who do arrive distressed and their affectionate approach quickly calms and soothes them. As a result, children are able to confidently take part in the interesting and exciting activities and events that the nursery provides to support all areas of their development and learning. For example, babies learn to explore and learn about their environment through their senses as they feel and taste ice lollies, play with water, paint with their hands and feet and explore interactive toys, noise makers and treasure baskets. Older children learn what happens when they mix Angel Delight and milk together and freeze it in ice lolly moulds. They discover what mushy peas, baked beans, jelly and custard feel like when they explore them with their hands and learn about space as they dress up and pretend to be astronauts in the imaginative role play area. Regular outings, such as walks to the farm to look at the animals or to the village to buy stamps and post a letter, are used to develop young children's understanding of the wider world. Opportunities to enjoy singing form a regular part of the day for all the children and the weekly 'Tiny Mites' music sessions allow children to develop their abilities in exciting new ways.

Children relate well to others and are developing good social and communication skills because staff are always interested in what they say and do. Throughout their interactions with the children staff provide a good model of speech and extend and develop children's vocabulary and language skills through their careful use of questions. Meal times are social occasions and staff sit with the children to encourage conversation and to support social skills, such as good table manners or the ability to feed themselves. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to observe and record babies' and young children's progress and to plan activities which will help them move onto the next stage in their development. They know and understand the children's needs well and liaise closely to ensure continuity when children move into a new group as they get older. Staff regularly evaluate the activities they provide so that they can monitor their ongoing provision.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are confident, well motivated and readily take part in all the activities and play opportunities that are provided for them. They are encouraged to develop independence in self-care skills, such as using the toilet, serving their own food and pouring their own drinks at meal times and work well together to tidy away toys and sweep the floor after messy play. The nursery also encourages children in the pre-school group to wear a uniform and this develops their sense of belonging and the awareness that they are the oldest children. Consequently, they show high levels of self-esteem. Children confidently join in with group discussions at circle time and show well developed communication skills. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories and are beginning to be able to link sounds and letters. This is supported by thinking and talking about the 'letter of the week'. A self-registration system has recently been introduced to reinforce the older children's recognition of their written name and opportunities for mark making and writing are provided within imaginative play areas as well as on the writing table. Children show good number skills and are using their developing mathematical ideas to solve practical problems. For example, a child laying the table for tea spontaneously counts how many cups and knives and forks she has left and how many place mats do not have cups or knives and forks on them. She then tells a member of staff that she has one extra cup and that one knife and fork is missing and finds the items so that she can complete the task successfully.

Children have exciting opportunities to develop their ideas about living things and the world around them. For example, the nursery arranges visits from companies such as 'Amazoo' and 'Living Eggs' who bring insects and reptiles for the children to look at and hold and provide eggs and incubators so that children can watch chicks hatch and grow over a period of time. They go for walks to look at the farm animals and draw pictures and take digital photographs of them which they display when they return to pre-school. They have developed a 'Minibeast Area' in the garden to provide a suitable habitat for insects so that they can explore and investigate the natural world still further and grow herbs, vegetables and sunflowers which they water and tend carefully. Children's creative development is well supported. They regularly make collages, paintings and three dimensional models and have opportunities for the practical exploration of full sized musical instruments, such as a violin, a saxophone and a cello. Their physical skills are enhanced as they learn to climb, balance, pedal and jump with a wide variety of outside play equipment and regular activities, such as the 'Yoga Bugs' sessions, develop and extend their skills still further. Children are therefore developing skills and progressing well in all learning areas.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a curriculum which provides experiences which are relevant, imaginative, motivating and enjoyable. Activities for each month are planned around different topic areas, show good coverage of the six areas of learning and clearly link to the stepping stones of children's learning. Consequently, children's progression towards the early learning goals is fully supported. Regular observations and assessments of children's progress ensure that their development is monitored and are used to guide the planning and teaching of the next steps in their learning. Staff use a variety of methods to help children learn effectively. For example, they use open ended questions when talking to children and ensure that they have their full attention before giving them important information. The main pre-school room is well laid out and allows the flexibility to have one or more groups of children carrying out different activities at the same time. However, the organisation of the accommodation, routine and resources in lower pre-school limits children's choices and independence. As a result, they are not fully able to explore, plan and make decisions for themselves during their play.

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

The provision is good.

Children are valued and included and feel a strong sense of belonging. Consequently, they are happy and confident and readily join in with all the available play activities. Staff recognise and value children's efforts and achievements at all times and this enhances their self-esteem. For example, children's art work is carefully and attractively displayed around the nursery and children who are learning to use the toilet are rewarded with stickers on a chart. Throughout the nursery children's individual needs are met effectively because staff work closely with parents and keep them well informed about their children's progress. For example, staff complete daily record sheets which tell parents what their children have eaten, what they have played with and for younger children how long they have slept and how many dirty nappies they have had. In addition they observe children's attainments and complete developmental checklists which they then use to write quarterly reports, which they share with parents. Twice a year parents' evenings are held to allow them the chance to look at their children's records of achievement. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator. She works closely with any other involved professionals to draw up Individual Education Plans and provides the additional and specialised support required to meet the children's identified needs and extend their development.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children behave very well and show good social skills because staff have high expectations for their behaviour. For example, politeness is valued and children are taught to respect the needs of others and to share and take turns with popular toys. If a young child snatches a toy from another child staff discuss this with them and offer an alternative strategy, such as asking if they may have a turn to play with it. As a result, children are developing good negotiation skills and older children are able to organise for themselves who will have the first turn and who will have the next when using equipment, such as the trampoline. Good social skills are also reinforced because staff encourage children to help to tidy away the toys when it is time to finish an activity and to help to sweep the floor after messy play. They do so willingly and work harmoniously together in order to complete the task. Children benefit from a wide variety of interesting activities and resources which help them value diversity and develop a positive awareness of the differences and similarities between people. For example, they learn about religious festivals, such as Divali by making Diva lamps, visit a Chinese restaurant to eat Chinese food during Chinese New Year and make traditional sweets at Eid. The nursery also has close links with a school in Cameroon and children learn how different it is to their own nursery by exchanging gifts and letters with the children there.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. When children move into the pre-school group parents receive a welcome pack which gives them good quality information about the daily routine, the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning which form the curriculum. They also receive parents' guides to reading, writing and role play. Staff talk to parents about their children on a daily basis and appointments can be made at any time should parents wish to talk about their child in more depth. Parents throughout the nursery are actively encouraged to be involved with their child's learning. For example, parents who are fire fighters, doctors, police officers and pilots have been asked to come into the nursery to talk to the children about their jobs. Parents also receive a monthly 'Activities at Home' sheet which tells them what topics the children will be covering and gives them ideas about some activities that they can continue at home to explore the topic still further. However, some of the information given to pre-school parents is not always sufficiently clear and specific to be useful to them. As a result, they are unable to fully and effectively continue children's play and learning at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Staff are well qualified, have a high regard for the well-being of all children and demonstrate a commitment to continual improvement. For example, they have recently begun to carry out regular written observations of each other's practice in order to highlight their strengths or weaknesses and they regularly attend training to update and enhance their skills. They also identify any particular training that they feel would lead to improved outcomes for the children. For example, staff in the baby unit have asked to attend training in baby signing to enable them to encourage the children's early communication skills. All of the necessary documentation for the safe and efficient management of the nursery is in place and record keeping systems are used well to meet children's needs. However, some of the written policies and procedures do not fully reflect the regulatory procedures that promote the welfare and care of children. As a result, their well-being cannot be fully monitored.

Good use of time and staff deployment contributes significantly to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. For example, the adult to child ratio is high and positively supports children's care, learning and play and staff are well prepared for activities and have resources ready so that children do not have to

wait and become bored or disruptive. Space in most rooms is well organised and provides appropriate areas for different kinds of play and all resources are stored at low-level in clearly labelled boxes and drawers so that children can access them independently. Throughout the nursery attractive displays using photographs and children's artwork celebrate and reflect the learning that takes place on a daily basis and provide opportunities for parents to see what their children have been doing.

The leadership and management is good. The setting is well led and emphasis is placed on high quality care and education for all children. For example, the nursery has successfully renewed their accreditation with the Herts Quality Standards quality assurance scheme. Monthly staff meetings ensure that staff are informed and fully involved with the running of the setting and their thoughts and opinions about the nursery are sought through the use of anonymous questionnaires. As a result, staff form a strong team, are motivated and work hard to improve the care and education they provide for the children. Regular parental questionnaires and a suggestions box in the foyer provide the nursery with additional feedback and help them to assess their provision still further. In addition, they regularly complete and review a comprehensive written self-evaluation in order to identify the nursery's strengths and weaknesses accurately. Input from a qualified teacher is sought to allow the nursery to monitor and evaluate their provision for nursery education. As a result, they can ensure that the curriculum they offer is developing the skills children need in order to achieve the early learning goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage.

Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

#### Care

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to ensure that there were sufficient quantities of easily accessible toys and play materials available to children. All rooms now have low toy drawers, boxes and book racks so that children can access them independently and babies explore a wide variety of toys that are laid out for them on the floor or at low-level. Resources are constantly being purchased and worn or broken items are quickly replaced. As a result, children have ready access to a stimulating and exciting range of toys which give them independence and choice.

They were also asked to increase the knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities. The nursery has now sent staff on training courses, designated a member of staff as their Equal Opportunities Officer and equality issues are discussed regularly at staff meetings. This has raised staff awareness and helps to ensure that children feel valued and free from discrimination. Displays and posters around the nursery show positive images reflecting non-stereotypical roles, racial, cultural and religious diversity and disability. As a result, children are helped to appreciate and value each others' similarities and differences.

#### Nursery Education

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to expand the provision for children to choose accessible resources in sufficient quantities. Within the pre-school room the apron racks and toy storage shelves have now been made lower and the room is laid out into zoned areas for different kinds of play. As a result, children can readily and independently access a wide range of resources and equipment to facilitate their play.



They were also asked to develop the staff's knowledge and understanding of the 'Curriculum Guidance for the foundation stage'. Staff working with pre-school children have attended a range of Foundation Stage training courses to develop their understanding of the six areas of learning and use the guidance to plan an interesting and stimulating curriculum that effectively supports children's progression towards the early learning goals.

### **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):

- review the written policies relating to emergencies and complaints to ensure that they fully and accurately reflect the regulatory requirements.

#### **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 the planning and organisation of the environment, routine and play opportunities provided for children in lower pre-school to increase their opportunities to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves
- review the opportunities provided for parents to become involved in their children's learning.

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