



Mulgrave Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY302317
Inspection date	10 January 2007
Inspector	Teresa Evelina Coleman
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Registered person	The governing body of Mulgrave Early Years Centre
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School care, Crèche

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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Mulgrave Early Years Centre was registered in 2005. Mulgrave Primary School and Cyril Henry Nursery School were amalgamated to form a new integrated centre for children's services. The centre provides wrap around care for children aged two to 11 years. Provision includes extended care before and after school and during school holidays. The centre provides full and part-time nursery sessions. In addition, places are available in the nursery unit for a few children to attend before their third birthday, on a care basis. Other facilities available at the centre are Surestart parent/carer toddler groups, Family Support, Ante-natal Clinic, midwife services, Job Centre Plus back to work training (GLaBB), Children's Information Service, I Can and the Childminding Network. The childminders attending the centre use the crèche room. The centre is located in Woolwich in the London borough of Greenwich and is close to the shopping centre and all local amenities. The premises consists of a reception area, offices, two nursery units, a crèche room, a parents' room, a sensory room and a family learning library. The nursery units have integral kitchen and bathroom areas and small rooms for one to one activities. Each nursery unit has its own fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery sessions are from 09:30 until 11:30 and 13:30 until 15:30. Some children attend on a full-time basis from 09:00 until 15:30. A maximum of 32 children aged two to eight years may attend the extended daycare provision. Children over the age of eight years also attend. Opening hours are from 08:00 to 09:00 and 15:30 until 18:00. Holiday care is from 08:00 until 18:00. The centre is open for 48 weeks of the year.

There are currently 21 children on roll. Nursery education is funded through the school's education budget. The centre supports a number of children with learning difficulties and or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The effective use of appropriate health and hygiene procedures clearly supports children's health and protects them from illness and the spread of infection. For example, staff use disposable gloves and aprons when changing children. There is a written sick children policy which requests that parents do not bring their children to the centre if they are ill. The risk of cross infection is also reduced because staff remind children to wipe their noses and cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze. Children's health is also promoted because there are effective systems in place to record the administration of medication, including prior written parental permission.

Children are learning about the importance of good personal care and hygiene because staff frequently encourage them to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. This is also reinforced through the use of posters and labels, for example, 'now wash your hands'. There are very good procedures for teeth cleaning in place and this encourages children to develop healthy routines and understand why they need to clean their teeth regularly. For example, toothbrushes are stored hygienically in lidded containers and staff explain the benefits of good oral hygiene.

The centre operates a free flow system which means that children are able to choose when they want to play outside. As a result, children benefit enormously from the excellent opportunities for physical play and exercise. The provision of macs and wellies means that children can enjoy outdoor play in all weathers. Facilities for outdoor play are very good and provide children with a wide range of opportunities for vigorous play. For example, they are able to run and jump and use a range of challenging equipment to practise their climbing, sliding and balancing skills. Children's physical development is also promoted because they enjoy excellent opportunities for indoor play, for example, they use a range of indoor climbing equipment.

Children benefit enormously from the centre's proactive approach to healthy eating and excellent routines are in place to promote this. For example, the centre employs a healthy lifestyle assistant who helps children to understand about how to stay healthy by choosing healthy eating options. She does this by providing the children with a range of healthy foods including cereals, wholemeal bread, fresh and dried fruit, raw vegetables, cheese and a variety of spreads.

Children are encouraged to prepare and enjoy their own snacks, as they discuss which foods are good for them. The centre is part of the Jamie Oliver healthy eating programme. Consequently, children also enjoy balanced and nutritious lunches, for example, chicken curry and rice with salad. Wholesome healthy foods are provided for children attending breakfast and after school provision. For example, during the after school session children enjoy a snack of freshly cooked noodles with peas and sweetcorn. Meal and snack times provide children with exceptionally good opportunities to develop their independence and social skills. They greatly enjoy chatting with each other and staff as they eat. Their independence is promoted because they are encouraged to help to set up and clear away, pour their own drinks and serve themselves. In addition, children are able to help themselves to drinks of milk or water throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a very warm and welcoming environment where risk assessments are used to identify and minimise potential dangers. Consequently, appropriate safety precautions are in place. As a result, children can move around the premises safely, confidently and independently. The environment is well organised in clearly designated areas and is enhanced through the creative use of posters, charts, photographs and displays of children's work. Very good accessibility of good quality resources across all areas of play and learning promotes children's free choice, independence and initiative. Most resources are stored in low level storage units, many of which are clearly labelled. As a result, children can choose them for themselves and greatly enjoy doing so.

Children's safety is further promoted by staff's good understanding of appropriate supervision levels, for example, while children are playing outdoors. Children have a good degree of freedom, for example, they are able to access their pigeon holes which are located in the corridor. However, staff monitor them closely and always investigate if they do not return promptly. Effective security procedures, including an entryphone system, a manned reception area and a visitors book help to maintain children's security while they are on the premises and ensure that they are kept safe from unvetted persons. Steps have been taken to protect children from the risk of fire. These include written fire procedures, regular fire drills and the provision of appropriate fire safety precautions, for example, fire blankets in the kitchen areas. However, current recording systems do not provide a fully accurate record of all children and staff present throughout the day. Although parental signatures are sought when recording major accidents, records of minor accidents that occur are not signed by parents and this means that parents are not fully informed.

Children are beginning to learn to take some responsibility for their own safety because staff frequently remind them to be careful so that they do not hurt themselves and others. For example, staff remind children to sit down when they are eating, to be careful with pencils and scissors and to pick the playdough up from the floor so that they do not slip.

Staff understand their responsibilities to the children in their care and are aware of the action to take if they are worried that a child may be being abused. For example, they understand that they must contact Social Services and Ofsted if they have a concern about a child attending

the centre. Consequently, children are protected from the risk of abuse. There is a detailed child protection statement and policy in place. This is shared with parents via the prospectus and information booklet.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

A very effective key worker system ensures that staff get to know the children really well. Key workers carry out home visits. This means that they can begin to get to know the children and their families before they start attending the centre. Children enjoy an excellent balance of activities where the emphasis is on learning through play, exploration and through their own experience. This is underpinned by exceptionally good levels of interaction between adults and children. Staff talk and listen to children, respond to their interests and ask lots of open-ended questions to make them think and to extend their language development. For example, nursery children listen attentively when they are introduced to their new pet, Lesley, an African land snail. They participate enthusiastically as the teacher asks them questions about what she likes to eat, whether she moves fast or slow whether her shell feels hard or soft and why her house has holes in the lid.

Effective planning, assessment and evaluation systems ensure that individual children's progress is monitored and the next steps in children's learning are identified on an individual basis. Planning is organised across the six areas of learning and this ensures that children enjoy a varied range of stimulating, interesting activities that provide appropriate challenge. There is an excellent balance between adult-directed activities and those freely chosen by the children. This encourages the children to be independent and use their own initiative when problem solving. For example, children try out various methods of securing plastic straws as hair when making their own puppets. They are able to do this successfully because resources are easily accessible to them, for example, glue and a sellotape dispenser.

Children greatly enjoy extremely good opportunities to use their imaginations, for example, as they play in the home corner that has been turned into a travel agent's. They use a range of props including travel brochures, booking forms, receipts and diaries appropriately supported by a member of staff who extends their play through getting them to think about where they would like to go, what items they would need to pack and how they are going to get there. Staff are highly skilled at judging when to get involved in children's play. For example, a member of staff observes that a child is engrossed in an imaginary game with dinosaur figures in the water tray and decides not to intervene. Children are developing positive attitudes towards books and reading because book corner provision is excellent and staff are enthusiastic and skilled at sharing the enjoyment of books with them.

Children's independence is promoted exceptionally well at the setting, for example, children put on their own coats, shoes, macs and wellies. They participate in preparing their own snacks, for example, making sandwiches, pouring their own drinks and clearing away after lunch and snacks. Children at the after school provision put out the tablecloths, set the tables and pass drinks round to each other. Staff providing after school care demonstrate an excellent understanding of the children's need for leisure activities and relaxation. For example, they encourage children to chill out at the end of the school day by relaxing in the parents' room

and watching some TV, before moving into the nursery unit for other activities. Staff chat to them about their day while preparing their snack.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are effective systems in place for identifying children's individual needs, for example, staff carry out home visits. This helps to ensure that staff get to know the children and their parents, even before they start coming to the centre. Children attending the extended day care service have usually attended the nursery provision in the past and are therefore familiar and comfortable in their surroundings and enjoy strong relationships with staff. Continuity of care is a priority and there are very good systems in place to support this. For example, some staff who work in the nursery units also work in the before and after school provision. Children moving from the nursery units into the reception unit join the children in the nursery units for their lunch-time break for the first two terms after they have moved. This helps to build up their confidence and ensures a smooth transition.

The centre has established very strong links with other groups in the community. For example, members of St Mary's community group which is made up of senior citizens regularly come into the centre. They recently purchased the macs and wellies used by the children so that they can play outside even if the weather is wet. Children are learning about the local community because they go on regular visits in the local area, for example, outings are an important part of the activity programme for children attending the holiday playscheme. Visitors regularly come to the centre, for example, parents from a range of cultural and religious backgrounds come in and share aspects of their cultures and traditions with the children. Children's understanding of multi-cultural issues is enhanced through the extensive provision of multi-cultural resources including books, puzzles, home corner equipment and posters. For example, there is a greeting poster, which many of the parents contributed to by adding a greeting in their own language.

Extremely good systems are in place for supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities. This includes the 'I can' service which is based at the centre. Children from nurseries across the borough who are assessed as having speech and language needs attend an intensive ten week programme. They are supported by a team of specialist staff including an 'I can' teacher, speech and language therapists, specialist nursery nurses and an educational psychologist. Children attending the programme are fully integrated into the nursery units, for example, staff reinforce signing with all the children. Children for whom English as a second language benefit from support from language support assistants.

Children's behaviour is excellent because staff provide positive role models for them by treating them with respect at all times. Staff maintain a consistent approach towards behaviour management, both in the strategies used and in their expectations of children's behaviour. Consequently, children are learning right from wrong and are becoming self-disciplined. Staff effectively promote good behaviour through the frequent use of praise, for example, "Good listening" and "Good sharing". Children play co-operatively and sometimes remind each other that they must share and take turns. They show care and concern for others, for example, they often hug each other and help each other during activities.

Partnership with parents is very good because staff are approachable and friendly, for example, parents and staff are on first name terms. Parents know that they can talk to their child's key worker and discuss their child's progress or any other issues with them. Parents are also made to feel welcome because there is a designated parents' room at the centre. Notice boards are used to share information with parents. Parents are also provided with good written information about the centre, including extended daycare provision via an information booklet that forms part of the centre's/school's prospectus. Parents provide positive feedback about the centre. For example, they comment on how friendly and approachable staff are and how well their children have settled and grown in confidence since starting to attend the centre.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from a welcoming, child-friendly environment where they have access to a balanced and interesting range of activities. Space is creatively and imaginatively used, for example, home corners and book corners. A free flow session means that children can play outdoors whenever they wish. This helps to promote their physical health and encourages them to make independent choices.

Good arrangements are in place to ensure children's safe arrival to the extended day provision. For example, younger children are escorted from their nursery unit to the parents' room at the end of the nursery day by a member of nursery staff who also works at the extended day provision.

Staff work extremely well as a team and are committed and enthusiastic in their approach. Very good ratios are maintained throughout the day, including when children are using the outside play area. Interaction between adults and children is excellent and this helps children gain in confidence and self esteem.

Most of the necessary documentation required under the National Standards is in place, including policies and procedures. For example, the centre has a policy on lost children and keeps a complaints log. Policy statements are also included in the written information for parents about the extended daycare services. However, there are currently minor weaknesses relating to the registration system and accident recording system of fire drills. The registration system does not currently provide an accurate record that includes times of arrival and departure for all children and staff on site throughout the day. Accident records relating to minor accidents do not currently include a parental signature. This means that parents are sometimes not fully informed if their child has an accident.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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.

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 the registration system accurately records the time of arrival and departure of all children and staff
- ensure that all accident records include a parental signature.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk