



Old MacDonald's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY335504
Inspection date	07 March 2007
Inspector	Gail Groves
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Registered person	Old Macdonald's Day Nursery Ltd
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 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 Nursery Ltd.

It opened in 2006 and operates from a three storey building situated in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery has a pet rabbit.

There are currently 92 children from three months to four years on roll. Of these 18 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting currently supports a small number of 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 17 staff, of whom 15 including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification and three are working towards a higher level of qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, appropriate exclusion times for children with infectious illnesses are enforced, weekly rotas are in place for cleaning rooms, equipment and bedding and staff ensure that hygienic nappy changing procedures are used consistently to prevent cross-infection. Anti-bacterial hand wash dispensers are available in the outside play area and in the upstairs lunch room for children and staff to use after touching the rabbit or blowing their noses. Medication records and parental permissions to administer medication are clear and are used to meet children's individual health needs appropriately and safely. Children learn to understand some simple, good health and hygiene practices. For example, they sing a song about washing their hands to get rid of germs as they wash their hands after using the toilet or before eating their snack, lunch or tea. However, children are not asked to wash their hands before eating breakfast and as a result, they are not fully developing good hygiene routines for later life.

Children are well nourished and enjoy a balanced diet in which any individual dietary needs are met. As a result, they enjoy their food and eat well. Drinks are available at all times from water coolers which older children can access independently if they are thirsty and young children have their own cups which are clearly labelled and readily available so that they do not become dehydrated. Children learn about healthy eating. They are encouraged to eat and enjoy fruit and bowls of fresh fruit are available on low tables in both the upper and lower pre-school rooms so that children can help themselves whenever they wish to. In addition there is a 'fruit of the week' which children learn about and which they are encouraged to taste. As a result, they understand where different fruits come from and how they grow. The lower pre-school room also has displays of art work using fruit prints as well as colourful posters and tablecloths showing fruit and vegetables and these develop children's awareness of different types of foods. Staff discuss the need to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day as children eat their lunch to reinforce their understanding about healthy eating. Children clean their teeth after lunch because they have learnt that this is important. They have been on an outing to visit the dentist and older children have a clear understanding that too many sweet things make holes in your teeth and should be avoided.

Children take part in regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors and are therefore developing good motor skills and an enjoyment of exercise. The nursery has a small outside play area which is supplemented by a large indoor ball pool and soft play area with a slide, in which children can climb, slither, run, balance and jump safely. All the children including the babies use this area regularly. 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. In the outside area children use obstacle courses, bikes, balance beams, balls, hoops and trundle toys to learn to run, pedal, throw, catch, kick and change direction. They also visit the local park to use the large scale equipment, to run around and play ball games in a large area or to use the parachute. Babies have regular outings to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine.

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 parents are kept well informed about how long children have slept. 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 have been minimised. For example, a video entrance system ensures that all visitors are screened before being allowed access to the building, hand rails on stairways are sufficiently low to allow children to reach them easily, the outside play area has a safety surface and regular safety checks and risk assessments are carried out. Children use good quality, suitable and safe equipment which meets their differing needs. Resources are checked regularly and any broken items are repaired or replaced so that children can play safely. Well established safety procedures ensure children are kept safe on outings. A ratio of one adult to two children is usually maintained and children must hold an adult's hand when walking. Staff take a mobile phone, first aid kit, tissues, anti-bacterial hand wash and nappies with them in case of an accident or emergency.

Within the nursery children learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they are reminded by the staff not to throw wooden bricks in case they hurt someone, not to kneel on chairs in case they fall off and to use the broom carefully when they sweep up the sand in case they poke someone with the handle. Planned topic work, such as road safety awareness and visits to watch the school crossing patrol lady helping children to cross the road, help to teach them about safety issues through practical experiences. In addition, when they go out for walks, children practise road safety routines and sing the road safety crossing song which reminds them to stand still and listen before they cross the road.

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 the nursery has 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 quickly become happy in the setting. As a result, they confidently take part in the broad and interesting range of planned activities and spontaneous events which the nursery provides to support all areas of their development and learning. For example, babies explore a wide range of colourful toys with interest and play with different materials, such as sand and paint, to discover what they feel like and what they can do with them. In addition, staff are currently in the process of setting up treasure baskets which they will use to extend babies' exploration and understanding of the world around them still further. Toddlers and two year olds enjoy creative activities using a wide variety of materials and techniques, such as hand or foot printing, sponge painting, collage and model making. They use their imaginations in the role play areas where, for example, they can pretend to be in a flower shop, a Chinese restaurant or pretend to care for and feed dolls or cook in the play kitchen. Regular opportunities to go out for walks to look at the sheep and horses, visit the post box to post a letter or go to buy flowers from a real flower shop help all the children to learn more about their environment and to make connections between what they see outside the nursery and what they play with and do inside it.

Opportunities to enjoy singing form a regular part of the day for all the children and the weekly 'Tiny Mites' music sessions allow older children to develop their abilities in exciting new ways. Children's communication skills are ably supported by all staff. Adults always show interest in what children do and say and encourage babies' early attempts at communication by responding to them with enthusiasm. 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. As a result, children relate well to adults and other children and play happily together in pairs or small groups as well as in large groups. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities which help babies and young children to make progress in their development. They know and understand the children's needs well and liaise closely when children move into a new group as they get older. Children's progress is assessed effectively and activities are evaluated so that staff can monitor their ongoing provision.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are confident, eager to take part in activities and show high levels of self-esteem. The nursery encourages children in the upper pre-school group to wear a uniform and this develops their sense of belonging and the awareness that they are the oldest children. They are encouraged to be independent in their self-care skills and use the toilet and put on their own coats with little or no adult support. Children use language for a variety of purposes and confidently join in with group discussions at circle time. They are beginning to be able to link sounds and letters using Jolly Phonics as they learn about the letter of the week and start to recognise their first name on their individual registration card. Opportunities for mark making and writing are provided within imaginative play areas as well as on the writing table and children trace individual letters and their own names to develop their writing skills still further. Children's mathematical concepts and their awareness of numbers is well developed and they count reliably and use numbers spontaneously within their play. Opportunities to develop problem solving and calculation skills within normal routines are used

very effectively to help children think about ideas such as whether there are more red chairs than blue chairs around the table and to discuss who has the longest and who has the shortest row of bricks.

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 spring flowers and are encouraged to take pictures of them on a digital camera for their display back at the nursery and grow herbs and tomatoes in the outside play area. Children explore paint and other materials in a variety of different forms as they create collages, make large scale models, such as a Chinese dragon, with tubes, boxes and lengths of material and develop their own ways of expressing themselves with chalk, paint and crayons. Their physical development is fully supported and encouraged through planned sessions such as 'Yoga Bugs' as well as through opportunities to use tools and materials such as playdough, scissors, cutters, rolling pins and knives.

The member of staff in charge of nursery education is a qualified teacher and has a highly developed knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. She mainly works alone with a maximum of eight children at any one time and is therefore able to give them a lot of individual attention and support. 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 guides the planning and teaching of the next steps in their learning. Although children of differing abilities are being appropriately challenged and extended, the activity plans do not reflect how this occurs. As a result, if other staff need to work with the children they are unable to ensure that the abilities of all children are being fully stretched. The upper pre-school room is well laid out and maximises the floor area so that there is the flexibility to have one or more groups of children carrying out different activities at the same time. Resources are readily available so that children can access them independently and the teacher uses her time effectively to interact with and support children throughout their play and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and included and therefore feel a strong sense of belonging. Staff are careful to recognise and value their achievements in a variety of different ways and as a result they develop confidence and self-esteem. For example, children's art work is attractively displayed throughout the nursery and when they build particularly good models with constructions toys, these are labelled with their name and are not taken apart and put away until the children have shown them to their parents. 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, they 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 parent evenings are held to allow them the chance to look at their children's records of achievement. The parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully involved in drawing up and monitoring their child's Individual Education Plan. The nursery also works closely with other professionals and provides extra support to meet any identified needs appropriately.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They respond well to appropriate expectations for their behaviour and clearly understand what is required of them. For example, staff value politeness and encourage children to share and take turns with popular toys. They remind them when babies are sleeping that they must be careful not to wake them and encourage them to help tidy away the toys and to sweep the floor after messy play. Consequently, children are developing good social skills as they learn to work harmoniously together and to respect the needs of others. Children benefit from a range of activities and resources which help them value diversity and develop positive attitudes to the differences between people. For example, they learn about festivals such as Diwali, Hanukkah and Eid and as part of a topic about Chinese New Year they visited a Chinese restaurant and made Chinese food.

The partnership with partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. When children move into the upper pre-school group parents receive a welcome pack which gives them good quality information about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning which form the curriculum. The weekly and daily activity plans are also displayed for parents to look at if they wish to do so. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children as they discuss their attainments at the parent evenings but do not have sufficient opportunities to become fully involved in their children's learning. For example, unlike the parents of children in the rest of the nursery, they do not receive information about the monthly theme and the activities being planned at nursery along with suggestions as to what activities they can do at home to develop their children's learning still further. Consequently, children do not benefit from opportunities to reinforce and continue their learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff in the nursery have a high regard for the well-being of all children, a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. For example, staff regularly attend training to update and enhance their skills and the nursery is planning to take part in the Herts Quality Standards quality assurance scheme. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development and children receiving nursery education have the benefit of being taught by a full time teacher. All of the necessary documentation for the safe and efficient operation of the nursery is in place and record keeping systems are used well to meet children's needs. In addition, the group's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

Space is used particularly effectively within the nursery to provide appropriate areas for different kinds of play. For example, both the baby and toddler rooms have a carpeted floor space so that children can crawl, walk and sit warmly and safely as they explore their toys as well as an easily cleaned hard floor area suitable for messy play and eating. The lower and upper pre-school groups share a dedicated messy play room as well as a room with comfy seats for quiet play and reading and a room which is turned into a variety of different settings, such as a dental surgery or a beauty salon for exciting imaginative play. 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.

Staff work extremely well together as a team and mundane tasks, such as clearing up after meals and snacks, are dealt with swiftly and efficiently so that staff can spend the majority of their time interacting with the children to support and develop their play and learning. However, whilst the adult to child ratio generally supports children's care, learning and play, the contingency arrangements which are in place to cover emergencies and unexpected staff absences are not sufficiently robust. As a result children's health and safety is potentially compromised if staff call in sick at short notice.

The leadership and management is good. Since taking over the existing nursery on this site, Old MacDonald's have made significant changes to the building and the way it is used and have improved and increased the equipment and resources provided for the children. As a result, children have access to good quality resources in a clean, bright, stimulating and lively environment. There are clear systems in place for the induction of new staff and appraisals and development plans are in place to identify individual areas for improvement and further training needs within the staff team. Regular staff meetings ensure staff are kept fully informed and involved about the provision and their thoughts and opinions about the nursery are also sought through the use of anonymous questionnaires. As a result, staff form a strong team, are motivated, committed and work hard to improve the care and education they provide for the children.

The teacher in upper pre-school monitors and evaluates the nursery education provision by using her records and assessments of the children's attainments and progress to ensure that the curriculum 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. The nursery assesses its own strengths and weaknesses accurately and there are plans in place to improve the provision further by developing the outside play area and by encouraging parents to come into the nursery to share any expertise they may have with the children. These improvements will increase the learning opportunities for children.

Overall, children's needs are met.

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 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 hand washing procedures at breakfast time
- review the contingency arrangements which are in place to cover emergencies and unexpected staff absences.

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):

- ensure that the written plans reflect the challenges which are to be provided for children with differing abilities
- increase the opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's learning.

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