

Micklefield Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109300
Inspection date	18 June 2007
Inspector	Alison Weaver
Setting Address	Sutton Avenue, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 4LP
Telephone number	01323 892457
E-mail	
Registered person	Micklefield Nursery School
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?

Micklefield Nursery School has been registered since 1994. It is run by a board of governors of the Micklefield School (Seaford) Educational Trust Ltd and operates from a large purpose-built building, in a residential area of Seaford. A maximum of 60 children may attend at any one time. The group opens five days a week for 41 weeks of the year. Opening times are from 08.30 until 15.30. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 102 children aged from two years to under eight years on roll. Of these 69 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 19 childcare staff. The two managers and eight of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff take all the necessary steps to ensure that the environment is kept clean and hygienic for the children. The toys and resources used by children are regularly cleaned. The children learn to wash their hands before handling food and after using the toilet. The staff remind children what to do to make sure they wash their hands properly. Children learn why they need to wash their own hands. They also develop their understanding about the importance of good personal hygiene when they explore topics such as 'People Who Keep Us Healthy'. For example, they learn about the need to look after their teeth and visit the dentist.

Staff obtain the necessary information about children's individual health needs from parents. They use this information to help them promote children's welfare. The parents are kept informed about any health concerns. If a child becomes ill in the setting, the staff ensure they are cared for appropriately in a quiet area. Staff make sure children are comfortable while they are waiting to be collected by a parent. There are sufficient trained staff who are able to administer first aid treatment in the event of an accident to a child.

Children learn about the importance of eating well. They enjoy a variety of healthy snacks such as cereals, raisins and wholemeal bread. Children are offered healthy and nutritious freshly cooked meals. Some of the fruit and vegetables that the children grow in the garden are used in their lunches. They help themselves to a selection of fresh raw vegetables and salad items that are available daily. Fresh fruit is provided along with a homemade pudding. The staff ensure they have information about each child's individual dietary needs. However, the setting does not always actively promote an alternative menu for children with special diets. Children have easy access to drinks so that they can help themselves when they become thirsty.

Staff plan and provide a wide variety of activities that effectively promote children's physical development. The children show good control and co-ordination as they play safely with a variety of games equipment outdoors. These include parachutes, ribbons, balls and trikes. They have fun as they take part in movement activities and action songs indoors, learning to use their bodies in many different ways. They zoom like space rockets, curl into balls to make planets and 'space walk'. Their fine motor skills develop extremely well as they use a very wide range of tools and small equipment on a daily basis.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a secure and safe environment. The staff are deployed effectively and overall the children are well supervised. The staff carry out a variety of regular safety checks and risk assessments to help ensure that children can move freely and are protected from harm. However, some exposed radiators remain a potential hazard to children. When planning activities for the children, staff consider any safety issues that might arise so that they can be addressed effectively. The setting carries out regular fire drills to ensure that all staff and children are aware of what to do in an emergency.

Children develop their own understanding of how to stay safe through some very effective adult interaction. Staff talk to the children about how to play with toys safely, for example, as

they make models with the bricks. They learn to move around safely as they are reminded to hold onto the rail when going down the steps.

The staff create a visually stimulating learning environment that is very attractive and welcoming. There are a number of interesting interactive displays in the hall for the children to explore. The children's work is displayed exceptionally well throughout the setting, showing that their contributions are valued. Good use is made of the different rooms and space available. Staff create different play areas for the children in each classroom. All the children enjoy playing with an excellent range of toys and equipment that is safe and kept in a good state of repair. Staff ensure that the resources are age appropriate and used well to challenge and stimulate the children.

The setting has all the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Several staff have attended recent child protection training. They passed on what they learned to the rest of the staff team. This results in all staff being fully aware of their responsibilities to report any concerns about a child. There are clear procedures to ensure that only authorised persons collect the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive very happily and soon settle into the friendly and welcoming environment. New children soon develop their confidence and build good relationships with the staff. All the children thoroughly enjoy themselves and are helped to achieve. They are well motivated, concentrating well on self-chosen activities. The staff are very caring and supportive, promoting children's learning as they play. Staff talk to the children about what they are doing and respond to their interests.

Staff make effective use of the Birth to three matters framework when planning the activities for children aged under three years to help promote their development. Useful records of the younger children's progress are kept. These younger children have fun using their senses to explore. They put shells to their ears to listen to the sounds. Children enjoy the water and sand play activities. They have a lovely time painting patterns on the paper using rollers. They learn to do things for themselves, for example, making their own choices and taking the tops off the roller paints. They like to sit with adults looking at books together.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make very good progress towards all the early learning goals due to the staff's secure knowledge of how children learn. Staff plan and prepare an excellent range of activities to encourage children to develop skills and have fun. Staff know the children well and help extend their learning as they play. Staff are particularly skilled at questioning children to help them think about what they are doing and express their ideas. The staff also provide some opportunities for child-initiated play.

The curriculum planning is broad and balanced as it covers all areas of learning. The focus activity sheets show clear links to the stepping stones to ensure staff are aware of what children should learn. Staff carry out regular observations and use these to inform children's records of progress. This enables staff to monitor what individual children are achieving and learning. The staff do not make full use of the observations and records to formally identify the next steps

for all individual children. The planning does not show how staff can adapt activities to take into account children working at different rates and with differing abilities.

Children are very happy and confident. They eagerly join in with the activities and are keen to learn new skills. They become absorbed in activities such as role-play and mark making. They play well together and on their own. Children begin to form friendships and share resources with each other. Good warm, caring relationships between staff and children are evident. Children's independence develops well in the setting as they help themselves to resources and drinks. Children enjoy being a special helper for the adult.

Children speak confidently to each other and to adults. They openly share their news in circle times. The children learn to recognise the link between sounds and letters. They show an interest in the written words displayed all around them. The staff make written words available to them at the different activities. For example, at the marble painting table children could see words such as 'silver', 'marble', 'bronze' and 'rolling'. The children make choices from well-presented and interesting mark making activities. They make up bills for car repairs in Micklefield Garage and make appointments at the vets. They develop good writing skills and regularly write their own names on their work. They develop a love of books and stories. Children enjoy retelling the stories as they look at the pictures.

Children count confidently and show increasing skill in number recognition. The staff use the environment well to reinforce mathematical development through the variety of displays. Staff encourage the children to count at everyday activities and routines such as when taking the register and lining up. They develop a good awareness of simple calculation through some very effective adult interaction. Staff regularly ask children questions such as 'if we count 2 and 7 together how many do we get?' They talk together about cutting something in half so that it makes twice as many. They learn about shape and measurement through everyday and planned activities.

Children enjoy investigating using their senses. They have fun playing with the 'space dust' and 'space gloop'. They explore other textures such as jelly and mud. They find out about the natural world as they plant and grow a variety of seeds and plants. They talk knowledgeably about what makes a plant grow. Children have visits from zoo staff who show them items of interest such as crocodile skin and let them see different mini beasts. They learn to construct a wide variety of models using different materials and objects. They have regular access to simple forms of technology such as remote control vehicles as well as other equipment such as computers and karaoke machines. They learn about other ways of life as they have visits from people such as librarians, fire officers and the police. They celebrate different festivals and find out about other countries.

Children enjoy using their imaginations, particularly in the role-play area. They enthusiastically plan their space trips, deciding which planet to go to in their rocket. Art and craft activities are readily available and are very popular with the children. They express their own ideas as they paint, make models and draw. They use everyday objects such as the wheels on toy trucks to paint patterns. They have fun making the painted marbles roll across the paper. Children have regular opportunities to enjoy singing and explore sound. They explore and play different musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff value children as individuals and acknowledge their home backgrounds. Staff work closely with parents to help meet children's individual needs. They ensure that they get the necessary information from parents about their child to help them settle into the group. Staff talk to the children about differences in a positive way and teach them to respect other people. Children are helped to develop their knowledge of the world around them through planned activities and the resources available. Staff ensure that all children have access to a variety of resources that represent the wider community. Children are encouraged to share artefacts from their own countries.

The setting has good arrangements in place to care for children with learning needs and disabilities to ensure that they are fully included. When necessary, staff adapt the environment and activities so that all children can take part. Staff support these children and give them the necessary care. They work closely with parents and other professionals to help the children achieve and make progress.

Children behave very well and respond positively to staff. They benefit from the praise and encouragement given by staff. Children's achievements are celebrated with the use of stickers. Children learn to share and take turns as they play. Staff calmly deal with any inappropriate behaviour. They talk to the children about their behaviour and how it affects others. Staff make good use of puppets to help children learn about caring for others. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. The parents of funded children receive some helpful written information about the Foundation Stage and there is a wall display in the hall, which gives them an overall picture of what children are learning. Staff keep parents informed of the topics and activities in the regular newsletters. They are also given ideas of how to extend their child's learning at home.

The staff make excellent use of open evenings for parents. At these visits, parents experience a typical nursery session for themselves and take part in some of the activities that the children enjoy. This helps them develop a good insight into what children learn and enables them to communicate more effectively with their own children. Parents discuss children's progress and look at their assessment records during the regular parent consultations. Parents are encouraged to share their own views and comments about how they feel their child is developing.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised and space is used effectively for the children. Staff group children appropriately and generally supervise them well. The lunch time session in the dining room is not always organised successfully to meet the needs of the children. The staff team works well together and they support one another in the setting. There is a strong leadership team who are working closely together to plan and prepare for a smooth transfer of management roles that lie ahead for the setting. The staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, which helps contribute to the smooth running of the setting.

All the required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in place. However, some staff checks are not stored correctly. A small number of the written policies made available to parents and staff lack some necessary details.

A thorough recruitment procedure is in place, which ensures that staff are suitable to work with children. The ongoing development of staff is effectively promoted through the appraisal system. The staff meet regularly to discuss the curriculum and general issues in the setting. They make good use of staff role-plays and questionnaires to review and assess their practices. This all helps to ensure that staff understand their role and know how to support children in their play and learning. The staff keep well informed about current childcare practices through ongoing training. All the staff are well motivated and enthusiastic. Children benefit from being cared for by a high level of qualified and experienced staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are good. The staff are committed to continuous improvement and development of the nursery education provision. They put effective development plans in place where they identify areas they want to improve. They are successfully developing the use of free flow outdoor play to extend children's learning opportunities. Staff regularly monitor and evaluate the curriculum and activities to ensure that the provision is helping children make good progress towards the early learning goals. They make effective use of the expertise and skills of some of the nursery governors to review the planning and their observation and assessment process.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last care inspection, the setting has reviewed and updated the policies to reflect the current childcare practices and regulations. However, there are still a few details that need altering in the complaints and confidentiality policies. The fire drill record now contains the necessary detail and is a more helpful record for staff. They can now monitor more effectively whether staff and children are sufficiently aware of what to do in the event of a fire. The record of attendance is improved as it indicates more clearly who is present and at what time. The medication record is maintained appropriately and meets the regulations. This helps ensure that children are not harmed by any overdosing.

The setting was asked to increase staff's knowledge of learning needs and disabilities. This is still ongoing as the setting has had problems accessing a suitable course to enable another member of staff to be trained in this area so that they can help support children.

At the inspection, it was recommended that the setting review the provision of meals to ensure that children's dietary needs are inclusively cared for. This has not been fully addressed and remains an area of concern.

At the last inspection for nursery education, the setting was asked to consider improving opportunities for parents to contribute to children's learning and assessment. The setting now holds open evenings and consultations where parents can learn about the activities and fully discuss their children's progress. They have an opportunity to see the formal records of assessments. This helps make a more effective partnership with parents.

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):

- improve safety with regard to the exposed radiators
- ensure that children's individual dietary needs are fully catered for.

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):

- continue to develop the planning to ensure that it shows how activities can be adapted to take into account children working at different rates and with differing abilities.

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