

Fordfield House Nursery & After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219075
Inspection date	03 May 2007
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow / Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	Fordfield Road, Millbrook, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK45 2HZ
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Registered person	Fordfield House Nursery Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Fordfield House Nursery Limited was registered in 1988. It is located, in detached premises, on the outskirts of the rural village of Millbrook in Bedfordshire. There are six rooms used for the children which includes the after school children. Children have access to a secure outside play area.

There is a maximum of 90 children between the ages of birth to under eight years, who may attend the nursery at any one time. It operates 48 weeks per year, Monday to Friday, between the hours of 08:00 until 18:00. The nursery also provides an after school and holiday club facility.

There are 96 children currently on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. The majority of children come from a wide the surrounding towns and villages. The nursery currently supports children who have learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 29 staff. Of these 28 members of staff, including the director, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely well-managed and clean environment where the staff are knowledgeable about the risks of infection and have highly effective procedures and practices which promote the children's health needs. Staff have an excellent understanding of this area and there is a designated member of staff who has responsibility to ensure that all workers have a clear and thorough knowledge of nappy changing and the procedures to apply when caring for very young children. There are very clear procedures relating to children's well-being and care to enable them to fully appreciate the relevance of practices such as washing and drying their hands thoroughly, using and disposing of tissues correctly in order to prevent germs spreading and cleaning their teeth to protect them from decay.

Children are offered exceptionally healthy and nutritious snacks and meals which are cooked using fresh ingredients obtained from the local farming community. The nursery has been involved in the 'Healthy Eating' programme for some time which ensures full support and advice is given to their cook who is totally committed to offering a wholesome diet to all children. She takes extreme care when preparing meals to ensure that there are no additives or salt and that there are the appropriate levels of fat and sugar. The cook is involved in the weaning process and this ensures that young children are also receiving a very well balanced and freshly cooked meal. Ingredients are supplied to the older children who attend the After School Club, so they can make their own meals. They are extremely knowledgeable about the foods that are good for them and those that are not and they have recently become involved in competitions for their prowess as chefs. Children learn practical social skills as they sit in small groups to eat their snacks and meals, interacting with each other and with staff members. They help themselves to water from the drinks dispensers positioned in the play rooms and competently manage serving themselves at mealtime, using serving spoons and china crockery to increase their feeling of homeliness. Children's individual dietary needs are clearly recorded and staff have developed an exceptionally practical system for checking all needs and allergies, ensuring that children's health is protected at all times. This is further promoted to a consistently high standard as most staff have current first aid qualifications and some have had additional healthcare training, such as the administering of an epipen.

Children's physical health is exceptionally well promoted as they are offered an extensive range of activities. They explore, develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in adult-led activities such as music and movement sessions and action rhymes. Children show exceptional skill and dexterity in the use of small tools and equipment, for example, very young children competently and safely use paint brushes, small construction pieces and competently manage to count their fingers when singing number rhymes such as 'Three little Speckled Frogs'. Staff pay particular attention when organising the children's physical care ensuring all children have opportunities to build on their established skills. Babies have opportunities to move, reach, stretch and walk along furniture and these skills are promoted in line with the Birth to three framework. Children freely access the outdoor play area and enjoy using the wide range of equipment which includes slides, ride-on toys, balls, hoops and climbing apparatus. Children are also offered swimming lessons by a qualified instructor and the older children thoroughly enjoy improving their football prowess with a skilled football coach. Children's enjoyment of these activities is evident, creating a multitude of learning opportunities to increase their co-ordination, balance and body control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work is creatively displayed and resources are attractively arranged. Their safety is effectively promoted because staff risk assess daily and are continually vigilant during the day, for example, checking room gates are always closed, undertaking regular fire drills and ensuring that emergency exits are clear at all times. Children have a good understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe, for example, attentively listening to instructions in order to prevent accidents and lining up in an orderly fashion making sure that they do not bump into each other. Younger children are given consistent responses to throwing or pushing each other and are learning the importance of being kind and gentle. However, the children's safety could be affected as socket covers are not always replaced after use and the record for visitors is not routinely completed. The staff plan to take steps to ensure these elements of safety are eradicated quickly.

Children independently select toys and activities from a wide range of good quality play resources. Staff regularly check these to ensure that they are clean, safe and appropriate to the age and abilities of the children. However, children's safety could be affected as they sleep in the play room whilst other children are involved in their activities and this could possibly lead to an accident or them not being able to receive undisturbed rest. Children's welfare is promoted well as staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and are able to identify report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy, secure and settled. Babies and new children settle into nursery life extremely well because there is a thorough and sensitive 'settling-in' procedure to ensure that both parents and children feel secure. The staff ensure that they have all necessary information about the children, including their likes and dislikes, as documented on the 'All about me' form completed by parents. They use this information to further support children, for example, ensuring that their favourite comforter or toy is readily available at all times. Younger children's learning and development is thoughtfully and carefully promoted. Staff have an excellent knowledge and enthusiasm for the practical use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They use this knowledge and their wide range of child care experience to make sure that all activities are offered at an appropriate level, thus ensuring that children make excellent progress in all areas. Children's learning is reviewed daily and the planning is reviewed and changed to meet their individual needs and differing rates of progress.

Children come in eagerly and are keen to participate in the activities and resources. They are enthusiastic about the play opportunities provided, clearly and competently acquiring new skills and fully embracing new ideas and challenges such as discussing the different shades of purple, linking it to the lilac tree in the garden, smelling and feeling the blossom, thus learning about the environment and colour in a positive and practical way. Children have excellent relationships with each other and with staff, confidently participating in discussions, initiating conversations, asking for help when needed and showing their accomplishments proudly. Children enjoy learning about numbers such as through singing number rhymes where they count the relevant fingers, relating this to the frog song and copying the actions. Their personal development and self-esteem are consistently promoted through extremely responsive support and interaction from highly experienced and genuinely caring staff. Plans for the older children attending the play scheme and after school club are extremely well organised to incorporate

their interests and hobbies such as football, snooker, cooking, craft work and board games. They thoroughly enjoy making up and playing their own home-made board games as well as making cakes for the holiday cake-making competition.

Children show high levels of independence as they make choices about their resources and activities throughout their time in the nursery. All staff make excellent use of open questions, demonstrating and explaining activities, and supporting children, thus taking every opportunity to extend their learning. An example of this is children making ladybirds being encouraged to print the spots using cylindrical bricks, count the number of spots made, and find the colour paint they chose, matching these to the spots made. Assessment of the children's progress is detailed and purposeful and staff are skilled in using a variety of methods. They ensure that assessments are reviewed daily and the findings are positively used to feed into future planning. Children are offered a wealth of challenging opportunities and activities which are adapted to suit them individually and help them realise their full potential. For example, children playing in the sand with pretend insects are encouraged to count the insects' legs and compare greater and smaller numbers. Children then transfer their knowledge to other situations. For example, a young child later finds an insect in the garden, recognising it and proudly telling the other children the name of it and how many legs it should have.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are highly motivated and are making outstanding progress towards each of the early learning goals. They respond to new ideas and activities with confidence and lively interest, for example, they eagerly participate in a water-based activity where they make the sound of rain falling, experimenting with different containers and noting the changes when water is poured from different heights. Their balanced progress and overall development is consistently promoted because staff have an excellent knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and use varied and creative teaching methods. Children's learning is gently and imaginatively reinforced as staff plan activities exceptionally well and help children to make links in their learning. An example of this is the way the children made clocks to illustrate 'Hickory Dickory Dock' when covering a theme of 'Nursery Rhymes'. They drew their own clocks, carefully writing the numbers, and learned early steps in telling the time, reinforcing their knowledge of shape, number and calculation, and developing their creativity and imagination.

Excellent teaching methods mean that behaviour is well handled, an optimum learning environment is created and all learning opportunities are used. For example, a staff member talks with a child about making pretend weapons, encouraging this child to think how this might make other people feel and to think about what else could be made with the blocks. When the child converts the blocks into a 'magic wand' and pretends to change people into animals, the staff member links this to the current theme and suggests that they try changing the soft toys into mini-beasts, putting the spider costume on a toy polar bear to illustrate this. Other children join in with this game and it leads to many discussions about the different insects. Children show very high levels of independence as they choose resources and activities throughout the sessions. They are inspired to try out new ideas and activities because staff pay great attention to detail when displaying resources. For example, when looking at their caterpillars growing, children use magnifying glasses and refer to the relevant books, posters and information cards on display in this area.

Children make balanced progress in all areas and are always offered highly appropriate activities and learning opportunities because staff are skilled in assessing them. Assessments are reviewed

daily and the information from these is then used to inform future activity planning. An example of this is staff noting that a child needs further practice in mastering the use of scissors. An activity is adapted to include opportunities in this area and staff make sure that it is included in the daily planning on the next day that the child is due to attend. An innovative range of themes provide opportunities for children to explore an extensive range of topics and activities which support all areas of learning. Themes have included 'Pre-historic Times', 'Lifeboats', 'Milk', 'Keys' and 'Around the World'. Each theme encompasses a broad range of subjects. For example, when looking at a theme of 'Music', children learn about rhythm, read music and make their own music sheets, look at instruments from around the world, act out nursery rhymes and link these to shapes and occupations.

Children have excellent daily opportunities to develop the attitudes and dispositions that will enable them to achieve in their future learning. For example, they are motivated and have a high self-esteem, talking confidently in groups and proudly discussing their work with each other and with adults. They are developing an excellent understanding of the values and needs of others as they work in groups, learning about listening, sharing and negotiating. For example, during a group discussion, children talk about what frightens them, confidently stating this and respecting the views of other group members. Their behaviour is excellent, enabling all to learn and creating a constantly busy, stimulating atmosphere within the setting. Children are encouraged to explore language, to use new vocabulary and to use language creatively. For example, when covering a topic of 'Music', children talked about relevant descriptive words, using words such as 'classical, slow, sad and reggae'. Children show a great love of books, and use them for a range of purposes. They thoroughly enjoy stories, often choosing books to read to each other and reading independently. They are clearly aware that information can be retrieved from books and understand that print can be used for a variety of purposes, for example, they follow recipe cards to make pancakes and then make their own recipe cards and books, competently writing words such as 'whisk, egg, spatula and flour'. Children confidently attempt to use written words for different purposes, understanding that writing can be used as a means of recording and communicating, for example, completing their 'News Diary' on a regular basis.

Children use numbers in a meaningful context and understand that these represent sets of objects, for example, sorting animals by size, colour and features. They have an excellent understanding of mathematical concepts, confidently transferring this knowledge to everyday situations to solve practical problems. Examples of this include working out how many pieces of cutlery are needed at each dinner table, timing how long it takes to run certain distances and making charts to record information such as favourite musical instruments and bread-tasting results. They are offered a wealth of opportunities to explore, question, and be curious in an extensive range of activities that form the basis of their later learning in subjects such as geography, history, science and technology. They enthusiastically explore the exciting play opportunities offered. For example, a group of children explore the 'Mini-beast Jungle', spotting different types of insects and discussing their differences with a staff member before enjoying a story about insects. Children confidently use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning. An example of this is two children independently using a computer, where they select a programme, use the mouse to draw lines and select colours and then competently switch to another programme by changing the computer disc. Children are gaining a comprehensive understanding of the cultures and beliefs of other people through their involvement in an exciting and creative range of activities. For example, they have looked at people from around the world and talked about their differences, studied maps and a world atlas, dressed up in traditional clothes and looked at music from other countries.

Children enjoy an extensive and stimulating range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills in all areas of their physical development. The extensive use of the outdoor play area means that children are able to explore skills such as balance and control as they use ride-on toys, run around the trees, play ball and use the swings. They are developing a positive attitude towards physical exercise and a growing awareness of how it can help them to stay healthy because they talk with staff about this and have covered topic work which increases their understanding in this area. Children's natural creativity is strongly encouraged and their individual work is always highly valued. This creates an exceptionally positive environment where children feel confident to express themselves, ask questions and participate in discussions. Staff are highly skilled and confident, ensuring that children are offered structured activities but are encouraged to express themselves within these. An example of this is an activity to make spiders for the mini-beasts jungle, where children used an extensive range of junk-modelling materials, arranging these as they liked in order to form a beautiful collection of highly individual spiders. They regularly use and explore a wide range of different mediums, for example, using chalk and charcoal to sketch musical instruments, and painting blossom trees using arm and finger prints.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are welcomed and offered a wealth of opportunities and learning experiences. This is excellently supported by staff who ensure that all children are able to participate and develop to their maximum potential. Children are respected at all times and the staff's individual approach to each child and their family ensures that they feel unique, valued and encouraged to play a full and active part in nursery life. Children are offered a multitude of creative opportunities and activities which promote their understanding of society and their local community. They regularly visit the local Garden Centre and receive visitors from the nurse on the Health bus, police officers as well as visits from animals such as the farmer's lambs and the family dog. Children participate in role play scenarios such as the dentist's surgery which enables them to gain a clear, meaningful knowledge of the people who aid them in the community. The children gain a full appreciation of their own culture and others through discussions, stories, craft work and the observation of festivals such as Chinese New Year, Hanukkah, Diwali, Christmas as well as special days such as Mother's Day and Saint Patrick's Day. They frequently use reference books to gain a further knowledge and understanding of little-known festivals, for example, the Indian festival of Holi.

Children's behaviour is exemplary as they confidently make choices about their activities. They are given consistent and securing support when playing together and the older children competently organise turn-taking and sharing. Children show care and concern for each other, for example, a child finds their friend's favourite doll when they wake up from sleep time a little disoriented. Children negotiate with each other productively, for example, two children negotiate the positioning of a garden toy so that the path can still be used. Staff are highly skilled in managing children's behaviour, setting consistent boundaries and always offering clear explanations so that children fully understand the need to take responsibility for their own actions. Staff act as excellent role models, always remaining calm, polite and attentive to all. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities have their requirements clearly identified and consistently met as there is a detailed, practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is steadfastly implemented. They have attended additional training and have put into action all they have learnt. The staff work sensitively with individual children and their parents to

make sure that all are included in the activities and routines of the nursery. Children have individual plans which clearly relate to their needs and excellent and efficient response from staff to concerns have accessed and provided prompt professional advice and support from outside agencies.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff are fully committed to involving parents in the setting and in their children's learning. There is a comprehensive parents' induction process which ensures that they are fully aware of all policies and of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework, enabling them to feel confident in the staff's ability to meet their child's needs and promote their learning and development. Parents are kept exceptionally well informed of their children's progress through regular newsletters, daily diaries, consultation sessions and meetings with staff. A particular strength of the setting is that staff rotas are exceptionally well-organised to ensure that children are cared for by the same staff team throughout the day, thus promoting continuity and enabling parents to discuss fully what their children have been doing throughout the day. There are highly informative notice boards containing a wealth of information about topics such as the current nursery themes and activities. These are all carefully linked to explanations about each area of learning so that parents are able to clearly see where the play opportunities and activities link to children's learning, enabling them to understand this and be involved in their child's learning. Feedback from parents is highly featured ensuring parent views and support are sought. For example, suggestions from parents made in the day book and questionnaires on subjects such as healthy diet are regularly reviewed and acted upon which ensures that the parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and high quality care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children's play opportunities are promoted by the good organisation of space, high staff ratios and the procedure which enables children to be cared for in groups which accommodate their abilities and personal needs. This enables the children the freedom to move safely, confidently and independently from one activity to another and to initiate and access their own play and learning. Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted through the staff's practical knowledge of the nursery's policies, practices, procedure as documented in the operational plan. Their immediate health is protected as the majority of staff have first aid knowledge and are qualified and there is a General Practitioner assigned to the nursery, who can be contacted in the case of a medical need or if advice is required.

There are thorough procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children and this is supported by a clear induction process for new staff, ensuring that all have a clear understanding of the high level care required of them. Children's overall welfare is further promoted by the clear understanding that the nursery director and nursery manager have of their role and responsibilities. The management have a good attitude relating to reviewing and updating their policies and procedures, for example, when omissions are identified, they immediately take steps to rectify these such as establishing a system to review policies and practices on a monthly basis.

Leadership and management of funded children is outstanding. The Director sets high standards and is committed to ensuring that all children receive the best available support and encouragement in all areas of learning. She positively encourages staff to review and monitor their daily practice, supporting them fully in this through regular supervision, appraisals,

discussions and meetings. Children's individual progress is closely monitored, and any additional help and support is carefully planned and evaluated. Staff are exceptionally well-supported and are encouraged to attend additional training in order to maintain their high standards. The Director acts as an excellent role model to staff, regularly reviewing her own work and practice and continuously seeking feedback in order to improve the practice of the setting. This positive attitude ensures that all activity plans reflect children's individual needs and contain a diverse and innovative range of teaching methods to inspire children.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The nursery were asked at the previous inspection to continue with the implementation of the 'Birth to three' programme evolving assessment profiles that reflect the quality of planning and subsequently shows that children are making successful progress. The nursery has introduced comprehensive individual profiles with reference to the 'Birth to three matters' framework which shows that children are making good progress. This further improves the welfare and development.

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 outstanding.

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 the sleeping arrangements to enable children to rest safely and comfortably without disturbance
- improve children's safety by ensuring that electrical sockets are safe or inaccessible, and ensure that there is an accurate record of all visitors.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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