



Mark Beech Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127370
Inspection date	28 September 2005
Inspector	Joanne Lindsey Caswell / Teresa Elkington
Setting Address	Cowden Pound Road, Mark Beech, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 5NR
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Registered person	Ann Roberts
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional 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 inadequate - enforcement action. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - special measures.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Mark Beech Nursery School has been established since 1965. It operates from Mark Beech village hall and children have use of one large hall with an adjacent smaller room. Toilets and hand washing facilities are easily accessible. An enclosed garden provides an outdoor play area. The nursery school serves the local area.

There are currently 15 children, aged from 2- to 3-years, on roll. This includes 5 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for most sessions. There are currently no children with special needs or children for whom English is an additional language.

The group opens on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday, during school term times. Sessions on Monday and Friday are from 9:00 until 12:00. Sessions on Wednesdays are from 09:00 to 12:00, with the option for children to stay for an extended day until 15:00.

A team of three staff work with the children. Of these, no staff currently hold a recognised early years qualification, although the proprietor is an experienced teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have opportunities to play in the fresh air, throughout the year, which aids their physical development and overall well-being. They use a variety of resources, such as wheeled toys, small slides, balls and tunnels, enabling them to move in a variety of ways and promote their healthy development.

Children are protected from illness as the premises are clean and well-maintained. Procedures are in place to ensure that children suffering from an infection are excluded from the setting, to protect children from illness. Staff protect children from infection, as they clean the nappy changing mat between use, to prevent cross-infection. Some procedures are in place to enable children to learn healthy personal hygiene routines. They are assisted with hand washing and learn to take care of their own needs.

Children's dietary needs are met. They begin to learn the importance of healthy eating, particularly at lunchtime, and mostly enjoy snack times as a sociable occasion.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are mainly safe and secure and procedures are in place to ensure children cannot leave unsupervised. There are satisfactory arrangements in place to enable children to play in the garden safely. Most precautions are taken within the premises to safeguard children. Staff are mainly vigilant in identifying and addressing potential hazards to safeguard children and protect them from injury. However, children do not consistently learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, children do not always understand why they must not climb on furniture to protect them from injury, as staff do not always give clear explanations.

Children play with a basic range of resources and play materials which are in a satisfactory condition.

Children are protected from harm as staff have a general understanding of child protection. This enables them to follow the necessary procedures, should they have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children have poor opportunities to initiate their own play, to make their own choices and therefore develop independence. There are insufficient opportunities for them to build on their natural curiosity as learners and develop their language and mathematical thinking. Children are not challenged or stimulated appropriately and do not engage in purposeful play and activities. All activities are heavily adult-directed with a very clear aim and expected end result. This restricts children from expressing their own ideas and developing their own creativity. Children are not given sufficient opportunities to express themselves freely and use their initiative and freedom to make their own decisions. The nursery environment prevents children from enjoying a wide range of play opportunities, due to the highly structured routine. Children lack opportunities for free play and are unable to select their own play materials, as resources are always pre-selected by staff. This inhibits children's independence and prevents them from planning their own play.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children do not make sufficient progress towards the early learning goals, as staff lack knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The lack of clear curriculum planning prevents staff from ensuring all activities and learning opportunities reflect the stepping stones to children's learning. Staff are unfamiliar with the early learning goals and do not use these to clearly identify children's achievements. As a result of this, the appropriate activities are not implemented to cater for children's individual needs and abilities. Staff do not plan, adapt or extend activities to meet the differing needs of children to promote their learning and development. This results in some children undertaking activities which present too much challenge, affecting some children's self-esteem.

Children share and take turns, although staff do not always recognise and reward children for showing care and respect for others. They enjoy conversation with staff, although their language skills are not always extended. Children learn about letters of the alphabet each week. However, the teaching methods are not always appropriate for their age, preventing children from developing a clear understanding of sounds and phonics. Children have some opportunities for mark making. However, the occasions for them to use writing for a purpose are limited.

There are insufficient opportunities for children to use numbers for counting and children do not see numbers on display. Some comparative language is used when children build towers with wooden bricks, however this is not extended into further areas of play.

There are limited opportunities for children to explore and investigate. Although they plant seeds and watch them grow, there are few opportunities for children to handle natural materials and develop curiosity. Children do not use Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) resources, preventing them from developing an understanding of how things work. There are few opportunities for children to learn about the wider world, preventing them from developing an understanding of the needs of others.

Children use their physical skills to kick and throw balls and crawl confidently through tunnels. They use wheeled toys competently and begin to develop manipulative skills as they handle wooden pegs and have some opportunities for mark making.

Children have limited provision for developing their creative skills. All activities are heavily directed by staff and children have insufficient opportunity to express themselves freely and produce their own paintings and pictures. Provision for role play is restricted, preventing children from playing imaginatively and re-creating familiar scenarios.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children's differing needs are not adequately valued, acknowledged or respected by staff. As a result of this, children are not regarded as individuals and activities and learning opportunities are not sufficiently tailored to their individual needs. Children are not sufficiently introduced to diversity within the wider world. This prevents them from learning to respect the needs of others and to recognise differences within society.

Children with special needs are poorly supported. Staff have little understanding of the Code of Practice (2001) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. This prevents staff from adapting the daily routine, play opportunities and learning activities to meet the needs of all children within the nursery.

Children's behaviour is not managed effectively. They do not consistently learn right from wrong and are unaware of the consequences of their actions as staff do not give clear explanations. This restricts children from learning about acceptable behaviour and the boundaries set within the nursery. Children often become disruptive within the nursery, due to the poor range of play opportunities available to them. For example, children often have to share limited resources, which younger children find difficult. As a result of this, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is inadequate. Parental feedback is positive and parents state they are happy with the nursery. Although children regularly take finished work home, there are insufficient procedures in place to ensure parents are fully aware of all nursery policies and procedures, including the Foundation Stage curriculum. This restricts parents from understanding their children's nursery activities and weakens the partnership for children between home and nursery. As a result of

this, parents are not actively encouraged to share in their children's learning and contribute towards forthcoming planned activities. This restricts children from seeing parents and the nursery staff as equal partners in their learning. Information is exchanged verbally on a daily basis between nursery staff and parents. However, there are no other formal procedures in place for parents to contribute towards their children's assessment. This prevents parents from sharing their knowledge of their own children's development with staff. As a result of this, insufficient procedures are in place to ensure children's records are kept fully up-to-date and their progression in learning is not always planned accordingly.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Staff are not appropriately trained in early years care and education. This restricts them from providing a quality range of play and learning opportunities, suitable and appropriate for young children. The provider does not ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge of the national standards, regulations and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage to help all children achieve and reach their full potential. There are many missed play and learning opportunities for children as the daily routine is not organised sufficiently around the needs of young children. The learning environment is not organised effectively to meet the needs of young children. As a result, children's learning is inhibited due to the lack of play experiences available to them within a small room. Teaching methods are not wholly appropriate for nursery age children, as staff are not sufficiently qualified for this age group. The Foundation Stage curriculum is not delivered satisfactorily as staff have little understanding of its format.

Appropriate policies and procedures work in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Staff have not, however, worked together to develop a coherent and well understood policy for children's play and learning or partnership with parents. As a result, children's progress is not sufficiently monitored and planned for.

The leadership and management are inadequate. As there are no procedures in place for staff to evaluate their practice, the weaknesses in provision are not identified and addressed appropriately. Staff are not committed to updating their knowledge and experience and have not utilised opportunities to attend further training.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection several actions were raised. These related to staff training and qualification issues, staff deployment, documentation, equal opportunities and child protection. Staff have addressed some of the issues, although staff training and qualification requirements are still outstanding. As a result of this, staff are not suitably qualified in early years care and education in compliance with the national

standards. This restricts staff from planning suitable activities to cater for the needs of nursery age children and remains a weakness in provision.

Staff deployment has been reviewed, ensuring that at least two adults are present for all sessions, in compliance with the national standards, ensuring children's safety and welfare is promoted at all times.

Staff have insufficient understanding of the importance of promoting equality to all children within the setting. This prevents them from identifying and addressing each child's individual needs and catering for their differing abilities. This restricts staff from planning suitable activities to cater for the needs of individual children and remains a weakness in provision.

Staff have updated their knowledge of child protection issues and appropriate procedures are in place to safeguard children.

Most regulatory documentation is now in place. However, there is no operational plan and staff demonstrate a poor understanding of the national standards and the associated regulations. This prevents the setting from running efficiently and in compliance with regulations to ensure the welfare, care and learning of children. This remains a weakness in provision.

Staff have addressed some of the recommendations raised at the last inspection. These related to range of activities and play opportunities, safety within the setting and written information for parents. In addressing these issues, staff have ensured that the premises are safe for children. However, the range of play opportunities, equipment and suitable activities still remain a weakness in provision. The partnership with parents is effective in some areas of care, although parents are not fully aware of the nursery education programme.

The key issues raised at the last education inspection, relating to staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum have not been addressed and remain a weakness in provision. Staff are not suitably aware of appropriate teaching methods to deliver the curriculum. As a result of this, children's progress towards the early learning goals is not sufficiently planned for and monitored.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

Ofsted is taking **enforcement action** to safeguard the welfare of children.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

The setting requires special measures to improve the provision for nursery education. The following urgent action is required:

- develop the partnership with parents to ensure that they are fully informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and are invited to contribute towards the assessment procedures
- develop curriculum planning to show 1) the learning intentions of activities that are clearly linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals, and 2) how children's individual needs can be extended or supported within an activity
- develop an effective assessment process, linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum, that is informative and used to help children move to the next stage in their learning
- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to plan play and learning opportunities, covering all six areas of learning

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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