

Marsh Lane Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	142873
Inspection date	04 July 2007
Inspector	Carole Argles
Setting Address	64 Marsh Lane, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 3BX
Telephone number	(01935) 410563
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Registered person	Marsh Lane 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Marsh Lane Day Nursery is privately owned and operates from a converted house which is located on the outskirts of Yeovil, Somerset. Children aged from two to five years are cared for in the ground floor accommodation, which consists of three play rooms, with a separate kitchen and toilet facilities. The first floor is dedicated as a unit for children aged from three to 24 months. There are three enclosed outside play areas. Children attending come from Yeovil and the surrounding areas.

The nursery is registered to care for up to 34 children aged under eight years and usually takes children aged from three months to when they start school. There are currently 66 children on roll, of whom 24 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery is open from Monday to Friday 08.00 to 18.00, throughout the year round except public holidays. There are 16 members of staff who work with the children, of whom 11 hold an appropriate early years qualification. Three further members of staff are currently undertaking training to gain a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children play outside daily in one of the three play areas and this helps to keep them fit. They use a variety of apparatus including wheeled toys, climbing equipment and balls, and they learn new skills. The staff play games with them and plan some physical activities. The children show developing control and coordination of their movements and a sense of space. For example, the older children show respect for others' personal space as they sit together on the mat at circle time and during their play. The children enjoy moving in different ways, for instance, jumping like frogs, and they show a developing sense of rhythm as they move to music.

There are suitable procedures in place to reduce the risk of infection between the children. For example, children who are ill or infectious are excluded from the nursery; food hygiene training is provided for staff. The premises are cleaned daily and the tables and highchairs cleaned before and after meals. However, at times, staff do not implement the hygiene procedures fully, for example, when they are changing nappies or by providing individual bedding for children who are sleeping on cushions or mattresses. The children are protected from the harmful effects of the sun. They wear hats when playing outside and there are awnings to provide shade in sunny weather. There are sound procedures to ensure that medication is administered safely when required. Many staff hold a current first aid certificate and appropriate consents are in place. This contributes well towards ensuring that children receive suitable care in the event of an accident.

The children receive a wholesome diet and have drinks available for them to take as required. Baby milk feeds are provided by parents and stored appropriately. However, sometimes the bottles are not clearly labelled to ensure they are given to the correct child. Food is prepared on the premises and cooked lunches are available for the children. Main meals and snacks usually include fresh, frozen or dried fruit or vegetables. Any special dietary requirements are respected. The menu is not displayed in advance but parents receive information daily about what their child has eaten. Sometimes the older children help to prepare their snacks, for example, making their own sandwiches with a choice of fillings.

The children begin to find about the importance of keeping themselves healthy and learn good hygiene practices. They wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet, using soap and paper towels, and they are reminded that this helps to keep them well. They talk about dental hygiene and about which foods are good for them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

At times, the children's safety is compromised because there are insufficient staff on duty to meet the required ratio of adults to children and to ensure the children are appropriately supervised and supported.

The premises are well maintained and kept secure. Entry is by keypad; parents know the code and other visitors are only admitted by staff. A welcoming environment for the children is created with murals, posters and displays of their artwork. The space is used effectively to allow the staff to group the children by age and ability. Older children are able to go to the ground floor cloakroom unsupervised and this promotes their independence. Satisfactory risk

assessments are carried out and safety measures are in place to reduce the risk of accidental injury to the children. For example, electrical sockets are covered and gates are used to prevent the children gaining access to hazardous areas such as the stairs or kitchen. The children and staff regularly practise the evacuation procedure so they know how to act in an emergency.

There is a satisfactory range of child-size furniture and equipment to meet the children's developmental needs. However, because there are only two travel cots, babies and young children frequently sleep on cushions on the floor. There is a suitable range of toys and activities to support the children's developmental needs. Low storage units are provided in each room and the oldest children make decisions about what they play with and select resources independently. However, staff set out the toys and activities for the younger children and often the range is limited and some children are not interested in playing with them.

Most staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the signs that may indicate that a child is suffering harm or neglect and they know what action to take if they are concerned about the welfare of a child in their care. There is a suitable procedure in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. This makes a satisfactory contribution towards safeguarding the children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children part readily from their parents and enter the nursery happily. The children are settled and have a friendly relationship with the staff. There is a usually a suitable level of interaction and conversation between them. For example, a member of staff sits and strokes the head of a baby until she falls asleep; staff sit on the floor and look at books with the younger children or support them in creative activities. The children enjoy playing games outdoors with the staff and there is often music and singing in the rooms. However, sometimes, for example, when children are eating their meals, there is little interaction between them and the staff miss the opportunity to create a relaxing, sociable time for the children and to develop their communication skills. Although there is a suitable range of toys and activities available, there is often a very restricted range available for the younger children and they have little opportunity to make choices about what they do.

There is a suitable routine for the children's day which includes times for rest, snacks and meals, and for them to be active outside. This routine is flexible to accommodate the youngest children's individual needs and their own sleeping and eating patterns. The staff plan a varied programme for the younger children and this includes opportunities for them to take part in activities such as playdough, painting or collage. Some staff are skilled at making the time the children spend at the nursery fun. For example, they pretend they are going on a bear hunt when they move between rooms. However, some staff have a limited understanding of what is appropriate for the age and ability of the children they are working with or the Birth to three matters framework. Some activities, for example, sponge painting small shapes, are too challenging for these very young children and babies. As a result, the activities are adult-directed and do not allow them the opportunity to investigate or explore the materials freely. Sometimes activities for the younger children are not prepared properly in advance; for example, staff suddenly realise there is no playdough available or do not provide appropriate materials for a collage activity. Although progress records are in place for each child, they are not completed consistently and, whilst some are up to date, others have very few entries. Consequently the staff cannot be sure that all children are making progress or plan their future development effectively.

Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is good for the children receiving funded nursery education. They are interested in what is provided for them and are eager to take part. Most show good concentration on self-chosen and adult-led activities. They show respect when others are speaking, sitting quietly and listening carefully. Most children are confident, speaking readily to others and offering their ideas at group times. They show a widening vocabulary and are encouraged to use descriptive words when talking about what they are doing. The children play cooperatively together and take turns fairly, for example, when they organise a game of hide-and-seek themselves. They are polite and considerate to others, and one child suggests that they all introduce themselves to a visitor. The children are encouraged to be independent and enjoy the responsibility of running little errands, such as going to fetch a spoon for a member of staff. The staff make routine tasks fun; for example, music is played at tidy-up time and the children quickly and excitedly help to clear away the toys before the song finishes.

The staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use this to help them plan a varied programme of activities for the children. They carefully evaluate how well past activities have supported the children's learning and use this information well to ensure that future activities are matched to each child's ability. This ensures that the children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Their progress is documented by the staff. However, some records do not show clear evidence of what the child has achieved and there are long periods between updating the entries. Staff have suitable systems in place to make sure that the activities support all areas of the children's learning. However, at present there are fewer planned activities which encourage the children to explore and work with different materials, or examine and investigate objects to see how they work.

The children are very interested in numbers and letters and use them spontaneously in their self-initiated play. For example, they choose to count to twenty or more when playing hide-and-seek, and they decide to play a game of 'hangman', talking about and writing all the letters of the alphabet and their names. The staff take advantage of practical activities to support the children's learning; for example, they ask each child to take eight counters from a pile to use when playing lotto. The children can correctly link objects to numbers, for example, they enjoy counting the stars on their star charts, and they can recognise and name simple geometric shapes.

There are many activities which help the children develop good hand-eye coordination and most can form recognisable letters and write their names. They use one-handed tools such as knives to make sandwiches and use scissors, carefully cutting out pictures from magazines; they skilfully complete activities on the computer, controlling the mouse. The children enjoy stories and use their imaginations well during their pretend play. They are encouraged to use their own ideas during creative artwork and drawing, or when using construction toys. They know the words of familiar songs and sometimes a small group of children will decide to sing a song together. They enjoy music and sometimes move rhythmically to the tune during tidy-up time.

The children take part in activities which broaden their understanding of the world around them. They cook and help to grow plants. They begin to find out about different cultures and traditions, and have, for example, sampled unfamiliar foods and celebrated Christian and Indian festivals. This helps them develop tolerance and acceptance of others. They also find out about their own community and people, such as fire officers and nurses, visit them at the nursery.

The staff are well organised so the sessions run smoothly for the children who are well occupied at all times and enjoy what they do.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They receive praise and encouragement from the staff and this helps them to develop good self-esteem and confidence. They begin to find out about their own community and the wider world. However, there are few resources in use in most rooms which show positive images of diversity. Many children in the nursery begin to use sign language as a means of communication, for example, to accompany their singing, and parents are encouraged to become involved and help their children learn the new signs.

The children behave well. The older children learn to share fairly and take turns, and they play cooperatively together. They begin to manage their own behaviour because they receive praise so they understand when they have done well. The staff usually help them understand why sometimes their behaviour is unwanted through explanations and by helping them think about the possible consequences of their actions. Generally, the staff provide good role models for the children who are polite and courteous. However, occasionally the children become noisy and staff also raise their voices to be heard and do not reduce the noise level quickly.

There is a suitable procedure to help new children settle quickly at the nursery and parents are encouraged to stay with their child until they are confident. Staff and parents share information so that young children's usual routines can be followed and they feel secure and comfortable. The parents of the younger children receive daily written information about what their child has done, how long they have slept, and what they have eaten. This contributes effectively towards ensuring that there is continuity with their care at home. Parents are very positive about their relationship with staff and they talk daily about the children. Suitable information about the activities, financial matters and events is made readily available for them.

Some members of staff have undertaken training to help them support and plan the development of any children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. They understand the importance of working closely with parents and others involved in the child's care. However, as developmental records are not completed and updated regularly for all children, this poses the risk that there is a delay in identifying any child who requires additional support.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving funding for nursery education is good. There are regular meetings for parents to give them information about the Foundation Stage curriculum so they understand what their child will be learning. The activity plans are displayed each week. Staff ensure that parents are kept well informed about their child's progress and they may see their records at any time. Staff encourage them to become involved with their children's learning and to share any particular skills or knowledge they have with the wider group, for example, by talking about their job or their culture and traditions. This makes an effective contribution to supporting the children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

On occasions, the provider exceeds the maximum number of children that may be cared for at the nursery at any one time. This is a breach of the registration conditions. At times, particularly

during the first hour of the day, the provider does not always ensure that there are sufficient staff on duty to meet the required minimum ratio of staff to children. This is a legal requirement and poses a risk to the children's safety and welfare. The provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The provider implements a sound vetting procedure to make sure that staff are suitable to work with the children and appropriate staff records are maintained. The minimum qualification requirements are met. There is an annual appraisal system in place and this helps to identify the staff's training and development needs. They have a positive attitude towards undertaking training and several are continuing to gain further qualifications. Children are grouped appropriately by age and ability. There is a consistent room leader who works with each group, although other staff often work with children throughout the nursery.

Many of the records, policies and procedures required to support the children's safety and welfare are in place. However, the procedure for addressing any written complaints from parents does not meet the legal requirements. There are regular staff meetings and time is allocated to allow staff to complete tasks such as planning or updating the children's progress records. However, systems for monitoring that they fulfil all their responsibilities are not fully effective.

The leadership and management of the funded nursery education is good and this supports the children's progress towards the early learning goals effectively. The room leaders are well organised and ensure that the sessions run smoothly for the children. They undertake training and keep abreast of current developments in childcare and this benefits the children. The staff evaluate the effectiveness of the activities in supporting the children's learning weekly and adapt their future plans to ensure that the children's individual needs are met. The room leaders have clearly identified areas of the nursery education for further development and are implementing strategies to address these. For example, they are increasing the use of the outside area to support the children's learning and reviewing the systems for monitoring and recording the children's progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the provider agreed to ensure that the required staff ratios are maintained at all times; to implement effective procedures for accurately recording the hours of children's attendance; to ensure all staff have sufficient training on child protection issues; to provide a balanced range of stimulating play experiences for children aged under three years and to develop staff interaction with these children to support their progress; to develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the overall nursery provision to give a focus for future development; and to extend the assessment systems for those children receiving funded nursery education.

The children's safety and welfare continues to be compromised. At times, the required ratio of staff to children is still not met and the provider exceeds the registered number of children that may be cared for at anyone time.

The staff maintain a record of which sessions each child attends and parents are requested to sign their child in and out of the nursery recording the actual times that they are present. However, this system relies on parents remembering to complete the record so that accurate information is available. Most staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection issues and know how to safeguard the children. However, some staff have less knowledge of these issues and have not undertaken training for several years.

Although staff plan and provide a programme of activities for children aged under three years, these are sometimes inappropriate for their ability. Generally, the staff's interaction with the children is satisfactory but they do not take advantage of situations, for example, at meal times, to talk with the children.

Systems for monitoring the funded nursery education are effective and allow the staff working with these children to plan and provide activities appropriate to their ability which support their learning well. However, systems for monitoring and evaluating other areas of the nursery are not effective as they have not allowed the provider or the staff to correctly identify areas for development or ensured that the previous recommendations have been addressed.

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. 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 good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that the correct adult to child ratios are maintained at all times
- revise the procedure for addressing written complaints from parents to ensure that it complies with current legislation

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- review the systems for assessing and recording the children's progress
- plan and provide more opportunities for children to explore and investigate materials and to find out how things work

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