



Marshmallows

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY232878
Inspection date	04 July 2005
Inspector	Christine Fraser Turner

Setting Address	Lower Marsh House, Marsh House Lane, Darwen, Lancashire, BB3 3JB
Telephone number	01254 873738
E-mail	Paul.McCowan@BTopenworld.com
Registered person	Lorraine McCowan
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

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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Marshmallow's Nursery is owned by Lorraine McCowan. It opened in October 2002 and operates from three base rooms, one for each age group. It is situated in Darwen, close to the town centre. A maximum of 56 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 7:30 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 80 children aged from 0 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 30

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs 15 staff to care for children, of these, 10 staff including the manager hold an appropriate early years qualification. Additional staff are employed to prepare meals for the children and clean the premises.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy through the staff's satisfactory understanding of current and appropriate environmental health guidelines. However, children under two do not wash their hands before eating so do not learn from an early age the importance of hand washing. Older children understand simple good health and hygiene practices, for example cleaning their teeth after lunch.

Children sleep and rest according to their individual needs following discussions with parents.

Children are well nourished through the provision of a healthy menu. They have their individual dietary needs met well through discussion with parents and staff being well informed. Children do not benefit from an alternative choice due to an inconsistent approach from staff.

Children benefit from regular physical activity. They enjoy a range of equipment to develop a variety of skills, for example climbing and balancing. However, children do not always have access to outdoors as plans are not always flexible to take account of the weather.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure, safe indoor and outdoor environment through the use of effective policies and risk assessments. However, there is no system in place to monitor temperature in the conservatory to ensure children are cared for in a comfortable temperature.

Children use suitable and safe equipment, for example low feeding-chairs for young children which enable them to sit with other children in the group at the table at meal times. Children are able to select their own toys easily through good organisation within the rooms. However, some of the toys are not age appropriate and are therefore a hazard.

Children are kept safe on outings through good policies and procedures. For example, through visits from the road safety officer.

Children are well protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and want to come to nursery. They enjoy a good range of age appropriate activities which promotes their development in all areas. Children develop early communication skills as staff respond positively, for example to their request for nursery rhymes. Children enjoy good sensory experiences as they play with sand, water and gloop etc. Children form good relationships with each other. Their individual needs for care are met well as they benefit from a well planned daily routine that includes opportunities for children to be active and time to relax. Children enjoy taking part in impromptu dancing as they create their own ideas in time to the music. Children receive additional support in music from a teacher who explores sound, instruments and songs with children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children benefit from planned activities that relate to the foundation stage and ensure children experience all areas of learning. Planning shows differentiation based on stepping stones but staff do not link planning to individual children's needs based on observations.

Children develop confidence and self esteem as they share their news with the rest of the group. Children's achievements are celebrated within the group, for example as children receive certificates for swimming. Pre-school children are able to make their own choices for some parts of the day and show good levels of independence e.g. playing with sand and clearing away afterwards. However, there are other times when adult led activities and meals times where children's independence is less well promoted.

Children show good interest in activities and concentrate well, for example as they play independently using the computer. Most children listen well at discussion time and ask questions, for example as they talk about the importance of taking care of their skin in the sun.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Good procedures help children settle well through preliminary visits to the nursery and discussions between staff and parents. Children's needs are met effectively because staff follow their daily routine which is discussed with parents as children arrive.

Children are encouraged to be independent and make decisions for play during free

play sessions. They behave well and children's behaviour is managed consistently through staff's shared understanding of the positive behaviour management policy. Children learn to share and take turns as they play together. Older children join in with a rhyme that reminds them to share, care forgive and forget and treat other people with respect. Children learn about other people's cultures and the wider world through a good range of resources that promote positive images. They learn about the local community, for example as they visit the local park and enjoy trips to the swim school. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Parents of children in pre-school are encouraged to look at their child's record of achievement at any time. This also includes information on what parents can do at home to support their child's learning, for example the road safety. However, not all parents are aware of this and there is no effective system in place to monitor which parents have seen the information in their child's file. Parents are kept informed of what children are learning through plans displayed in the entrance hall and photos of what children do. Parents receive a written report on their child's progress towards the early learning goals before their child goes to school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Effective recruitment and selection procedures ensure that children are cared for by staff with suitable knowledge and understanding of child development. The adult-child ratios support children's care, learning and play for most of the time, but at lunch time children receive less support due to staff breaks. Care for babies is not always provided by a consistent adult. Some routines, for example nappy changing, are completed by staff on a rota basis. Children benefit from generally well organised space that helps them make their own choices for learning. Arrangements for storing children's outdoor clothing on the ground floor does not support children's independence.

Policies and procedures mainly work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

The leadership and the management are satisfactory.

The management reflect on current practice within the nursery and have effective systems to develop the staff team. They identify individual training needs as well as those required by the setting. Children's achievements are recorded but are not used to plan for the next steps for learning for individual children. Children benefit from plans that cover all areas of learning. This enables children to learn from a satisfactory range of interesting activities. Children do not benefit from consistent practice in the way staff build on what children know and can do when they join the pre-school group.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection several improvements have been made. Children's sleep arrangements have been improved by the provision of additional ventilation in the sleep room and by purchasing additional mattresses for older children that require a sleep. Children's access to the outdoor play area has been reviewed. Their safety has improved by the provision of gates outside the main entrance to the nursery following a risk assessment. Revised medication records ensure parents provide written consent before staff administer any medication. Children benefit from a wide range of resources and activities that give insight into how other people live. Children learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour through the implementation of a positive behaviour policy and staff's consistent implementation. Children benefit from appropriate support from staff during play, which is clearly shown in planning.

The nursery has not had an education inspection previously.

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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve staffing ratios over the lunch period to ensure children receive sufficient support at meal times
- ensure the conservatory is maintained at a suitable temperature at all times
- review the current storage of children's outdoor clothing on the ground floor to enable children to become independent at selecting their own coat for outdoor play
- ensure that young children under two receive consistent care from their key worker

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 development records for funded children to ensure all children's records are completed to take account of what children know and can do to effectively monitor children's progress in the Foundation Stage Curriculum
- use observations and assessments to identify the next steps for learning for individual children and use the information to inform planning so individual needs can be included in plans for teaching

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