

# Midway Academy

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY276002
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynne Milligan
<b>Setting Address</b>	Bramshall Road, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, ST14 7PG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01889 562 089
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Partners Of The Cheshire Day Nursery
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Midway Academy nursery changed ownership in 2003. It is situated in a converted house on the outskirts of the market town of Uttoxeter. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding villages.

There are currently 148 children under five years on role. This includes 37 funded three-year-olds and five funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with special needs and children with English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. It opens from 07:30 until 18:00.

A combination of thirty full, part time and bank staff work with the children. All staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 and 3, including two qualified teachers and one with Early Years Professional Status (EYPS). The remainder of the staff are working towards Foundation Degrees or NVQ Level 3. The nursery receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Childcare and Development Partnership (EYDCP).

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by the good standards of hygiene and cleanliness which are maintained throughout the nursery. Effective procedures are followed for nappy changing and older children have an increasing awareness of the importance of good hygiene routines as they become independent in their personal care. Surfaces used at mealtimes are well cleaned and disinfected before use. Staff place tablecloths on the tables for older children as they explain this helps them 'feel at home', thus developing their sense of belonging. All toys and resources are kept in a hygienic condition to prevent the spread of infection. Staff know the children very well and quickly recognise signs of illness and tiredness and they generally respond quickly and appropriately to this. Children sleep, rest and eat in line with parents' wishes and their own routines. The majority of staff have completed first aid training to enable them to take the appropriate steps should an accident occur. Records are kept of accidents, signed by parents to fully safeguard children's welfare.

Meals and snacks are freshly prepared using fresh fruit and vegetables whenever possible. The well-qualified and experienced cook works with the management to ensure that children receive a nutritious and balanced diet. Good attention is paid to the individual dietary requirements of children. Parents are fully informed by clearly displayed menus and by details written in the diaries for children under three years. Children are gaining an increasing awareness of the importance of eating healthy. They grow their own fruit and vegetables and engage in food tasting activities.

Very good provision is made for children to benefit from the fresh air. The free-flow arrangement between indoors and the outside play areas works very well and the children love having the choice of where to engage in activities. Their physical development is progressing well as they confidently use a wide variety of large and small equipment such as bikes, scooters and slides and enthusiastically engage in playing with the parachute, join in yoga, aerobics and dance on a regular basis. Children under two years have lots of room indoors to move around freely and develop their crawling and walking skills. They are provided with opportunities to enjoy the fresh air when they are regularly taken outside, sometimes playing alongside the older children. They can sit and read books on the bench snuggled up in a blanket to keep out the cold or bang the pots and pans hanging from the tree to discover new sounds or to further develop existing ones.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The premises are bright, stimulating and well maintained. Children's work is effectively displayed. Information, words and signs in a range of languages help children to learn. Furniture, for example, tables and chairs are child sized. Therefore, children can independently access these. Equipment for babies is in good condition and harnesses are used when using high chairs. Each child has their own set of bedding which is washed regularly. Consequently, they are protected from cross-contamination of germs. The risk of cot death is minimised because babies are placed at the foot of the cot, never left unsupervised and checked regularly. Children can safely access an extensive range of appealing toys and resources both indoors and outdoors to support their play and learning. Practitioners are resourceful in providing a range of natural materials and objects to enhance the toys available. For example, they provide tyres and pots and pans.

Children can access further resources as they are stored at their height and comply with the relevant safety standards. Therefore, children are developing their confidence and ability to make choices.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment because practitioners are vigilant about locking doors and gates and maintaining a record of visitors. Consequently, children are effectively protected from unknown adults. Written risk assessments and daily checklists are carried out to ensure that the premises, toys and resources are safe for children to use. Consequently, this further promotes children's welfare. Children understand why action is taken and rules are in force to keep them safe. For example, they help to maintain a safe environment by helping to tidy away toys. They learn about the emergency evacuation as they participate in regular practices. Visits from the local fire service and participation in road safety awareness also further children's understanding of safety. Children's safety is a priority during outings as practitioners implement clear risk assessments beforehand and clear procedures on the day. The number of adults caring for children is increased and clear routines are in place to ensure children do not become lost.

Practitioners have a clear understanding of the indicators of abuse and neglect. They are confident to take the appropriate action to report this type of concern in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. This is supported by a suitable policy regarding child protection. Although this includes the procedure to be followed should an allegation be made against a practitioner, staffs understanding of this procedure is inconsistent. As a result children's well-being is generally well maintained.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

All children benefit from a welcoming, stimulating and interesting environment in which they are happy, content and secure. Children are able to make good developmental progress as they progress through the nursery. This is because they receive a good level of support from staff who demonstrate a caring attitude towards the children. They have a good understanding of the needs of the children in their care. Most children are very familiar with the nursery and the daily routines because they have begun the nursery as babies. This helps them to develop their independence and confidence. Children move through the nursery when they are developmentally ready and not when expedient for the nursery. This ensures their individual needs are taken into consideration at all times.

All children have access to a wide range of activities throughout the nursery. They are busily occupied with favourite activities including baking, making tents, planting cress and experiencing different textures through mediums such as jelly and shaving foam. Children benefit from outside visitors such as fire officers, police and a dance teacher who provides opportunities for music activities. They are becoming competent learners as they acquire new skills and understanding. The babies are beginning to make sense of their environment as they play with colourful toys and activities which are stimulating and age-appropriate. They are able to explore and investigate using all their senses as they use interactive toys which make sounds or have different textures to touch. Children are forming positive relationships with staff and other children and are developing their independence and confidence well.

The staff group are qualified and knowledgeable and use their understanding of early years guidance such as 'Birth to three matters' to provide good quality care. Children have their individual care needs met appropriately because staff know the children well and work closely

with parents to ensure children's daily routines are followed. There are good arrangements in place for sharing information with parents through use of a daily diary and regular opportunities for parents to talk with staff. The good level of care children receive helps them to feel emotionally secure and develop a bond with their carers.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have the necessary training and experience to deliver a broad curriculum to the children. Children are making good developmental progress overall. Planning shows that the six areas of learning are covered each day with a focus for the week. This means that children attending on different days have a balanced range of activities and learning opportunities while children attending full-time benefit from the varied range of activities. Teaching methods are generally good and a balance of free play and structured activities are provided enabling children to develop their independence and choice as they select their own activities and use their imagination during free play. However, not all staff provide sufficient challenges for older or more able children taking into account children's different attainments and expectations for each child to progress further.

Children are able to acquire new skills as they participate in meaningful and practical activities which help them learn by experimenting with and exploring new ideas. Children learn mathematical concepts using practical activities to compare, sort and count objects. They are learning to recognise numbers through everyday activities such as mealtimes as they calculate how many cups they will need. Children are also developing an understanding of simple shapes and colours using activities such as table games. They are making good progress in understanding mathematical concepts as they try to guess which of the three bags is full, half full or empty. Children's language and literacy skills are developing well. Children use practical activities such as mark-making using sand, shaving foam and paint brushes and water to begin to make marks in different ways. They progress to using paper and pencils and eventually are able to form recognisable letters to label their own work with their names. Children's understanding of letters is further extended as they take part in a daily phonics activity. They use rhyme and rhythm to explore sounds, practising such tongue twisters as 'damp dirty dogs' and 'dingle dangle scarecrow'. As a result children are exposed to a rich experience that increases their understanding of how letters and sounds occur in words, with music playing a key part in developing children's language.

Staff generally interact well in children's play, providing guidance and making effective use of questions to help children develop good communication skills and to think and demonstrate what they know. Staff motivate the children, capturing their interest well as they chat about the ostrich egg. They compare its size to that of a chicken egg with one child stating securely that it is a lot bigger in comparison. Children are confident in asking for help when needed and in sharing information and talking about their own experiences. For example, a small group of children playing in the flower beds outside discover pieces of ice that have formed on top of the soil. They crouch down tentatively touching the ice, being careful not to break it. A staff member quickly picks up on this opportunity to engage the children further by asking questions about what it may feel like. As they all stroke it they blow on their fingers as they express how cold it feels. Their understanding is further developed as they are asked what it would become if it melted. The children pause then answer that it would become water. Conversation flowed as the children talked about what they were going to do with the ice and shared their own experiences of when they had melted ice previously. Children were asked questions which effectively encouraged their conversation and use of language. Stories and songs are used well to capture children's interest and encourage the enjoyment of books and songs. Children are

becoming increasingly confident and self-assured as they are encouraged to predict what may happen next or how they would feel if like the character they fell off the wall.

Staff value children's achievements and give constructive praise for the work they have done and for good behaviour. This adds to children's sense of achievement and promotes their confidence and self-esteem. There is a good relationship between children and staff who have realistic expectations for behaviour and use effective methods to encourage good behaviour. For example children are given a reminder when an activity is about to end allowing them to finish what they are doing. They are encouraged to help with routine task such as tidying away activities. This helps children to begin to understand the need for self-discipline and consideration for others. Children's personal, social and emotional development is well supported. They are making friendships with other children and enjoy playing games together such as using the role play area to act out their experiences. Their independence is promoted well because they have ample opportunities to manage their own self-care skills such as pouring their own drinks at snack time, getting ready to go outside to play and putting their coats on and off.

Good quality resources are used effectively to support children's learning. The environment is well organised providing plenty of space for children to move around indoors and good use is made of the outside play area, enabling children to engage in many activities outdoors. Children are developing their physical skills as they run around outside and use a varied range of physical play apparatus. They enjoy parachute games and show excitement as they play in the soil, using their hand trowels to dig as many holes as they can. Staff are actively involved in children's physical play joining in with ball games, reading stories and helping them on and off the climbing frame. Children's awareness of health and bodily awareness is regularly raised as staff use opportunities to talk to the children about the effect exercise has on their bodies. For example, why they get tired as they run about during aerobics. Many activities take place outside. The children are able to explore and investigate the outdoor environment using their natural curiosity. They use magnifying glasses to look for bug and insects in the garden and observe and note the weather each day. Children are involved in topics about the world in which they live such as learning about other cultures as they celebrate events such as Hanukkah, Ramadan and Chinese New Year. They join in with community events, including visits to the local care home for the elderly. They take parcels of food during the harvest festival and sing songs at Christmas. Many visitors to the setting enable children to learn about the jobs people do such as fire officer and the police. Consequently, children are developing a sound understanding of the world around them.

Children are able to develop their creative skills using a range of different media and materials. They use paints and chalks to make pictures and patterns. Children were provided with eggs that they decorated with various materials. This theme was extended as they cooked eggs using different techniques such as boiled, scrambled and poached, noting the differences as the progressed. They also look at how colours change as the drop blobs of food colouring into water, watching how it changes. Various construction materials are available enable children to build and design models and structures. For example, modelling using play dough or constructing shapes with cardboard tubes. Staff express their delight as one child shows them their model of a rocket. He smiles as they explain how far it will go into space and the noise it makes as it travels. The child runs off followed by his friends as he acts out his shooting rocket. This helps children to develop their small muscle control and dexterity as they manipulate tools and equipment.

The use of detailed observations and assessments are carried out regularly to identify the progress children are making towards the early learning goals and this information is used to inform the next stage of children's learning. An initial assessment enables staff to plan the curriculum to meet the children's needs and ongoing assessments ensure that progress is being made.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of diversity and the world around them is promoted well through discussion, theme work and age-appropriate activities. All children are able to develop an awareness of the wider world around them as they access resources and activities that encourage a positive attitude and non-stereotypical view of society. They are involved in their local community and visits from people who work and live in the community enable children to learn about the world they live in. Children's individual needs are fully discussed with parents to ensure their individual needs are respected. Independence is encouraged and supported very well. Children are developing their confidence and independence as they follow basic self-care routines themselves, for example, as they get older using the toilet independently and preparing themselves to go outside.

Children are well behaved; they are polite and show a good level of care and consideration towards each other. They are beginning to understand responsible behaviour because staff explain the codes of behaviour and have reasonable expectations for good behaviour. Staff use age-appropriate strategies to manage children behaviour. For example, babies are distracted with toys or activities while older children have the consequence of their actions explained. Children are learning to play together and share activities or equipment. The children are developing a positive attitude towards others because staff are good role models who use positive praise and encouragement effectively to promote children's understanding of good behaviour. This helps feel secure knowing what they can and cannot do. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff have a good understanding of each child's needs and that some children may require additional support, including those for whom English is an additional language. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive a good level of support because there are effective systems in place which enable staff to implement individual education plans for the children identified with specific learning needs. Staff work in partnership with parents and carers and other professionals involved in the children's care to ensure each child is able to make sound developmental progress.

The partnerships with parents and carers is good. There are good systems in place to enable a constructive two-way flow of information between parents and the nursery. Children's individual needs are met because parents provide information on their child's needs and preferences. For example, any specific dietary or medical needs, contact details and collection arrangements. This means children are protected. Parents are provided with information on their child's daily routine and development through informal chats with staff who are friendly and approachable and written information provided in daily diaries. More detailed information on the curriculum is provided through parents' evenings and a news letter keeps parents up to date on general information. Parents' views on the provision are sought through a questionnaire which are carried out regularly. This means that staff are able to meet children's personal, social and emotional needs; resulting in well settled happy children. Parents are able to access details of written policies and procedure used within the nursery. Parents are encouraged to become

involved in their child's learning through being informed of themed activities or sharing any skills they may have.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare is maintained because the management implements robust procedures for the recruitment and the vetting of new practitioners and students. Practitioners receive a thorough induction. This process arms them with the information they need to successfully implement the settings policies and procedures. Consequently, this contributes effectively to children's well-being and care. Children are well cared for by suitable, qualified and experienced practitioners. New and inexperienced practitioners are supported by colleagues who act as mentors. An annual appraisal system ensures that the practitioner's strengths are used well and informs future training. The management shows a commitment to enhancing practitioner's professional development as they support them in formal training, providing further opportunities for in-house training. Consequently, children benefit from the expertise available. Practitioners also receive valuable support from the qualified teacher who has recently been appointed to the setting. This offers the setting the opportunity to learn and receive relevant advice and guidance. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is effectively planned and delivered. This ensures that children in this age group make good developmental progress.

The operational plan works effectively in practice. A good range of policies and procedures are implemented but some contain the incorrect contact numbers for Ofsted. This has the potential to lead to some confusion or delay should a parent or carer wish to report a complaint or concern. The effective deployment of practitioners means that the number of adults caring for children is usually exceeded in all areas of the setting, however due to current the system in use of recording staff attendance this is not always clear. Children are protected from those who may pose a risk to them because they are never left alone with unknown adults, uncleared practitioners or students. This means that children receive good care and support to play safely and develop their confidence and independence. Practitioners promote an inclusive environment in which every child matters. The environment, time and resource are organised well to provide all children with a wide range of stimulating and developmentally appropriate play and learning opportunities. This includes the effective use of the outdoor environment to provide and extend children's learning in different ways. The atmosphere in the setting is good because practitioners show a commitment to supporting children's play and learning. Consequently, children feel safe and are very happy to be there. Practitioners are skilled and know when to allow children time and space to develop their own independence and play. Therefore, children move around the premises freely accessing stimulating activities and appealing resources.

Leadership and management are good. The management are active role models and involved in the day to day care of the children. Consequently, this builds a motivated team of practitioners, who work very well together as a team, have the best interest of the children at heart and are committed to improving the outcomes for all children. As a result children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in the Foundation Stage. Practitioners are trained in and understand the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. All staff are involved in curriculum planning. Therefore, they can explain the learning intentions of the activities provided. Planning is adapted well to meet the needs of the children currently learning. Consequently, children participate in activities which help to promote their individual stage of development and learning. Monitoring and assessments of children's learning is in place and shows progression for most children and the next steps for learning. The management has a clear vision for the future development of the setting. Consequently, the provision is good and



children benefit in an environment where every child matters. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure that nursery policies and procedures are easily accessible to parents. The setting has now developed their practice to provide parents and carers with a pack containing all the relevant documents. They are also asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the policies and procedures. This enables the setting to further develop good partnerships with parents and carers.

### **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):

- develop further staff's understanding of the procedure to follow should an allegation be made against them
- ensure documentation is updated to provide the correct contact numbers for Ofsted
- further improve the registration system for staff in all rooms.

#### **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):

- further develop staff's understanding of ways in which older and more able children can be challenged
- extend further the opportunities for children to develop their independent writing skills

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)