

The Marmalade Cat

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY267483
Inspection date	21 November 2005
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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 outstanding. 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?

The Marmalade Cat Day Nursery opened in 2004. It operates from a building attached to a church. There are two large play rooms, kitchen, toilets and the group also has access to a hall. It is situated in a residential area in Battersea in the London Borough of Wandsworth. The nursery is open each day from 09.15 to 15.15 during term time.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum 40 children aged 2 years to under 5 years at any one time. There are currently 42 children aged 2 to under 5 years on roll, of these 17 children receive funding for nursery education. Most children live within the local area.

The nursery employs 9 staff. There are 7 the staff, including the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices to meet the children's physical and health needs. Staff give children excellent support and guidance to help them gain an understanding of hygiene. They are fully encouraged to become increasingly independent in their personal care. Children automatically wash their hands as part of everyday routines, such as before eating and after using the toilet. Some older children understand the reason for washing their hands. For example, one child said he needed to wash his hands because the toilet 'had germs'. Children are cared for in a warm, very clean and well maintained environment. Staff carry out excellent hygiene procedures to prevent the spread of infection. For example, they make sure all areas are clean, they wash their hands regularly and make sure tables are clean by wiping them with anti-bacterial spray, before children have snacks and after messy activities.

Children thoroughly enjoy snack time, which is made into a very sociable occasion, where they sit in small groups at tables and have general discussions between themselves and staff. Children are offered a choice of water or milk. To develop their self help skills they are encouraged to pour their own drinks. Children receive nutritious snacks of fruit and raisins. This helps children develop excellent healthy eating habits. To prevent children getting thirsty or dehydrated, drinks are accessible to them at all times.

Children's health is well safeguarded because perishable foods from the children's packed lunches are kept in the fridge. Information about children's dietary needs is gained from parents and taken into account to ensure their needs are met and to ensure children's health and safety.

Children are able to move around the playrooms freely and are provided with comfortable carpet areas in which to look at books and play quietly. Children's hand/eye co-ordination is encouraged through an extensive range of activities, such as threading, drawing, painting, construction, cutting with scissors, moulding play dough and sand play. Their fine motor skills are developed further through using a wide range of Montessori equipment, such as spooning rice from one container to another, pouring from one container to another and picking up objects with small tongs. Children's co-ordination is encouraged as they confidently carry and balance Montessori equipment on trays to tables to play with them and then return them to their storage place.

Children enjoy a vast range of activities which promote good health and their physical development is encouraged well. They have opportunities to develop their physical skills during regular outings to the common, where they are able to use park equipment to develop their climbing and balancing skills. They show very good co-ordination when running and children learn about the changes in their body during exercise, because staff talk to them about the way activity affects their bodies. For example, running can make you out of breath. Children benefit from indoor sports sessions each week when they play a very wide variety of sports games such as rugby, tennis, and cricket. They use balancing equipment and throw and catch balls and bean bags, which helps to develop very good co-ordination and balancing. Children enthusiastically join in ballet sessions, where they develop skills to skip, hop and move their bodies slowly to music well. Children receive plenty of fresh air and exercise from regular walks to the common and within the local area. Physical activities are an integral part of the curriculum

planning, this ensures children take part in activities that offer excellent challenge, which promotes their well-being and development.

Children's health and welfare are protected because most staff hold a first aid certificate and the first aid boxes are well stocked. This means children are safeguarded in the event of an accident. For continuity of care parents are notified of any accidents and parents provide appropriate consents in relation to medication and emergency treatment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children have access to an excellent range of play resources and Montessori equipment, which are safe, up to date, of a very high quality and developmentally appropriate. These are very well set out, so the children have lots of space to play with them very safely. For example, building construction resources are set out on play mats and water and sand trays are in height appropriate containers. This means children are able to enthusiastically and easily make choices of what they want to play by themselves. The very comfortable book and carpeted areas provide children with the opportunities to relax, play quietly and read in comfort.

Children enjoy their play in an extremely safe, spacious and well organised child-centred environment, where staff are extremely vigilant and use thorough risk assessments well to reduce potential hazards. Children move around and play safely. Security arrangements ensure that children are kept very safe, within the premises. For example, there is an intercom system which ensures that all parents and visitors to the group are identified prior to them gaining access. Children develop an excellent awareness of keeping themselves safe. For example, when they use the stairs staff remind them to walk slowly and hold on to the handrail. In the park, staff talk to children about being careful when the swings are in use and when using the climbing apparatus. Children learn about 'stranger danger' as part of a recent theme, when a police officer came into the nursery to talk to the children.

Children are kept very safe during outings because staff follow excellent procedures and have a very good understanding of health and safety requirements. For example, staff take a list of all children on the outings and do regular head checks when out and when they return to the nursery. Staff wear safety jackets at all times when taking children out. Children are helped to learn to be vigilant about road safety, because before they go out staff explain to them that they must hold on to the rope or a member of staff's hand. Crossing the road safely is also demonstrated to the children. Children demonstrate they are very good at following instructions and are able to act in a sensible manner when on outings. For example, when stopping at the kerb side, children say 'we can go now because the man is green'. To ensure children's safety when taken on outings further away from the nursery, staff ensure there is a high adult/child ratio.

Children are very well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of the child protection procedures. This gives top priority to children's welfare within the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children arrive happily at the nursery and are very enthusiastic as they make their way to the extensive range of resources, which are very well presented by staff. Their happiness at being in the group is evident as they enthusiastically talk to their friends and easily link up with one

another. Staff are very welcoming to parents and children, and greet them with smiles and lots of positive comments. Close and very caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and high self esteem.

Children achieve very well because staff are highly skilled and use their child development knowledge to plan an excellent range of activities to provide an excellent quality of care and education. Staff are very aware of experiences and activities that younger children need, and plan an extensive range of activities to ensure they have lots of opportunities to explore and communicate through their senses. Children very eagerly play with the resources such as puzzles, Montessori equipment, small world toys, sand and water. They move from one activity to another and explore through play. Children use their imaginations very well, playing in exciting and well equipped home corners. For example, they dress up as fire officers and pretend to drive a fire engine and put out fires, whilst talking about a recent visit to the fire station.

Children's creative activities are developed through an extensive range of planned and free play activities, such as painting, model making, cooking sessions, and sticking activities. They confidently spread glue with spatulas and sprinkle glitter to make stars.

Nursery Education

The quality of Teaching and Learning is outstanding. Children are captivated and inspired by the extensive range of stimulating activities relating to well planned topics. They access an extensive range of well chosen resources and Montessori equipment, which supports learning across all areas of the Foundation Stage. All children are eager to learn and there is an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities, which allows children to learn at their own pace. Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet each other and practitioners on arrival. They quickly link up with one another and very confidently initiate their own play, selecting from the resources independently.

Children are confident speakers and good listeners both with their peers and adults. For example, during practise for the nativity play, children confidently recited their words and listened carefully for when it was their turn to speak and join in songs. Children show great enthusiasm as they sing songs in a hearty manner, both inside and outside of the nursery. Children have a very healthy interest in books, as they enthusiastically access books independently during the sessions. They avidly listen to stories in groups and confidently respond to questions about the text and pictures. Children are learning that information can be retrieved from books, as they look and talk about illustrations in books, relating to topics they are doing, with each other and staff. Children are introduced to sounds of letters, through staff talking about objects beginning with the sound of the letter they are learning for the week. Some children are able to link letters to words and this is encouraged through various games, which include using letters and sounds. Children have extensive opportunities to write for a variety of purposes in all play areas. They enthusiastically make marks to represent their ideas and older children are able to hold a pencil effectively and form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. Children have a very wide range of opportunities to draw and more able children produce pin men, by drawing circles and lines.

Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play and respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical thinking through lots of well planned activities. For example, in ballet sessions, children take large and tiny steps. Children enjoy using the maths table where they have lots of opportunities to explore numbers and shapes, through counting and drawing around stencils. They sing number songs. Children develop an awareness of measurement during

cooking activities, measuring out ingredients using spoons and weighing scales. Children enjoy counting and are able count up to 10 objects correctly. Montessori equipment is used very effectively to support children in learning early calculation, they are able to sort, match by colour, size and object. Children enjoy learning about volume and capacity when pouring water and dry sand into different sized containers. Children's learning benefits greatly through real life, fun experiences. For example, they go shopping to buy cards and then go the post office to buy stamps, which involves counting the money required and receiving change. This activity makes the whole concept of simple calculation real for them.

Children have many lovely planned opportunities to explore living things and observe them over time. For example, children planted beans and watched them grow and produce an end product. They watched butterflies develop and let them go outside, when fully grown. As part of the butterfly topic, children's learning was extended by a visit to the butterfly house. This excellent topic made learning real for children, so they truly learn to understand the wonder of nature. There are very good systems to encourage children to develop an awareness of their community and they learn about the cultures of others through excellent planned outings and very meaningful festival celebrations and an excellent range of resources depicting diversity. Children have very good IT skills, they click and drag the mouse, and use an excellent range of programmes to support their learning.

Children's creative development is fully enhanced as there are many activities that enable them to capture experiences and explore colour, texture, shape and form in a variety of stimulating ways. For example, children very much enjoy taking part in art activities, such as sponge painting, painting with pads and brushes, and experimenting with different textures such as corn flour. Children are very imaginative and show very good expression when they move to music. For example, using their bodies to capture real and imaginary experiences, such as building a snowman and using their fingers as crawling animals.

Staff work very well with parents to identify children's skills, interests, needs and abilities. They build on this information to help children achieve as much as they can. Staff very successfully differentiate activities everyday, so that more able children are extended in their learning, while less able children are given further support and encouragement. Staff are very well organised and deploy themselves very well so that children are able to freely initiate their own games, whilst at the same time, undertaking more focused activities with staff. This ensures they make excellent progress in their learning. Staff are totally committed to support children in their learning and use very effective questioning and take every available opportunity to extend children's thinking in every day play situations. They work harmoniously together, creating a seamless and well organised play environment in which children feel secure, happy and motivated, which ensures children remain enthusiastic and eager to learn.

Staff have an excellent awareness of the Foundation Stage of learning and very effectively plan a varied and exciting curriculum to encourage children's development in all areas. They are very aware of children's individual progress and through observations, monitoring and recording of children's achievements, they plan experiences that ensure children are fully challenged and take the next step in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. This contributes significantly to children's well-being in the nursery. All children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery because staff value

and respect the individuality and family context for each child. Staff actively seek parent's views about their child's needs and development before their child starts at the setting, by asking parents to complete a child profile questionnaire. Information is exchanged verbally with parents when they bring and collect their child and through daily home diaries on each child. This ensures consistency of care. Staff ensure parents are e-mailed activity plans at the beginning of each week, so they know what their child is doing in the nursery throughout the day. This helps parents continue children's learning at home. Staff ensure that parents know how their children are progressing through regular written reports and yearly meetings. Children benefit greatly from the involvement of parents in outings and some topics, which contribute to their good health, safety, development and learning.

Although there are no children in the nursery with special needs at present, they are warmly welcomed in the nursery. There are excellent procedures to ensure children are given support to make progress and meaningful targets are set for children as part of individual educational plans.

The children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, others and the world around them, through planned topics, visitors to the nursery, outings to places of interest and the local community. Resources which promote positive images of culture, disability and gender are fully integrated into every day play, which helps children learn about diversity. Children learn about other religious festivals and events from extensive, well planned, meaningful activities and celebrations. For example, for Diwali there were many enjoyable activities, such as making diva, cards, dancing to music, cooking Indian foods and having a celebration lunch. Children learn about people who help us through nursery visitors, such as a police officer and doctor. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children play and behave very well and the staff use continuous praise to reinforce positive behaviour. Acknowledgements of efforts and achievements contribute to children's very high levels of self esteem and confidence. For example, 'you have painted that picture nicely', 'you are very good at threading'. Staff provide excellent role models for children and manage children's behaviour very well, through simple explanations that are appropriate to the age and understanding of the child. Children are very good at taking turns, whilst playing group and team games. Children have excellent table manners, they say thank-you when they receive their snack and wait patiently until every one has their snack, before they start eating theirs. The nursery has a gerbil, the care of which helps children to learn that they need to be kind and gentle to animals.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The Leadership and Management is outstanding. Children's care is significantly enhanced by the exceptional quality of the organisation and the outstanding leadership and management of nursery education. The excellent displays of photographs and children's work shows that staff value their contributions and efforts. Children are relaxed and at ease within the very well organised environment. This gives them confidence to initiate and extend their own learning and play. Resources are very well presented and excellent use is made of space, to maximise play opportunities for children.

Staff have a excellent knowledge of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and comprehensive planning systems are monitored to enable children make progress in all areas of learning. The manager has a hands on role, and she evaluates teaching very effectively

through daily observations of the staff team and close monitoring of the activity plans. Most staff are qualified and are very effectively inducted and an excellent appraisal system ensures that the nursery's comprehensive policies and procedures are consistently applied and staff training needs are identified. Staffing ratios are well maintained and staff are employed very effectively throughout the nursery, which provides excellent consistency of care for the children. A very effective key-worker system ensures that staff know children's initial needs and are able to identify and plan their next steps in learning well. Children benefit greatly from specialist teachers for music, ballet, French and physical activities, who provide small group sessions throughout the week.

Policies and procedures are used very effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. Documentation is well maintained and there are very good systems in place to share written information with parents. This keeps them very well informed about the service and their child's activities, which contributes to continuity of care.

There are regular opportunities for the staff team to meet together, to share ideas and suggestions for planning and discuss continual improvements to the quality of care and education provided for the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation was made at the last inspection. Since the last inspection the provider has safeguarded children's health, by putting a system in place to record any medicines administered whilst children are at the nursery. Therefore children's well being and safety is fully protected.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 outstanding. 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

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

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