

# Muddy Boots Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	220218
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<b>Inspector</b>	Mark Evans
<b>Setting Address</b>	Walgrave CP School, Kettering Road, Walgrave, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN6 9PH
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](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 satisfactory. 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?

Muddy Boots Playgroup opened in 1996. It is committee run and operates from a self-contained building in the grounds of Walgrave Primary School. The setting serves the local community and has close links with the primary school. The pre-school opens five mornings and two afternoons a week during school term time. Morning sessions take place from 09:00 to 11:45 on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; 09:00 to 12:30 on Tuesday and from 12:30 to 15:00 on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.

There are currently 29 children from two to under five years on roll. This includes 21 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are no children currently attending who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or whose first language is not English.

There are five members of staff employed to work with the children. Three members of staff have appropriate Level 3 early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a Level 2 qualification. The pre-school receive support from a local authority advisory teacher and are affiliated to the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children keep healthy because they receive care in a premises which is in good hygienic condition. They are effectively encouraged to use suitable personal hygiene practices and to develop awareness of the reasons for this. Written parental consent is obtained for any medication to be given and details of the administration recorded. However, parents are not asked to sign each entry, which potentially compromises continuity and children's welfare. Accident records are well organised and accurately monitor incidents and children's wellbeing. Children's health is maintained because practitioners are well qualified for first aid and able to respond appropriately to children's accidents. Clear policy with parents for ill or sick children ensures that they are suitably cared for when unwell and this helps to reduce cross-infection and keep others healthy.

The setting provides a good, healthy and varied range of snack foods, including savoury items, fresh fruit and salad items, for example, toast, cheese, peppers, raisins and apples. Activity themes, such as the Chinese New Year, are effectively promoted to encourage children to experience various cultural foods and associated utensils. For example, to use chopsticks with noodles and rice. This encourages familiarity with a variety of foods and promotes strong dietary health. Children also develop awareness of healthy eating through activity themes, such as using a market stall role play scenario where they discuss healthy types of foods. Practitioners have good knowledge of children's dietary requirements and organise suitable foods to keep them healthy. This information is recorded and made available to practitioners to ensure secure and correct details to maintain children's health. Children have opportunity to access drinking water at all times, which keeps them well hydrated and comfortable and supports their active involvement in play and learning.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that promote their physical movement and skills. They have regular outdoor play and benefit from the fresh air and exercise. Children enthusiastically use large equipment and other resources to climb and go through and under; they gain good ability with balance and coordination. Children display good spatial awareness and negotiate each other's space when playing on tricycles and ride-on toys and when walking and running. They experience planned activities that provide them with challenge and encourage them to try different ways of moving and working together, for example, by taking part in an obstacle course or using a large parachute cooperatively to manoeuvre a ball.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a secure and welcoming environment for their care and play. Although there is some restriction of space within the setting, its layout and organisation make the room feel warm and stimulating. As a consequence, children enthusiastically engage with the activities and environment. Information for parents displayed in the entrance area and exhibited artwork and pictorial images give a sense of welcome and purpose. Children's safety and comfort is supported by a satisfactory range of child-sized furniture and play equipment and these resources are kept in sound order to keep children safe. Practitioners use policy and procedures to maintain children's wellbeing, such as effective levels of supervision and sound arrangements for security of premises and vetting of any visitors prior to entry. Written risk assessments are

complete for the premises to reduce any risk to children. However, there is no risk assessment for the outside play area and this potentially compromises children safety.

Children have developing awareness of keeping safe because practitioners educate about relative aspects in various ways. For example, by encouraging children to help tidy away activities to keep organisation and safe order, to involve them in emergency escape practices and through visits from other agencies such as the Fire Department. Although the setting has child protection procedures and contact details for relevant local agencies, the written policy is not based on current legislation and guidance and this potentially limits the effectiveness of safeguarding for children. However, practitioners have sound understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow if they have a concern and this helps to protect children's welfare.

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

The provision is good.

Younger children and those who are new to the pre-school settle very well because there are very good arrangements for them to make pre-visits with their parents prior to their full placement according to their needs. On arrival children engage quickly with resources and in interactions with others; they enjoy their time at the pre-school and enthusiastically participate in the wide range of stimulating and challenging activities. Children's emotional needs are identified and supported by practitioners who provide supportive contact and develop secure and caring relationships with them. As a consequence, children become confident and able to explore the environment, which supports their play, learning and development. Children benefit from shared information between parents and practitioners, which promotes continuity in their care arrangements.

Observations are completed on all children and the 'Birth to three matters' framework is used effectively in planning to provide an exciting range of activities and learning opportunities. Practitioners have sound knowledge of children's abilities, based on initial information from parents and through their own observations, which lead to a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children enjoy sensory play and the use of natural materials, such as water and play-dough; they select books, engage in the available role play and use outdoor equipment. Children's behaviour is good overall, they learn to share toys and equipment and take turns because practitioners encourage this and provide some activities to promote cooperative play, such as taking turns with use of outdoor equipment, serving snack foods to others and giving time to their peers when sharing and discussing an item from home.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Practitioners have good knowledge of the Foundation Stage guidance, demonstrating awareness of the six areas of learning. They have sound knowledge of children's abilities and use this to support children's learning within planned and child-initiated play. For example, counting children and recognising whether the total number in one group of children is greater or less than the other. Practitioners have responsibility for observation of children and contribute to planning of the curriculum to support children's learning. Observations are undertaken to provide some information of what children can do and this is used to assist planning what they will do next. However, there is no defined system for assessment of children's levels of achievement against the stepping stones and for use of this information to more clearly identify and plan their next steps of learning. This is potentially detrimental to the full effectiveness of directive learning for children.

All practitioners work directly with children and provide a well-organised environment that helps children to make independent choices of play. In general, practitioners make good use of time, ensuring that the room is set out ready with activities and resources for the children's arrival. There is a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities provided by the setting, and as a consequence, children make good progress overall. However, the organisation of some activities limit children's creative expression through self-selection of art materials and free painting or where some role play props are of restricted value or access. Children benefit from practitioner questioning, for example, during circle time and in their informal play, which encourages them to talk about their interests and home-life events. Children's behaviour is managed well and they respond appropriately to adult requests.

Children are confident to be without their main carer and demonstrate good relationships with adults and their peers. They are cooperative and able to take part in group activities showing good levels of concentration during circle time activities. Children show sound levels of independence with personal care and help to pour drinks and serve foods to others. They understand the need to show responsibility, for example, when pouring drinks, saying, 'I'll be careful'. Children start to recognise their own name through use of name cards in routine activities. They enjoy stories read to them by adults and show good interest in looking at books for enjoyment and using them appropriately, following aspects of the narrative. Children use opportunities to make marks, for example, with pencils, crayons and chinks and through mediums such as making finger patterns in sand. More able children can form recognisable letters and write their own name. Some children show developing phonic knowledge, for example, by looking at another child's name card and recognising and sounding the beginning letter of their name. They use language to express themselves and to ask questions using key words such as 'who' and 'what'.

Children engage in songs and rhymes that include simple addition or subtraction, for example, adding or taking away by one at a time. They are developing ability to count with numbers in the right order and start to label one number to each object by pointing at each item in turn. More able children are able to count two different groups of objects and recognise that one group is more or less than the other, for example, by counting two groups of children at circle time. Children can match and judge space through use of play resources, for example, puzzles, and use materials such as water to look at volume.

Children effectively operate available information technology, including a computer, cassette players with headsets and programmable toys to support their play and learning. They learn about natural things and patterns of change, for example, by growing plants from seeds and nurturing them. Children can construct and shape using various materials, for example, when using construction toys and in using malleable materials. They have a sense of place within their local community through visits by local people and agencies, for example, the Fire Department, a reptile refuge worker and a paramedic; early awareness of the wider community is also developed through activities and resources that represent diversity. Children develop a sense of time and place and demonstrate this through group discussion about their journey to pre-school, the time of the week, seasonal changes and the weather.

Children use opportunities to be creative and are involved in some adult-led activities with a desired outcome, such as making cards or snowflakes out of card or paper. However, there are some sessions where children have little opportunity to express their creativity through self-selection of art materials and free painting and, although they use various role play scenarios, the presentation, accessibility and value is sometimes limited and restricts this aspect of play and expression. Children enjoy music and explore different sounds and ways to use

instruments, for example, to use them loudly or softly and to play with rhythm. They enjoy using natural materials and use these to develop understanding, for example, to see that a bucket is full or empty when pouring water and to use tools to shape, form and cut with malleable materials such as play-dough. Children develop awareness and respond to effects on their senses through activities where they experience and describe taste and smell or meet with someone who is visually impaired and explore the sense of sight.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Practitioners are very welcoming and friendly and they provide an environment that is inviting to children and parents. Relationships between practitioners and parents are strong, with sound opportunities for parents to be involved and influence the running of the pre-school through informal suggestions and links with the committee. Practitioners give time to parents to talk and exchange information. These aspects of practice help to promote parental views in relation to the organisation and continuity of care for their children. Children benefit from their parents being suitably informed through various types of written documents, for example, a prospectus, written policies, newsletters and various displayed details. There is a written complaints procedure available, however, records for written parental complaints do not meet with current requirements and this limits transparency for children's care and welfare.

In practice, children are respected and valued as individuals. However, the written admissions policy is not fully inclusive in respect of indicating that children should have toileting skills prior to entry and this potentially defers initial admission of some children to the pre-school. Children learn about the wider community through their involvement in themed activities and group discussion, and sharing of information on culture and life experiences with a parent and child of Hindu faith and with a person who has visual impairment. They have access to a varied range of play materials and pictorial images that promote diversity, which develops their awareness and familiarity. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities integrate well. The setting works in partnership with parents and relevant agencies in order to meet their individual and developmental needs. Children are very well behaved and have sound awareness of adult expectation, which enhances the room ambiance and their involvement in activities. This is supported by practitioners who take time to talk to children about suitable behaviour, for example, reminding them to share and take turns. Children become confident and willing to try new experiences because practitioners regularly praise them for their involvement in activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good quality written information from the setting that includes details on the Foundation Stage. Newsletters provide useful information on events and current matters; there is very accessible information displayed on the activity programme and parents also receive a periodic planning record about themes and the activities to be provided linked to the six areas of learning. The setting requests that parents complete an 'All about me' form at the initial stage of placement in order to have baseline information to aid emotional support and planning. Effective partnership and communication with parents contributes to the children's educational needs; detailed observations and aspects of development are discussed with parents and their comments recorded. Practitioners welcome informal contact with parents at the beginning and end of the session. There are opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning, for example, by facilitating their child in taking an item to the setting for them to share and discuss, through participation in a parents' rota and through information gained on their child's development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation for deployment of practitioners and numbers of adults on duty provides children with secure and stable levels of care. This enables practitioners to help each other during group activities, such as circle time, and to support children individually. As a consequence children feel valued and secure. There are suitable numbers of staff with childcare qualifications and relevant training, such as first aid and food safety and hygiene, to support the care and wellbeing of children. Most adults working with children undergo vetting procedures, however, these are not fully rigorous and robust, which potentially compromises children's welfare.

The setting has an operational plan with written policies, which are accessible to parents, and these detail the procedures that are designed to keep children healthy and maintain their wellbeing, including procedures for lost or uncollected children and health and safety. Some aspects of policy are being reviewed and updated. Records are made available for inspection and most are in sound order, for example, records of fire drill practices and accidents. These recorded details help to safeguard children's safety and welfare.

Leadership and management are good. The managers of the setting identify their strengths and key roles for efficient provision of nursery education. They have a sound overview of the curriculum planning and show good commitment to review of the educational programme to support children's learning and development. There are effective systems to evaluate and monitor the use of the Foundation Stage guidance and service delivery. For example, planned activities are evaluated after implementation; advice from the advisory teacher is acted on, practitioners meet to discuss and plan for children's progress and development of provision is reviewed and put in place, such as improving the outdoor play area. The pre-school has a committed, enthusiastic and well-motivated team of practitioners who work well as a team. Periodic team meetings and a well-organised appraisal system aid continuity in practice and identify practitioner's professional developmental needs. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last Children Act inspection the setting was required to devise an equal opportunities policy that is consistent with current legislation and guidance; provide and implement a policy about the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious making sure parents are made aware of it; ensure a daily attendance record is maintained for children, showing times of arrival and departure and to make sure that a procedure is in place in the event of a parent failing to collect a child or a child being lost.

The setting has devised an equal opportunities policy which promotes equality and awareness of diversity for children attending the setting. An illness policy has been devised and implemented to ensure that children are cared for appropriately when unwell and to reduce cross-infection. The system for recording children's attendance indicates the times of arrival and departure, including any deviation from the opening hours; this ensures accurate information of those children on the premises and supports their wellbeing. Written procedures are in place for lost or uncollected children to safeguard their welfare.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was required to continue to develop the planning of activities to ensure that all areas of the early learning goals are covered, including the use of information and communication technology and construction, and that the plans

clearly identify what children are expected to learn and the role of the adult support. To develop the system for observing and recording children's progress in order to build on children's existing knowledge and skills and to plan for children's future learning and development and to provide more frequent challenges for older and more able to children to extend their progress towards the early learning goals, particularly in developing early reading and writing skills and mathematical calculation.

The setting has developed planning so that it now shows how all six areas of learning are used to provide a balanced curriculum. Planning shows development matters, objectives and adult involvement and support. This is designed to inform what the intentions for learning are and how practitioners support this. The range of resources for children's construction play and use of information technology has been increased to meet these aspects of play and learning. The system for observation has been developed and this provides some information for planning what they will do next. Development of planning, resources and extended challenge for older children provides suitable opportunities for their learning, including their literacy and problem solving skills.

### **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 satisfactory. 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):

- ensure that parents are requested to sign each record of entry for administration of medicines
- develop the written risk assessment of the premises so that it includes the outdoor play area and review the child protection statement to ensure that it is based on Government guidance and legislation
- review the admission to day care policy so that it ensure equality of opportunity and provide a summary complaints log, including required details, of any concerns raised by parents that relate to the National Standards
- ensure that the system for vetting staff is rigorous and robust to ensure suitability to work with children.



## **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):

- develop the use of assessment to clearly identify the children's individual levels of achievement against the stepping stones and use this information to plan children's next steps
- develop planning for children's creative development so that they have increased opportunities to express their creativity and imagination, including free painting and collages and improved presentation and access for role play.

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