

Maplehurst Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109298
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Inspector	Sue Taylor
Setting Address	Sandown School, The Ridge, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 2AA
Telephone number	01424 202262
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Registered person	Ruth Szulecki
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 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?

Maplehurst Nursery opened in 1990 and moved to its current site in 2000. It operates from a purpose built portacabin in the grounds of Sandown School, on the outskirts of Hastings, near Ore Village. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 51 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven members of staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in very clean premises as the staff follow good hygienic routines daily. For example, the floors are mopped during the day with a disinfectant solution. Children are able to use the toilets independently and the low-level washbasins help them have control in their personal cleanliness. The use of paper towels for hand drying, that children know to use, helps prevent cross contamination.

Appropriate records are maintained for the administration of medication and accidents. The form that records medication is being adapted to ensure that it clearly shows the time that any medicine is given; this ensures parents are kept fully informed. Documentation shared with parents regarding the care of sick children helps prevent the spread of infections. All staff have valid first aid training. This means they are aware of current practices; ensuring children receive appropriate attention if they are poorly or have an accident. In addition, the nursery obtains parental written consent for emergency medical treatment or advice.

The nursery obtains all relevant information regarding special diets or allergies. This ensures children's dietary needs are met. For example, during a food tasting activity, the member of staff provides suitable items that mean all children can take part. It also provides an opportunity to talk to children about respecting differences. Children have easy access to a water dispenser throughout the day, helping them control their own thirst needs. Children benefit from the healthy snack of fruit. A catering firm, who are able to meet a variety of individual diet needs, provides nutritious and balanced lunch meals. The nursery provides a tea for a small number of children at the end of the day. A member of staff, who ensures she uses good quality foods, produces the meals, such as fish fingers and chips or poached eggs.

Children benefit from good opportunities for physical play in the fresh air, throughout the day. They go out in most weathers. The available resources vary, for example, children have fun as they run through a line of different materials blowing in the wind or watch how the tied plastic bags move. At times, a line of pans is set up for children to bang. Children gain skills as they balance, climb or clamber. They like to use the different sized crates to climb up and jump off with staff support. Their hand-eye coordination is promoted with the resources they use both indoors and outside. All children's emotional well-being is supported well by the warm and caring relationships they have with the staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The very good security at the nursery keeps children safe. There are good arrangements in place for effective arrivals and departures of children and others. A CCTV system in the office monitors the area. The outside play area is fully enclosed with padlocked gates, which also ensures children's safety. The outdoor area surfaces help keep children from injury as they play. The risks from current outdoor building works are minimised, through a well-thought out risk assessment and from the action taken.

The premises are well-organised enabling children to explore the environment safely and with ease. This helps them develop independence and confidence. Good explanations and support from staff promotes children's developing knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. They

regular practise the fire drill and a clear record is kept with the procedures for the drill displayed. Good quality resources are stored at low level so children can access them safely as they make choices about their play. The free use of some resources, such as scissors, is restricted to staff supervised activities.

The staff are confident in their knowledge of child protection and of their role in safeguarding children. Supporting guidance and clear procedures are available to staff and parents. The nursery is proactive in keeping children safe, working in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The environment is child centred, stimulating and welcoming to children and parents. The staff are very good at settling children in and use sensitive approaches to calm an upset child. All children become happily involved in play or activities. The children are in two groups with the Busy Bees being the children who go to school in the September. However, children do mix at appropriate times such as outdoor play and for some activities, helping to develop their social skills. The planning for the younger children, the Ladybirds, relates to the Birth to three matters framework or the Foundation Stage as necessary. Observations are made as children play and this information is used by keyworkers to help develop children's learning. The nursery do not keep developmental records in line with the Birth to Three framework, although there is some noting of children's next steps.

The Ladybirds enjoy age appropriate activities. They begin to learn about counting as they sing action songs such as Five Fat Sausages or Five Current Buns. This also helps with their language development as they sing familiar and popular rhymes. They get to paint and explore other textures such as shaving foam and soap flake gloop, as well as sand and water. As they play with the play dough they extend their physical skills with kneading, rolling and cutting.

The relationships the children have with the staff are excellent and the staff team get to know the children well. This enables them to offer very good care and support throughout the day. Children really enjoy their time at the nursery and are very interested in the available activities and toys. They have opportunities to take part in quiet and active games. There is a sensory room available that children use one to one with a member of staff or in small groups. Children do not have free access to this room, which also doubles as a staff rest room.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Displays around the room demonstrate the staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The staff ask good open questions of the children to get them to think and to show their understanding. Conversations happen as children play, with staff using these opportunities to check how the child is or for extending their learning. The staff know the children well and adapt activities to offer support as necessary. All staff are involved in the planning process. It relates to the Foundation Stage and ensures a balance across all areas of learning. A provisions plan enables resources that are not freely available to children, such as the musical instruments, to be rotated. The short-term plan shows stepping stones as learning intentions, however, these do not always match where children are in their own progress to the early learning goals. The focus activity sheets enable staff to make observations about children's progress and note some next steps. The staff use the Stepping

Forward profiles for noting children's progress to the early learning goals, these records indicate that some children are making very good progress in most aspects.

Children are confident and willingly approach the staff for support. They make positive relationships with other children and play well together. They become aware of how others live and accept differences. They are all keen to communicate and some show good language development. Children's vocabulary is extended by staff during activities or as noted on focus activity sheets. They learn letter sounds following the Jolly Phonics system that the local school also uses. Children have fun as they demonstrate what they know. A good range of books are easily accessed by children; they look at them themselves or share with a member of staff. They listen well at group story time. There is always paper and pencils out to encourage children to practice writing skills. Some children are beginning to write their name with good letter formation.

There are good quality resources to help children gain an awareness of mathematics. They learn about simple calculation, for example, through action songs or as they help put cups out at lunchtime. They observe and create patterns and sequencing as they play, with good quality input from staff. They explore their environment in range of ways. For example, they investigate worms they find as they plant flowers or dig in the garden. They create their own booklets as they explore their journey from home to the nursery. Children use their imagination as they draw their own treasure maps or play with the small world resources and dressing up clothes. There are opportunities for free art and craft activities where they use a range of materials to create collages and pictures. An art gallery shows that children's work is valued, helping them develop a sense of pride in their achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The nursery is a very nurturing group with very caring staff, helping children feel valued for who they are. As a result, children develop positive self-esteem. Meeting children's individual needs is a strength of the nursery, as they get to know the child and family well, with an open door policy that parents welcome and appreciate. Information is gathered about children's care needs with good additional facts obtained about children's likes and dislikes or family detail. This information helps the staff support the children and their parents. Children learn some Makaton signing that aids communication skills and helps them gain an awareness of the needs of others. For example, they use signing as they sing familiar songs or for some requests, such as asking for more fruit at snack time. The nursery also has a wide range of picture symbols to assist children. Children gain an awareness of the wider world through the positively reflective environment and from resources that offer positive images of culture and disability. The nursery has a trained special educational needs coordinator who works alongside the parents and other agencies in supporting the child. If necessary, individual education plans (IEPs) and home books are devised to help the staff offer suitable care and activities to the child.

The staff are very good role models, helping children learn the importance of showing respect for all. There is very good detail in the behaviour management policy that offers guidance to staff and parents about positive strategies. This covers areas such as rough and tumble play or bullying. Children learn to share and take turns as they play. They happily help the staff at tidy up time. The staff are very supportive and talk at the child's level of understanding, giving clear explanations for promoting acceptable behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents of nursery education children is good. Parents are informed about the Foundation Stage, although there is no supporting written information on how the nursery implements this. The planning is displayed and parents are able to access their child's progress record should they want. They receive a summary report of how their child is doing under each area of learning prior to the parent day. They are not routinely informed about children's next steps, although they are given some written detail about Easter time. Parents are provided with information about activities at home that may support children's learning. These tend to be linked more to the theme than children's individual learning needs. This restricts parents' ability to fully contribute to the assessment process themselves.

The nursery offers a sensitive approach to settling children and involves the parents in approaches used. A very positive, supportive relationship develops with parents and carers. Parents comment on the support they receive as well as that offered to their child. The prospectus informs them about how the nursery operates. They are fully aware of the relevant policies and procedures at the nursery, such as child protection or health and safety. Parents are welcomed into the nursery and receive verbal feedback about their child's day. The keyworkers share details about children's progress at the parent's open day or through informal feedback if a parent wishes. There is provision for private discussions.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is an effective recruitment process that helps ensure the suitability of the staff. Staff have Criminal Record Bureau checks or are not expected to be alone with children or involved in personal care such as toileting until their check is cleared. A clear induction process is in place for new members of staff with a performance review at the end of their probation. This ensures they are aware of how the nursery operates and have an awareness of the nursery's procedures and practices. The staff receive on-going support. They have annual appraisals and receive regular supervision. Their professional development is discussed and they are encouraged to attend training courses. The nursery training records show that staff make use of these opportunities.

The required policies and procedures are in place, although the complaints policy requires amending to fully reflect the current regulatory guidance. The nursery ensures parents are aware that children sometimes make use of the school grounds and that photographs may be taken for use within the nursery, although no written consents are obtained.

The staff team work very well together with effective communication. They all know their roles and responsibilities that assist with the smooth running of the day. There are effective systems for communication between the manager, her line manager and the registered person. Information is shared between staff as required, backed by regular staff meetings. The available development plans show how the nursery intends to develop. A focus on the personal development and achievement of all children is evident. The planning and curriculum is monitored and evaluated to help ensure children are making progress. There is a strong commitment to promoting an inclusive environment and this is a view supported by parents. The motivation of staff and children is very good. Staff work well as a team, integrating care and nursery education to enhance children's learning. Leadership and management are good. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Good progress has been made since the last nursery education inspection. As requested, the nursery considered the access to books and writing materials in the Busy Bees area of the nursery. This has been improved enabling children to make their own choices easily from the book corner. Writing materials are available throughout the day for children to practise their mark making or letters. Since the last care inspection the manager ensures she regularly reviews the policies and procedures to ensure that all relevant detail is included. She is aware that the complaints policy requires additional detail. This contributes to the effective running of the nursery.

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

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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 the complaints policy fully reflects the current Children Act regulation and guidance

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):

- continue to develop the system of identifying children's individual next steps in their learning and ensure these are incorporated in the planning process (also applies to care)
- encourage further parental involvement in their child's learning through activities at home to support their next steps, enabling parents to contribute to the assessment records

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