

# The Mulberry Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125049
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Elizabeth Anne Coffey
<b>Setting Address</b>	10 Howard Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 5BU
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<b>Registered person</b>	Kim Dixon & Faye Blake
<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?

Mulberry Kindergarten opened in September 1997. It operates from a large house which they have sole use of, located in a quiet residential area in South Norwood. The group serves the local community and local working parents. There are currently 36 children from six months to five years on roll. There are 10 funded three-year-olds and seven funded four-year-olds attending. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, all year round apart from bank holidays, and staff training days and one week over the Christmas period.

There are eleven staff who work with the children, eight have an early years qualification, three members of staff are unqualified, two of whom are volunteers. The setting receives training and support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The setting is working towards their Stage II Accreditation with the Preschool Learning Alliance (PLA). The setting works as a partner with Crosfield Children's Centre.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to follow good hygiene practices, for example they automatically wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals. They eagerly brush their teeth after lunch and know and understand that this helps to keep their teeth strong and healthy. Older children can independently access the toilets and wash basins and this helps to promote their self care skills. Nappy changing routines are in place and staff wear disposable gloves and aprons. There is no running water in the baby room and staff compensate for this by the use of liquid hand gels to clean their hands before and after changing nappies and during routine tasks.

Children enjoy healthy meals that are freshly prepared on the premises and take into account their

nutritional needs. They begin to develop healthy eating habits and learn about the foods that are good for them. Children help themselves to a variety of fruit and vegetables including celery, orange, apple and banana and eagerly tuck into freshly cooked foods for their lunch. Meals are nutritious and avoid large quantities of saturated fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives. The setting received a five star award for food safety.

Written procedures are in place for medication, accidents and illness. Parents give prior written consent to administer medication; this ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs and permission has also been obtained for emergency medical treatment. However, the current system for recording the administration of medication does not promote confidentiality or privacy, because all children's medication records are noted on the same page. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate. This means they can give appropriate care if there is an accident.

The Birth to three matters framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage of learning are used well to ensure children's physical development is planned and promoted indoors and outdoors. Children enjoy daily physical activity where they use a range of equipment, such as cars, bikes, climbing frames and balancing apparatus. This is further enhanced by the use of a soft play room on the first floor which is well used by all ages. This ensures that all children have opportunities to exercise and be physically active even during periods of bad weather. Children are able to move independently in the setting and rest according to their individual needs.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environments. Suitable safety precautions are in place, for example, areas children are not allowed to access are fitted with stair gates; hazardous materials are stored out of children's reach; and the well deployed staff team ensures children are supervised at all times. Children learn to keep themselves safe through staff talking to them about coming down the stairs with care and reminding them not to climb up the slide, in case they hurt themselves or others. Daily risk assessments are completed and this helps the staff to identify and deal with any hazards without delay.

Children access and use suitable and safe equipment. Space within the nursery is well organised to provide an environment for children to learn and develop through play. For example, the

shared use of the 'blue room' and 'soft play room' allows the children to experience different areas of the building throughout the day, whilst still having the security of their own group room as a base.

Written policies and procedures that help to underpin the sound practice in the nursery help keep children safe. There are clear systems for vetting all persons who come and go from the setting. An attendance register of staff and children and a record of visitors is maintained. There is a written outings procedure in place that covers staff ratios, insurance and risk assessments. However, the procedure for local outings does not ensure that a list of named adults and children is recorded. This compromises safety.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Written policies and procedures are clear to ensure staff know what to do in event of a child being abused. Ongoing training in safeguarding children recognised as high priority by the providers and any information gained from training events is cascaded back to all staff

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and relaxed. They benefit from the interactions of the well established staff team, which helps create a close-knit atmosphere where staff and children know each other well. Young children explore as they crawl and climb in the soft play room. They begin to learn about responses and turn taking when they engage in 'peepo' games with staff. Their creative and imaginative development is encouraged through activities, such as art and craft, play dough and through other activities that stimulate the senses, such as exploring treasure baskets.

Children listen to and play music, sing, dance, role-play and dress up. Staff positively engage with the children and join in with their games, extending their play through appropriate interaction and support. Children receive ample praise in their work and play, which promotes their self-esteem and confidence. They cuddle up for a story and join in with songs and rhymes enthusiastically. Children understand the routine and know for example that they take their shoes off and put them under a table before rest time. Children sit socially with staff and their friends during mealtimes and their involvement in the table setting process promotes further independence.

Staff have good knowledge of the children and their individual needs and abilities. They use the Birth to three matters framework to make regular observations of their progress and achievements and identify future experiences that will support their development.

Children have opportunities to take part in swimming sessions at a local pool. They also benefit from extra tuition, for example in dance or foreign language lessons by external tutors who come to the setting, which the providers organise. Outings to the theatre, a children's ward at a local hospital, parks and shops further enhance children's learning and development and their understanding of the local and wider community.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff show a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and ways in which to help children make progress in their learning. Staff create a

stimulating environment for the children by making sure that all the areas are well resourced with interesting and challenging materials. Children are eager to learn and move freely from one activity to another. They become independent learners, able to make informed choices about what they want to do because toys and equipment are easily accessible to them, at low level.

Children have good access to technology. They use computers with confidence and develop good control of the mouse from an early age. They experiment with cameras and delight in seeing photographs of themselves and their friends displayed around the nursery.

Children's mathematical development and problem solving skills are promoted in focused activities and in their day to day routine. Children learn to sort items into sets as they help lay the table for lunch, counting out one fork, one knife, one spoon and one plate per child. They calculate how many more pieces of cutlery are needed to ensure a place is laid for all the children in their group. In the outdoor play area children estimate how long it would take an ant to reach the end of the fence panel and gaze in awe and wonder as the ant makes it's slow journey downwards.

Children enjoy books and use them well. They know how to turn the pages and that the print carries meaning. Children learn to recognise their names and many children can spell their own names with little or no prompt from staff. Children make good use of the writing area to mark make, and use a range writing resources to extend their play, for example making a shopping list and menu when using play food in their role play.

Children explore with different textures when they play with the sand, water, paint and glue using a wide range of rich vocabulary to describe how things feel on their hands. They eagerly take part in cooking activities such as making cakes, chatting about the 'strong muscles' they are building as they stir and mix the dough.

Children enjoy physical play through music and movement sessions indoors and the use of large equipment outside. They are able to move confidently and enjoy the challenges of the outdoor equipment such as the 'wobbly bridge' and slide. Their dexterity and balance develops as they manoeuvre wheeled toys and cycle bikes and trikes in the garden. The soft play room further enables them to exercise and keep fit in a fun and safe manner.

Staff are good role models to the children and interact with them purposefully. They know the children very well because they observe them during play, recording significant learning on each individual child. They plan activities to enable children to move forward in their learning, catering for each child's individual needs.

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

The provision is good.

Children within the nursery are very much valued as individuals. Detailed records are maintained of the individual needs of the children, for example, any specific dietary or medical requirements. Children have a very strong sense of belonging and being part of the group. Photos of children who currently attend and those who have previously been part of the setting adorn the walls. The nursery is committed to inclusion. There is an equal opportunities policy in place. The nursery supports and welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language, although none are currently attending. Posters and displays around the nursery reinforce the nursery's ethos of valuing diversity, such as the dates of festivals and

celebrations around the world which is displayed by the entrance and the attractive poster portraying the message that 'We all smile in the same language'. Children also learn about diverse cultures and society through the play materials available. For example, there is an extensive range of books, puzzles, musical instruments and dolls of varied skin tones. The nursery embraces involvement in the local community. For example, the children used the local church hall to stage their Christmas production and the vicar judged the nursery's Easter bonnet competition. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave extremely well. They understand about sharing resources and spontaneously repeat the familiar motto 'we always share and care' as they play and engage in activities. Staff reinforce this good behaviour, for example, saying 'well done' and telling the children to give themselves a 'pat on the back'. Staff treat children with respect and they have a very good rapport with the children in their care. The behaviour policy in place reinforces the values of the nursery and identifies how any issues would be managed. The traffic light system, where children's names are stuck on red, green or amber circles depending on their behaviour at the time, is well understood by the children and acts as a quick visual aid and effective system for dealing quickly and fairly with any issues.

Children's care and learning are well supported by a strong partnership with parents. Children benefit from the warm welcome that is extended to their parents, who have frequent discussions with staff about their child's progress and care. Parents state that they are extremely happy with the care given to their children. They discuss how well staff support individual children, for example, working closely with them to potty train a child. There are various notice boards throughout the nursery that display relevant information for parents. Parents also receive a newsletter, which includes information about the current theme. Staff update the parents of younger children with the use of a daily sheet. Parents' consent is obtained as required, for example, relating to administration of medication. In addition, staff gain parental consent for taking photographs of children or for outings. Staff have a secure understanding of the procedure to be followed in the event of a parent wishing to make a complaint and a complaints record is maintained and available for parents to view. Parental involvement is positively welcomed. Parents have set up a committee to provide support and fundraising for the setting and to act as a forum for parental views.

Partnership with parents and carers relating to nursery education is good. Parents are well informed about the topics and themes that their children are covering. Planning sheets and posters give clear information about how and what children are learning. The prospectus details the curriculum that is delivered and explains the learning outcomes of different types of play and activities. Written observations and individual profiles on each child help staff identify and plan for next steps in children's learning. However, not all parents are aware that these records are available for them to see at any time. As a result, some parents do not know what the individual learning goals for their own child are.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

An established and enthusiastic team work well together to provide children with a fun and stimulating environment, in which their learning and care needs are well met. Good staff ratios and experienced and qualified staff impact positively on the quality of care offered. All new staff receive a detailed induction and are made aware of the policies and procedures of the setting. The nursery welcomes work experience students to join their team on a temporary basis. There are secure selection and recruitment processes in place. This includes ensuring

that all relevant checks are carried out on staff. Staff understand their role and responsibilities. They have opportunities for professional development and to attend various training courses, covering topics such as observation and assessment skills, safeguarding children and first aid.

Children are generally grouped according to their ages and the key worker system ensures appropriate support and care are provided. At certain times during the day younger children and older children work and play together in mixed age groups. This benefits all the children ensuring that they have opportunities to learn from each other and to experience the breadth and wealth of input from all staff. Children over two years old wear a uniform of a tracksuit with the setting's motif. This helps to clearly identify the children both in and out of the setting and instils a sense of pride and belonging in the children.

All mandatory records are in place and generally well maintained. This guarantees the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. Written policies and procedures are in place and work well in practice. However, the system for recording the administration of medication does not ensure the privacy of children. Furthermore, the procedure for local outings does not effectively promote children's safety.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The programme of activities offered covers all six areas of learning and recording systems are in place to effectively chart children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff successfully monitor the effectiveness of the nursery education through frequent evaluation of systems and good team work. The setting works towards continual improvement through the use of review and evaluation and through taking part in quality assurance programmes to assist them in this process. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

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

At the last inspection the providers agreed to: improve procedures for nappy changing and children's hand washing; improve the attendance register for staff and children and ensure that focus activity sheets were evaluative and used to aid planning for children's individual needs.

Nappy changing and children's hand washing procedures are consistently implemented in line with the setting's written health and safety procedures. The lack of hand washing facilities for staff in the baby room is compensated by the use of liquid hand gels. Staff wear gloves and aprons when changing nappies. Children learn from a young age of the importance of good hygiene. They automatically wash their hands after using the toilet and before snacks and mealtimes. This promotes children's health.

There is a system in place for recording staff and children's hours and days of attendance. This promotes children's safety.

Focus activity sheets are effectively used to evaluate and plan for children's next steps. This promotes children's learning and development.

### **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 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):

- ensure that the system for recording the administration of medication promotes the privacy of individual children
- improve the outings procedure to include a record of what adults and children are on outings at any time

#### **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):

- ensure that records are shared with parents about their individual child's progress and the next steps for their learning

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)