

Merry-Go-Round

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY220882
Inspection date	21 November 2007
Inspector	Patricia Jane Daniels
Setting Address	St James Church Hall, Church Street, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 8DE
Telephone number	07990 743537
E-mail	
Registered person	Merry - Go - Round Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Merry-Go-Round Ltd was taken over by its current owners in 2002. The group operates from a church hall and has access to large hall, smaller room, kitchen, toilet facilities and an outdoor area. It is situated in the centre of Weybridge. A maximum of 36 children may attend the group at any one time. The group is open five days a week from 09:15 to 12.00 during term time only.

There are currently 28 children from two to four years on roll, of these 19 receive funding for nursery education. The group serves the local community. The group has procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group employs seven staff on a part time basis, of these five staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children wash their hands before helping to prepare fruit and eating at snack time, which helps them to develop good personal hygiene routines. Children who are contagious are excluded from the group to prevent the spread of infection to others. Parents give prior written consent to administer medication, so that children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. Staff receive specialist training to administer any invasive medicines. This ensures children receive the correct dose in an appropriate manner.

There are six staff members who have current training to administer first aid and written parental consent to seek emergency treatment is in place. This ensures that children have access to appropriate care in the event of an accident.

Children can help themselves to a drink of water whenever they wish, which encourages them to consider their personal needs and ensures they do not become thirsty. The group provides a nutritious snack, which consists of a selection of fruit in plentiful amounts. Staff gather all relevant information regarding diet and medical history to ensure children's individual needs are met.

Children have a range of opportunities to develop their physical skills. Within the hall they ride trikes, balance on a beam and climb on the climbing frame. The hall is spacious, allowing children to move around freely. The provision of outdoor play is limited in the winter months, or when weather is inclement. At times, the children visit the local park to play on the equipment and enjoy the benefits of fresh air. Children demonstrate a range of skills as they use items such as scissors, paintbrushes and pens to develop their hand-eye coordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The large, bright hall is made welcoming by displays of children's artwork, posters and toys. Staff organise the space to enable children to move around independently and play safely. Floor cushions are provided so that children can sit and have a rest if they choose. Toys and resources are carefully selected to ensure they are suitable for the ages of children attending.

A risk assessment is undertaken daily before children arrive, to ensure that the premises and outside area are safe and suitable. The premises are secure and a doorbell entry system prevents unwanted visitors gaining access. Safety procedures are considered when visiting the local park. Good staff deployment ensures that the children are safe at all times. Children learn about safety through explanations and reminder from staff, for example, they learn not to throw sand because it might get into someone's eyes. However, fire drills are not held frequently enough for all children to learn how to evacuate the building.

Staff have a good understanding of their roles to safeguard the children in their care. They know the possible indicators of abuse and the procedures to take, if they have concerns. The group provides a copy of its policy to all parents, which ensures they are fully informed. The welfare of the children is promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and independent. Staff interact well with the children and respond to them warmly, which helps them to feel secure and valued. Children organise their own games and seek support from staff, when needed. They generally play together and share well. Activities and resources are selected to be suitable for the ages of children attending and presented to offer a good range of free choices. However, there is no system enabling children to choose other toys, resources and activities that are not readily available.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff motivate children by being enthusiastic and ask open-ended questions to help them organise their thoughts. The planned presentation of the 'Three Little Pigs' story engages the children's interest and they enjoy participating. Written plans are linked to the six areas of learning. However, these are not differentiated to identify areas of support and extension for children. Staff observe the children during free and focused activities and record their observations. However, these observations are not always used to plan for the next steps in the children's learning.

Children are developing good relationships with their peers and adults. They understand the need to share resources when playing together. They respond to requests for good behaviour and learn the expectations of the group. They learn about the differences in their lives to others around them by themed activities, such as the different homes where people live.

Children speak freely and use language to explain why things happen, such as the effect of the magnifying glass. Everyday activities such as naming the initial sound in the days of the week help children link sounds and letters. Some children can write their names and form the letters correctly. Children enjoy listening to stories and regularly help themselves to books.

Mathematical development is an area of weakness for the group. Sometimes staff use the opportunities presented within activities to develop children's mathematical learning, for example, children identify the triangle shape of the musical instrument and compare sizes of bears. Children rote count and compare the numbers of boys and girls at circle time. However, a broad range of activities is not presented on a daily basis.

Children explore and investigate using their senses. They comment on the temperature of the milk at snack time and feel the straw used in the story. They explore the sounds made by musical instruments and the effects of magnets. Children learn about their environment through activities such as a walk to the park or a visit to the library. They investigate what happens when they mix different colours of paint and describe different textures. Children use imagination during role-play and express their ideas creatively using paint, pens and paper.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children become aware of their own and other cultures through a range of resources and planned activities, for example, resources depict variety that includes disability and different cultures. Staff encourage all children to take part in all the activities and make modifications to support this, if needed. Information about children's needs is sought from parents, so that

appropriate care is provided from the start. Young children can bring special comforters from home if they need, to help them feel secure.

The group has good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are well planned for and met.

Staff make expectations of behaviour clear and remind children gently of the rules. Children are praised when they show good manners or behave well. This helps the children feel good about themselves and makes them aware of what is expected. Staff redirect any unwanted behaviour. The children benefit from these positive management strategies and behave well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is met.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents initially receive a general written introduction to the group. Information about the main activity of the day is displayed for parents and termly newsletters indicate the planned themes. However, there is no information given regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum and educational programme. This limits opportunities for parents to support their children's learning at home and enhance their progress towards the early learning goals. Parents' afternoons are held every other term, when details about children's progress are shared.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All required checks on staff are in place, to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Regular staff appraisals assess their ongoing suitability and identify training needs. Professional development is encouraged and all staff attend courses and workshops to keep up to date with current practice. A generous staffing ratio gives children the support needed to help them feel secure and confident. Contingency arrangements are in place to cover any unexpected staff absences. The environment is well organised, to be safe and stimulating for children.

Regulatory requirements are met and documentation required for the safe and effective management of the nursery is in place. This contributes to the welfare of the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The two owners share management tasks between them and aim to provide a happy atmosphere, in which children's independence and confidence is promoted. They encourage staff to attend ongoing training and to share the results with their colleagues, so that all benefit. Staff hold regular termly meetings to discuss planning and share ideas. The owners evaluate the provision of nursery education to identify areas for improvement.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, Ofsted requested some improvements. A system of staff appraisals is now in place as a result, although a system to assess and record the strengths and weaknesses of the setting has not been formalised. Systems to identify challenges for children that are more able and to provide more opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning remain highlighted at this inspection.

Parents now receive a copy of the group's policy about safeguarding children. The daily routine ensures that all children wash their hands before snack time. A range of resources and activities

are provided to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. As a result, the standard of care for children is improved.

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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 fire drills are held frequently enough for all children to experience

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):

- provide parents with information about the Foundation Stage curriculum
- differentiate activities to identify areas of support and extension for children
- use observations of children's abilities to plan for the next steps in 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