

# Merryvale Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	253814
<b>Inspection date</b>	03 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Esther Gray
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<b>Registered person</b>	Merryvale Nursery Ltd
<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 outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Merryvale Nursery opened in 1992. It operates from a large detached house and it is situated in the Hurst Green area of Halesowen, West Midlands. The nursery serves the local community.

A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 68 children on roll. Of these 23 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is open from 07.30 to 18:00, five days a week, all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

Sixteen staff work with the children. Twelve of these have appropriate early years qualifications. They currently support a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority in Dudley.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

The nursery, toys, resources and equipment are kept in a generally good, clean condition and there is a rolling programme of maintenance and repair. Staff follow appropriate procedures to ensure children's health is protected during nappy changing processes. Parents give appropriate permissions for the administration of medication, prescribed for children. Good records are kept of all accidents and medication administered to children. Parents acknowledge the entry signifying their awareness of the entry made to the record. There are sufficient staff who hold a first aid certificate to ensure children are taken well care of if they have an accident or become ill. As a result, children's health and well-being are suitably safeguarded.

Older children are encouraged to maintain their own personal hygiene independently and are encouraged to clean their teeth after lunch. They can explain the importance of washing their hands before helping themselves to their snack or before lunch. All children benefit from the many opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air. They regularly visit local shops and other resources in the local community. For example, they visit the local library for 'Rattle and Rhyme Time'. Staff encourage children to develop their physical skills inside and outdoors. They offer various challenges for all ages. These include, climbing, sliding, riding, balancing and building. As a result, children enjoy many varied opportunities to experience physical activity, develop their skills and appreciate the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle.

Children are well nourished. Meals are freshly cooked in a local school kitchen and the nursery have won a healthy eating award. Staff encourage children to learn about and try many different foods, tastes and textures. They learn to identify a good variety of fruit and vegetables and all dietary and religious needs are complied with. Older children serve themselves at lunch and snack times. Staff ensure they all have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. They join with children and take these opportunities to remind children about the healthy lifestyle project they were recently learning about. Older children can identify foods such as broccoli from the description given by staff, as they anticipate the lovely smell coming from the kitchen. As a result, children learn about red, green and amber foods and the importance of making healthy food choices and healthy eating.

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

The provision is good.

Children are secure and well supervised in premises which are suitable for their purpose. The manager and staff ensure that the environment gives children good access to a comprehensive range of facilities that successfully promote children's development. Staff responsible for children aged two years are keen to review the layout of their room to make best use of the limited space. A system has been developed to display pictures at child height, of resources available for them to choose from. Children use safe and suitable resources, toys and equipment that stimulate and challenge them. There are sufficient resources in the nursery for all age groups. These resources are checked and kept clean.

Children are well protected from harm because staff have a good understanding of their role in child protection. They are able to put appropriate procedures into practice and have identified where and how staff can access further training to safeguard children. Children's safety is well promoted because the registered person takes positive steps to promote safety. There is a

comprehensive risk assessment system. There is an appointed health and safety officer who checks risks are being addressed appropriately. Staff explain how they make identified risks safe, whilst notifying management of the need for longer term solutions. For example, staff remove toys for repair or replacement. All exits are kept clear to allow easy emergency evacuation of the building and there is a good adult to child ratio for babies on the first floor. This allows one adult to leave the building with two children safely in an emergency. Consequently, children's safety and well-being is safeguarded.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe. The nursery have been visited by the local fire brigade. Older children are informed of the risks of fire. They enjoyed exploring the fire engine. Younger children learn about what is dangerous and how to be careful so that they do not hurt themselves or other children. Children are encouraged to be involved in clearing up and staff use appropriate safety equipment to restrict access to areas such as the stairs. Staff have a good rapport with the children which enables them to share any concerns or worries they may have. This suitably safeguards children from harm.

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

The provision is good.

Staff develop good relationships with children and their families. They work with them in key working groups, which provides good continuity of care. All staff are engaged in children's play effectively and children are encouraged to develop good independence skills throughout the nursery. For example, children aged two are encouraged to help themselves to their snack from the trolley, serve themselves a drink at snack time and help themselves to the art aprons when they choose to move to an art activity. They also learn to put on their own coats for outdoor play. Consequently, children are confident, independent and are developing their self-esteem.

Planned activities are adapted by staff to challenge more able children. Children aged two years make generally good progress before moving into the pre-school room. Staff have been adapting the plans they previously followed whilst using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are developing plans for use in the Early Years Foundation Stage, for children aged from birth to five years. The revised planning, for this younger age group, has failed to take account of children's interests and where their starting points are. This means, children's progress is not effectively recorded to enable staff to plan the next steps for their development through play successfully. Although staff make good use of observations and assessment to help children make progress, the detailed planning sheets are taken from ideas planned for older children in the pre-school room rather than from what staff know about what children can already do, or are interested in. Very good progress has been made to ensure younger children can explore confidently and mostly find their own resources across the nursery. Good use is made of display in the nursery, to remind children of stories they enjoy and to celebrate children's success. Consequently, children have their individual needs met and are developing a good range of knowledge and skills because there are some effective plans, which provide activities and play opportunities that mostly help children achieve well.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. All staff delivering the education curriculum for funded children have exemplary knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and are developing their knowledge of how this fits into the new Early Years Foundation Stage, for children aged from birth to five years. Staff use this knowledge to develop a programme of very interesting, exciting activities, which ensure all children achieve and make

very good progress. The effective layout of the room and resources allows children to freely explore their environment, making their own choices, which they use to very good effect as they develop their imaginative play. They bring resources from one area to another and move inside or outdoors in their play throughout the day. Staff ensure all areas of the Foundation Stage are covered by organising resources very successfully. They make notes of where children achieve well and where they need more support very effectively. The assessment of these observations are successfully used to provide the basis of what is planned next to allow children to make the next steps in their learning. Consequently, planning, observation and assessment is used successfully to ensure excellent outcomes for children.

Children are actively encouraged to think about and demonstrate what they know and understand. Staff listen and are interested in what children are doing. They know when to intervene and build sufficient challenge into their plans for all children, including more and less able, very well. For example, in an activity of measurement, more able children begin to transfer the numbers they find on the measure onto a list. They begin to understand the representation of bigger and smaller numbers and how this demonstrates taller or smaller when measuring. Younger children consider measurement using a non-standard measure, comparing size and like with like. For instance, with children lying on the floor they look at who is taller or, in plants, which of the flowers they have planted have grown the most. Staff help children to consolidate and extend their learning. They have very good relationships with children and encourage them to become involved and to persevere with tasks. For example, children become engaged in a vigorous, musical 'tidy-up' operation, as they all work cooperatively together until the music stops. Staff use a lot of praise to encourage good manners and sharing and taking turns. Children learn to politely say 'excuse me' if they need to move around others in the nursery. The session is exceptionally well paced, which ensures that children are fully engaged and do not become disruptive. Strong, effective behaviour management ensures that children are developing a very good understanding of right and wrong, rules and boundaries and how to be considerate to others.

Children are developing their competencies extremely well across the four aspects of communication, speaking, listening, reading and writing. They explore a fantastically well-planned and interesting environment. For example, they look at caterpillars they find in the garden, provide a new home for the caterpillar and think about what it will turn into. They rush with excitement to see if it is still in the jar when they arrive in the morning. They experiment with potatoes to see what they need to enable them to grow. They are discovering if they grow better with water or without. This provides very good, spontaneous opportunities for further discussion as staff encourage their research in books. The flexibility of the programme allows staff to follow a line of interest led by children very well. For example, they adapt play in the role play corner to include baby dolls, which allows children to explore and express feelings about the arrival of another baby at home. Children help to display the story of Chinese New Year. They enjoy the story of how animals of China had a race on the Emperor's birthday and learn about how the years are represented by the animals crossing the finishing line. Children are developing their ability to make recognisable shapes as they write symbols that represent their own name on their art work. They develop excellent dexterity and coordination with pegs, for example, that allow them to find their own name on a card on the washing line, as they sign themselves into the café for a snack. They are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through many first hand experiences in a rich and stimulating environment.

Children are able to be very creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play. There are some very stimulating resources made

accessible for children to choose from. This includes an interesting sensory play area with stimulating natural and recycled materials to explore and from which children make a wide variety of imaginative creations. They are encouraged to make a necklace threaded from card shapes as they begin to identify shapes in a variety of ways using art and craft activities. This incorporates children's learning in mathematics as they display art work that represents measurement and shape in a variety of glorious colours all around the nursery. Children appreciate the passage of time, the seasons of the year and count in everyday situations. They count children in rotation up to 10. Some more able children count how many pieces of cutlery they need to lay the table. They calculate how many more they need so they can ask staff in the kitchen for more. They are beginning to use number in a meaningful context and understand that number represents sets of objects or people. Children begin to appreciate the passage of time in circle time as they say good afternoon to staff, recognising that they have had morning and lunch and it is now afternoon. They say hello to the visiting dance teacher or play outdoors on large climbing equipment, which develops children's awareness of how to become fit and healthy, as they enjoy musical movement and join in with physical play in the fresh air. Plans are adapted very well to meet individual children's needs, including recognising areas of children's own interest as they develop the idea of 'the car wash' outdoors in the fresh air, or in developing play to accommodate those with learning difficulties. Children return excitedly to the classroom to share the experience with other children and staff as they recount the morning or afternoon events with them. For example, they explain to staff how they painted a representation of a daffodil. The staff in turn prompt children to share information about their exciting day with parents.

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

The provision is good.

There are sufficient, suitable resources and activities to help children learn about diversity in society through their play. Children have a wide range of books, for example, which allow them to research topics of interest. Staff use the traditional seasonal festivals to promote children's appreciation of diversity and the wider multicultural society. They also have regard to the code of practice when supporting children's identified needs and have successfully supported both emotional distress and learning difficulties. This is achieved by staff supporting the whole family and engaging where necessary with other professionals to support children. Every effort is made to ensure that activities are adapted to best meet the needs and abilities of the children attending. As a result, good arrangements are made to ensure all children are included.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are developing excellent self-esteem and respect for others. They understand responsible behaviour and learn about boundaries because the staff are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour very well. Where disputes occur staff quickly resolve them through negotiation, encouraging children to share. Children behave very well and make some very strong friendships at the nursery, making space, for instance, for their friends in circle time on the carpet. Children are able to feel an excellent sense of belonging, work harmoniously with others and make choices and decisions about what they want to experience or play with.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. There are very good procedures for settling children. Key personnel move temporarily with children, for a short while, to ensure they settle in as they grow up and move through the nursery. Parents express their content and pleasure at the amount of information they receive through letters, homework folders and other written communication systems. They are made welcome and become involved in children's learning. For example, a father was able to read to children, another parent came to explain the role of

the police officer and another the role of shop keeper. They become closely involved in the life of the setting, bringing culture and experience to the children. For example, one family were running the 'Race for Life' and the family were able to share this with the children of the setting who with good staff support, then developed the theme of caring for others in their activities for that week. As a result, children are developing good consistent relationships with adults and other children in a setting where staff work very closely with parents and carers to meet individual children's needs and ensure they are fully included in the life of the setting.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The management are proactive in ensuring the practice of all staff contributes positively to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. A large proportion of staff have been working at the setting for some time, which enables them to provide consistent care for children. They organise the setting very well, which allows them to provide a warm and cosy environment, in which children thrive. The management have suitable vetting and recruiting procedures to safeguard children. They also support students very well to gain childcare qualifications, including the manager who is studying for a degree in childcare. Children are well protected from harm as the staff are aware of the importance of ensuring that all unvetted visitors are suitable and are not left unattended with children in the setting or whilst on outings. All policies and procedures protect children sufficiently and are effectively implemented to promote good outcomes for children. Records are available and retained for inspection. They are well organised and kept confidential.

The leadership and management is outstanding. Children aged three and four years in the pre-school room make very good progress. Their ability is quickly identified and notes are taken of their interests to allow them to become engaged and interested in learning more. There is an action plan to develop the outdoor area to mirror areas of learning indoors. The supervisor in the pre-school room has also identified where she would like to improve plans to suitably challenge more able and less able children even more effectively, by developing staff observations and plans to identify how to pin point more closely, where children with learning difficulties need support and where more able children are challenged. All staff have a very clear idea of what they need to do to help children make very good progress. Staff are confident in what they are doing and engage in children's play to support them in making excellent progress in their development, attitude and interest in learning.

Across the nursery, younger children benefit from very good organisation of the setting. For example, staff are deployed effectively and are suitably experienced and qualified to support children aged from birth to three years. Staff have been trained in the use of the framework, 'Birth to three matters'. This framework underpins the care of younger children to ensure they develop to their full potential. They have also been on some basic training to support their move to using the Early Years Foundation Stage, for children aged from birth to five years. Consequently, children in the early years are developing very good dispositions towards learning and are developing well. All children are encouraged to become independent and confident learners by a staff team who all work very well together as a team. Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to: ensure records are kept of when children are monitored during sleep, improve the recording procedures for visitors, ensure that attendance

records for staff and children include arrival and departure times and ensure the procedures to be followed in the respect of a parent failing to collect a child, are in the best interest of children. The provider was also asked to ensure the child protection procedures are effectively and readily accessible to all staff.

Since the last inspection documents and monitoring systems have been improved. Staff are all able to find contact details for the local authority to enable them to safeguard children if any concerns arise about children's welfare and there are good records kept about how well children have slept. Staff remain with children at all times, however, they have not kept up-to-date with best practice in positioning children so they cannot become overly wrapped up in blankets or become too warm. Consequently, parents are better informed and children's safety has improved, however, some training needs for staff have not been met to better safeguard children whilst they sleep.

The policy informing parents about what will happen if parents fail to collect children is clear and gives staff and parents information as to the role of the local authority to find a place of safety for children whilst parents are located. Visitors are required to sign the attendance record and all records for staff and children include arrival and departure times. As a result, children's health, and well-being are safeguarded.

During the last Nursery Education inspection there were no key issues, however, the provider was asked to consider how staff increase the opportunities for all children to further develop operating independently throughout daily routines.

Since the last nursery education inspection considerable improvements have been made across the nursery to generate early independence skills as children make many choices and decisions about their care. They initiate many learning opportunities themselves as their interests are taken into account in planning for their needs and they take a pride in their nursery classroom, helping staff to lay tables, clean up the rooms and set out new activities of their own choosing. Children's confidence and self-esteem have benefited from these changes and children are mastering many new physical skills as they develop their independence before moving on to school.

### **Complaints 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.

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. Concerns were raised regarding inaccuracies on the children's daily register, the lack of stimulating toys and failure of the manager to address these concerns when raised by the complainant. These concerns relate to National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 4: Physical Environment and National Standard 12: Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers. Ofsted made an unannounced visit to the setting and raised two actions; to provide a copy of the amended procedure for recording arrival and departure of children attending the nursery and to provide a copy of the monitoring procedure to ensure that toys and equipment are clean, well maintained and safe. The registered person reported that arrival and departure times are recorded; the manager oversees that toys and equipment are maintained appropriately. Ofsted is satisfied that the registered person has addressed the concerns and remains qualified for registration.



## 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 outstanding.

### 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):

- develop and improve ways of recording children's progress to plan the next steps for their development through play
- ensure that the continuing training needs of staff are met; this refers to training for staff in child protection and up-to-date safety recommendations for sleeping children.

#### 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)