

Mayfield House Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205436
Inspection date	18 August 2008
Inspector	Valerie Fane
Setting Address	275 Marlpool Lane, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 5DA
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Registered person	Heidi Munday and Erica Munday
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 inadequate – notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Mayfield House Kindergarten is a privately owned and managed day nursery that was registered in 1991. It operates from a private house with gardens for outdoor play on the northern side of Kidderminster. The nursery serves Kidderminster and the surrounding area.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 64 children on roll. Of these 24 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are 17 staff who work with the children. Of these eight have appropriate qualifications to Level 2 or above. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop healthy eating habits. They sit round the table in groups with members of staff and mealtimes are sociable occasions where staff and children engage in conversation. They enjoy a very healthy selection of meals for breakfast, lunch and tea. These are prepared on the premises using healthy ingredients such as wholemeal bread and brown rice as well as a very wide selection of home-grown vegetables and eggs produced by their own hens. For example, lunch menus include potato and garlic bake made using potatoes that children have dug at the allotment the previous day. Older children develop a very good understanding of the principles of healthy eating because they are fully involved in growing vegetables on the kindergarten's allotment.

Children learn about the importance of good hygiene routines because they wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and after handling the chickens. Children receive good care in the event of an accident or needing medication because most staff have current first aid knowledge. Staff keep accurate records of serious accidents that occur or medication given and ensure that these are signed by parents. However, children are not fully safeguarded because staff do not keep a written record of minor accidents to share with parents.

Children have excellent opportunities for fresh air and exercise because they are provided with opportunities to take part in a variety of activities. These include weekly gymnastic sessions, yoga, visits to the forest school where they can enjoy fresh air and move around freely, regular walks to the allotment and playing outside in the garden. They have a good selection of equipment available in the garden that provides appropriate challenge for children of all ages. They develop very good balance and control as they construct and use a balance trail using the wooden blocks and planks and as they ride wheeled toys such as a tractor. They develop climbing skills using the large climbing frame and enjoy an interesting range of swings.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children use premises that are suitable and are kept clean and well maintained. The layout of the equipment is attractive and welcoming and this creates a stimulating learning environment for them. Children see their own work displayed as well as information posters and photographs of themselves enjoying different activities such as forest school. They use a wide range of equipment that is suitable and safe. This is because the staff provide child-sized furniture, equipment and toys that are appropriate for their purpose, are of suitable design and condition and are very well maintained.

Children use premises and activities that are safe because staff have carried out risk assessments and these are updated as new equipment arrives or changes take place. Children are unable to leave the premises alone because these are fenced and the outer gates are kept locked at all times. However, children are not fully safeguarded because the front door is not consistently kept locked when children are not using the tree house area. This means that visitors can potentially gain access to the premises unnoticed. Children learn to use equipment safely. For example, when helping to prepare vegetables they use scissors and sharp knives under close supervision and in forest school they know that they must not go near the campfire and learn how to carry logs and sticks around.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and have some knowledge of the procedures to follow if they were to have concerns about a child in their care. However, few staff have undertaken specific child protection training to ensure that their knowledge is up to date in this area. There is a clear child protection policy and this is made available to parents. Children develop awareness of their personal safety because they learn to speak out for themselves if they do not like other children's behaviour as well as seeking adult support to address their concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages are very settled in the friendly family atmosphere of the kindergarten. They relate extremely well to staff and to each other. Younger children in all base rooms progress well because they enjoy an interesting range of planned activities that supports their progress and development and staff are aware of their individual learning needs. The two-year-olds play with the wooden blocks outside. They design and build a house with support from staff who make good use of questioning to help children develop their thinking skills. For example, they ask children what they need next to make their house and encourage children to decide which blocks to use for different parts such as the windows and the bathroom. Children discuss their play with staff using language competently to discuss their ideas. Younger babies play with a wide range of toys including ones made from natural materials. They play 'peep-bo' with staff using the triangular mirrors, discover that their voices echo when they make a noise inside the mirror house and enjoy repeating the noise. This activity supports their emerging language skills well.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress towards the early learning goals and in some areas such as maths and knowledge and understanding of the world their progress is outstanding. This is because staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and demonstrate excellent understanding of the breadth of learning that children obtain from different activities. They follow the children's lead when planning activities so that children are able to follow and develop their own interests and ideas and are actively involved in planning their own learning. Staff offer appropriate activities because they have assessed children's starting points through observations and information provided by staff from their previous base room. Children continue to progress because staff observe and evaluate their learning and development and use the observations to inform future planning at their weekly planning meetings. Children behave extremely well and show sustained involvement in their play because staff present well-resourced activities and use their time efficiently to be actively involved with the children. They make excellent use of questioning and spontaneous learning opportunities to extend children's learning.

Children improve their language and literacy skills. They develop their understanding of story lines as they help staff make up and act a story about a fish called Thomas linked to the current underwater theme. Children use their knowledge gained from other activities to talk about the creatures Thomas might see under the sea and they act Thomas swimming in the sea to appropriate background music. Afterwards they find a picture of a fish in a book and use it to paint their own picture of Thomas. This helps them understand the use of books as a source of information.

Children are fully involved in growing their own vegetables on the nearby allotment. They visit it regularly as a large group or in smaller groups to harvest vegetables for the day's lunch. They enthusiastically go to see if the seeds they planted previously have grown and when they get back to the kindergarten they tell their peers which ones have grown. They enjoy hunting for beans to pick for dinner and use their emerging mathematical skills to judge which ones are big enough to pick. They confidently use mathematical language such as 'enormous' to describe their beans. Staff support younger children well and help them learn which ones are ready. Children develop independence in their personal care because they learn to dress themselves in Wellingtons and waterproof trousers to go to the allotment. When they get back to the kindergarten the older children help to prepare the vegetables for dinner using tools such as scissors and sharp knives with increasing confidence.

Children enjoy making their own salt dough. They talk about the ingredients and count out the number of spoonfuls of each that they need. Staff make good use of opportunities to ask children what cooking they have done at home over the weekend and children recall what they have done. Children count how many of them are present and decide that they need the same number of balls of dough. When another child joins the group they add one to the total, showing a good understanding of simple calculations and problem-solving skills. They enjoy exploring the texture of the dough as they roll it into balls and use rolling pins and shells to make shapes with the dough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children of all ages develop their individuality and self-esteem because staff work hard to build children's confidence and support them to become independent, confident and enthusiastic learners while being very sensitive to their needs, likes and dislikes. Children become aware of our wider society because they use equipment such as books, puzzles, small world toys and dressing up clothes that promotes positive images of gender, race and disability. They learn about other cultures and religions as they celebrate different festivals. For example, they have a lantern party to celebrate Diwali and the Chinese festival of light. They become involved in their local community through the use of the allotment because other residents give them help and advice and children take part successfully in the annual allotment competition.

Children behave extremely well because staff are excellent role models and set high standards for children's behaviour. Children are polite and helpful to staff and to each other. They learn to share toys and to take turns. Occasional challenging behaviour is managed effectively by staff who are calm and patient but consistent as they provide younger children with simple explanations as to why behaviour such as snatching toys is unacceptable.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good care because the staff liaise closely with their parents and, if appropriate, with outside agencies. They work with relevant agencies to implement individual education plans for such children and support their progress and development well. Effective procedures are in place to identify children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their needs are met because staff seek permission from parents to make the appropriate referrals and obtain advice and guidance to enable them to provide children with the best possible support. When children are due to transfer to school staff liaise closely with the school to ensure a smooth transition.

Children benefit from the good relationship that the staff have with their parents. Parents receive information about the kindergarten before their child attends and are encouraged to visit the group with their child for some introductory visits. Children's ongoing needs are met through regular discussions between staff and parents when they collect their children and parents see photographs of children enjoying a wide range of activities displayed in the nursery. Children are protected because parents are made aware of how to make a complaint to the regulator and a log is in place to record any complaints that might be made.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents are aware of topics that children are doing through quarterly newsletters and planning is displayed on the notice board outside the door during school term times. Children have some opportunities to continue their learning at home because parents receive verbal information about their learning and they are encouraged to request appointments to discuss their children's progress. They see their children's development records prior to school transfer. However, the staff do not maximise opportunities to share information with parents about their children's progress or provide them with specific ideas to enable children to continue their learning at home. Children benefit from their parents' involvement in the life of the nursery because parents are invited to regular social evenings and to attend shows put on by the children.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children's welfare, learning and development are compromised because they do not consistently receive care from an adequate number of suitably qualified staff. The supervisor in charge of one of the baby rooms does not have an appropriate Level 3 qualification, there are frequent occasions when less than half of the staff working with the two-year-olds hold a minimum Level 2 qualification and there are some sessions when the overall staffing does not meet the requirement for at least 50% of staff to be qualified. Children are also not fully safeguarded because no record is kept of visitors to the premises.

In other respects children are protected from harm because the registered person has robust procedures in place to ensure that all staff who work with the children are suitable to do so. This includes a Criminal Records Bureau check and an induction programme for all new staff. Children's welfare is safeguarded because all required policies and procedures are in place. Parents also provide all necessary information and consents before their child attends the group.

Leadership and management of the funded children is satisfactory. Children benefit from the owner's clear vision to provide high quality nursery education that ensures that they transfer to school as confident learners who are able to think creatively and have a positive attitude to learning. This is reflected in the recent mission statement which clearly sets out the kindergarten's ethos. Children in this age group benefit from working with a high ratio of well-qualified staff who plan a rich and varied curriculum for them to enjoy. However, staff do not work together to evaluate their practice to identify and improve areas for development in the provision of nursery education.

Overall the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was required to ensure individual records of staff details are kept on the premises and to make sure enough staff are trained in first aid to ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate is on the premises or on outings at any one time. The recommendation with regard to the nursery education was to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of supporting children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Children are safeguarded because the required individual records for all staff are now kept on the premises and most of the staff now have current first aid qualifications. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive enhanced support because staff who work with them have received training in the special needs code of practice and follow approved procedures to support children.

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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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- provide an action plan to demonstrate how the qualifications requirements will be met; ensure that all supervisors hold a Level 3 qualification appropriate for the care or development of young children and ensure that at least half of all child care staff hold at least a Level 2 qualification appropriate for the care or development of children.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- improve information given to parents about children's progress and ideas to enable children to continue their learning at home.

- improve the use of self-evaluation to identify and develop areas for improvement in the nursery education.

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