

Mulberry Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	511344
Inspection date	11/06/2009
Inspector	Sylvia Dindar
Setting address	Mulberry Road, Marchwood, Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 4WB
Telephone number	02380 660354
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Mulberry Preschool opened in 1991. It operates in a self-contained building on the edge of the army camp in Marchwood near to Southampton. Children come from the village of Marchwood as well as from army quarters. The pre-school is a registered charity and is managed by a voluntary committee. Access to the pre-school is via a ramp. There is access to a ground floor toilet and the group have plans in place to address the need for access for toileting facilities for those with disability.

The setting opens five days a week in term-time. Sessions are from 09:10 to 11:40 and from 12:25 to 14:55. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school is registered for 26 children on the Early Years register.

There are currently 83 children on roll aged between two years six months and five years. This includes 64, three and four year olds who receive funding for early education. At present the pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and also children with English as an additional language.

There are 11 staff who work with the children and of these nine have relevant early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is a member of the Hampshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Staff have a good knowledge of individual children, and children's welfare and learning is generally effectively promoted. However staff are aware they need to do more to meet the needs of a minority of the older children as at times they become boisterous and this impacts on the other children. The setting is secure and safely organised and children enjoy a wide range of activities which cover all areas of learning. The group are committed to inclusion and support children with additional needs. The staff team work closely with parents to ensure all children make progress and their care needs are fully met. The setting is committed to improvements and has effective systems in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the play and learning programme.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further develop opportunities for children to discuss and understand how their words and action can impact on others
- continue to observe and evaluate children's learning and development and use this information to ensure that every child consistently receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience paying particular attention to the needs of older boys

The leadership and management of the early years provision

A cohesive team of committee members and staff work together to ensure that the provision provided evolves effectively and staff receive good management support to develop and improve their practice. The group make improvement based on good evaluation, this goes beyond the recommendation set by Ofsted at the last inspection and brings about positive outcomes for children. Policies and procedures are reviewed and generally well implemented and reflect the good practice offered by the pre-school and protect the children's good health and keep them safe. The group works closely and welcomes support from external agencies, such as development workers and advisory teachers in order to improve provision.

Parents are encouraged and play an important role within the group, both in supporting the committee and staff. Their input and suggestions given through the completion of questionnaires are valued. Since the last inspection they have been involved in developing and planting the sensory garden. They help organise and provide items for the pre-school's annual fund raising community street party. On joining the group, staff ensure they obtain general information about the children to ensure they are able to meet their individual needs and on going meetings keep them well informed about their child's education and gives them the opportunity to be involved in their child's learning and contribute their ideas. Regular newsletters keep them well informed of important events such as school intakes and arrangements for school visits and the learning programme, so they remain well informed.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children have a sense of belonging because staff warmly welcome them and their parents into the setting. Parents are able to settle their children in and as a result children feel secure. Children are keen to find their name and register and greet their friends and commence their play immediately. They have a special place to hang their coats and bags and a drawer to keep their work in. Resources are easily accessed and labelled and in text and pictures so that children know where to find things. This encourages independent play and children are able to make their own decisions, this promotes their confidence and self esteem. Key workers make themselves available for discussion with parents and to provide a familiar face and to support the children.

Children are making good progress in line with their starting points. Staff plan together and meet regularly to ensure that each child is able to follow a personalised education plan and to take in the children's interest and ideas in order to meet their needs. For example, they recognise some children have a preference to be outside in the fresh air and so have implemented free flow play activities which cover all areas of learning, allowing children to choose their favoured learning environment. They are flexible in delivering the education programme and make good use of incidental play to enhance children's learning and engage children. For example, when children show a real interest in space rockets and

astronauts, they extend this by adding junk modelling allowing children to design and construct models of space ships. Staff ask them questions to make them think about the size and shape and how they will stick things together ensuring children think about and learn the process for themselves. Staff are aware that at times a few older children lack challenge and become boisterous and are providing this type of focused activity to engage them. Staff recognise this as an area for on going development and are currently evaluating their progress and looking for new ideas in order to keep them consistently engaged.

Children enjoy physical play; they show good control over their bodies as they confidently pedal the trikes which have just been cleaned in the car wash by their peers. Stepping stones are strategically placed close to the play house and children are encouraged to count and identify their colours. They confidently jump from one to another. Staff are quick to recognise children are enjoying the jumping and ask the children if they would like to have the trampoline out enabling them to practise some more. Children are keen to help and set out equipment, they are learning to consider their safety and that of others as staff ask them to think about what they need to ensure that they are safe when jumping and children understand that crash mats will make a fall less dangerous. They are asked to remember the rules when on the trampoline. Staff and parents have worked hard in the garden to make a quiet tranquil sensory area, where children can relax and be creative and to grow and tend plants which include food for eating at snack time.

Children's good health is promoted as they learn about the importance of healthy eating. They understand why they must wash their hands. This routine is thoroughly embedded through effective routines. The café snack bar is very popular and children are learning to pour their own drinks and cut up the fruit. Staff are mindful of those children who are hungry enabling them to come to the table first. Staff are good role models and treat children with respect. They encourage good behaviour offering lots of praise and children respond well when they are given stickers. As a result children generally are keen to please and want to help. Children's work and photographs are displayed and staff take an interest in the life of their families. They are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' and to consider others for example, when they bump into each other. They learn to share and take turns and generally get on well. However, odd incidents occur when children do not understand the effect their words and action could have on other children which have the potential to undermine some children's self esteem.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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