

Mendip House Nursery and Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Rachael Williams

Setting address Mendip House Nursery & Pre-School, 17a Bedford Road,
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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Mendip House Nursery and Pre-School opened in 2002 and is privately owned. It operates from a self-contained building in the south ward of Weston-super-Mare in North Somerset. The ground floor of the premises is open plan, and accommodates pre-school children and the first floor, which includes a dedicated play room, sleeping facilities and nappy changing room, accommodates children under two-years-old. The nursery has a rear garden for outdoor play. The ground floor provision is wheelchair accessible.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 42 children; of which 12 may be under two-years-old. There are currently 61 children on roll. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. The group opens five days a week for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm each day. The owners, who both have teaching degrees and diplomas in special educational needs, employ nine members of staff to work directly with the children; seven of whom have level 3 or above childcare qualifications. The nursery also employs a dedicated cook and cleaner.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

A stimulating and welcoming environment is provided. Practitioners have excellent knowledge of the children in their care and caring relationships have been established to ensure that each child is acknowledged and valued as an individual. Children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Rich and varied experiences are offered and children are fully engaged. On the whole, welfare is promoted well and children have a strong sense of security and feel safe. Inspired and knowledgeable staff work very well together. All are focused on improving outcomes for children and play a key part in the rigorous and extensive monitoring of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- develop further opportunities to consistently promote independence skills
- ensure consistency in appropriate hand washing arrangements before mealtimes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for by competent, knowledgeable and enthusiastic practitioners who ensure children's welfare is safeguarded. Rigorous systems are in place to ensure that practitioners are appropriately inducted into their role through a mentoring system so that they fully understand the well-written policies and procedures which underpin the smooth running of the nursery provision. Vetting procedures are extensive and include support staff, volunteers and students. A designated member of staff has responsibility for ensuring children are safeguarded. She has attended relevant training and disseminates information to all staff through appropriate in-house training; therefore, all staff are aware of appropriate procedures to follow if child abuse is suspected.

The team of experienced and well-qualified practitioners work exceptionally well together to positively promote very good outcomes for children. Through staff meetings and training good practices are shared and there is a very clear ethos of expectations to promote positive attitudes. Practitioners are very focused and receive clear direction from the management and leaders of the setting. Effective steps are being taken to ensure sustainability as the improvements practitioners have identified ensure that an extended provision can be offered, for instance so that messy activities can be more abundant and accessible, providing an enabling environment. Self-evaluation, which includes practitioners, children and parents, rigorously monitors the provision and reflects on the impact improvements will have on the children. Consequently, actions taken by the setting are well targeted.

Children benefit from a colourful, warm and welcoming environment which values their contribution, for instance through interactive displays. Children have access to an abundant range of high-quality toys and resources. This is reflected in the recent projects the children have engaged in, for instance children have been introduced to a range of mark making equipment, such as graphite and charcoal. Through appropriate monitoring of the setting, plastic toys have been replaced, for instance plastic building blocks have been replaced with natural resources which influences children's imaginative play. Practitioners provide a fully inclusive environment for the children and families in their care. Practitioners reflect on their practice and are proactive in accessing relevant courses to support the children, such as Makaton, to support communication skills and training to support autistic children. The key person system works exceptionally well to support all children as positive and caring relationships have been established. Consequently, there is good communication with parents to ensure children are valued as individuals and their uniqueness is fully fostered. Parents receive a wealth of information about the setting via the notice board, a welcome pack and the information supplied from the awards and achievements the nursery have accomplished. Practitioners are proactive at engaging with parents and other key agencies to ensure continuity in children's care. For instance, a communication diary provides effective dialogue with other early years providers.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children engage in a wealth of experiences, both adult-led and child-initiated. Key group times work exceptionally well to ensure that learning priorities are addressed and that children engage in activities that respect their interests and pre-occupations. Practitioners have excellent knowledge of children's starting points and capabilities. For instance, during a flexible settling in period practitioners complete 'all about me' documents to ensure they are fully aware of children's interests, pre-occupations and routines. Effective, ongoing observations are made of the children by knowledgeable staff to support their engagement in activities. These are linked to children's stage of development within the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are consistently used to identify learning priorities for each child. Parents are able to contribute to the assessment system, for instance through 'wow' moments, and these are shared with the children to ensure they are praised for their achievements. Children's communication skills are developing well through the consistent engagement the practitioners have with the children as they listen and respond to them. Younger children listen to simple instructions, for instance to match their shoes so that they can be put on ready to join the older children for lunchtime. Lunchtime is a social occasion and to ensure younger children can engage with older ones they wear safety reins to protect them as they sit in the captain's chairs. All children have an excellent sense of belonging through the caring relationships that have been established. Younger children thrive in the cuddles they receive and they have a positive self-image. Children's behaviour is exemplary as they are happy and engaged. There is little opportunity for children to become bored or disinterested.

Practitioners are confident to let activities evolve from the children, for instance a potato printing activity is accessed by the children and as they are inquisitive learners the children adapt the activity so that they mix paint with their hands. Following the theme of 'brown' a child states, 'I've made chocolate' as she spontaneously mixes the colours together. Children explore their creativity very well, for instance they enthusiastically participate in creating a 'twigloo' using willow and tree stumps. The children are consistently encouraged to offer their own ideas and to evaluate their learning, for instance debating what should go inside the 'twigloo', such as a fire, light and doormat. Through a research project children are introduced to using tools for a purpose and handle them competently. They are able to discuss safety, such as wearing goggles and not running with the tools. Children confidently identify what materials they need and how they can be fixed together.

Children have regular opportunities to be outside in the fresh air and to be active, for instance a free flow system operates for the older children. The children confidently explore the outdoor environment. One toddler shows confidence as she climbs the steps to the slide and slides down it showing good spatial awareness. Children are actively involved with the water trough and explore how the water moves down the guttering. They thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to have their snack outside and their mathematical development is supported as children are

introduced to the concept of money as they pay for their biscuit and drink. However, hygienic routines lapse as these older children do not wash their hands before eating their snack. Independence skills are not consistently encouraged at mealtimes as older children are not encouraged to pour their own drinks, prepare their own food or to serve their food. A dedicated cook prepares healthy and nutritious meals that meet children's individual needs in a scrupulously clean kitchen. She has good knowledge of children's special dietary requirements and ensures a fully inclusive menu. Children become aware of healthy eating through topics such as, 'Trisha Tomato' where children are able to talk about healthy foods and what they like to eat. Practitioners deal sensitively with children's toileting needs as they progress from nappies to using potties and toilets. Excellent, hygienic nappy changing arrangements have been established for all children and an appropriate area is available to ensure children's privacy.

Children's safety is paramount within the nursery. Extensive systems, such as rigorous risk assessment of all areas used by the children and specific activities, ensure children feel secure. Practitioners in the baby room are fully prepared for evacuation and, as there is a no shoe policy on the first floor, younger children's shoes are stored safely in a bag for a quick exit. Robust systems have been established to ensure that children are collected by suitable adults, for instance a password system has been adopted. Children become aware of their own safety as staff offer clear explanations, for instance when a child tips back on her chair a practitioner promptly supports her and explains the possible consequence if she continues to rock. Through high quality interaction by practitioners outcomes for children are excellent.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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