

# Old Macdonald's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspector** Hilary Preece

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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

Old MacDonald's Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by Old MacDonald's Day Nurseries Limited. It opened in 1998 and operates from a large two-storey detached property with a separate pre-school unit. It is situated close to Bovingdon village in Hertfordshire. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas. It is open each weekday from 7.30am to 7.00pm all-year-round and both full-time and sessional care is offered.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 62 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 133 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 38 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 27 members of staff, 17 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are working towards a qualification. Support is provided by a member of staff at the sister nursery who holds the Early Years Professional Status, and several staff are about to start working towards this status. The nursery also receives support from a qualified early years teacher. The nursery was awarded the Hertfordshire Quality Standards certificate in 2007.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

An exceptionally well-developed knowledge of each child ensures that staff are highly successful in promoting children's welfare and learning and meeting their individual needs. As a result children make rapid progress. Children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment and thoroughly enjoy learning about their local area and world around them. Highly effective partnerships between the nursery, parents and other agencies contribute to an environment where every child is welcomed and supported appropriately. Strong leadership, rigorous monitoring of practice and robust self-evaluation systems mean that plans are well targeted and improvements continue to be made where they have greatest impact on children.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- clarifying the written statement outlining the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Recruitment and vetting processes are rigorous in ensuring that well-qualified and highly skilled staff are employed to work with the children. A commitment towards further developing their knowledge through training means that standards of care are exceptionally high. All staff strictly adhere to the many policies and procedures that keep children healthy and safe throughout their daily routines such as when children are taken on outings or walks around the farm. Risk assessment records are managed efficiently and safely. All staff members consider the welfare of children to be paramount and understand their roles in carrying out the safeguarding children policy. However, the written statement within this regarding allegations made against members of staff is not completely clear. Despite this, staff act with vigilance in following the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance in the event of a child being considered at risk.

An exceptionally strong management team strives tirelessly to motivate staff and sets out a clear vision of their expectations. Responsibilities are shared out amongst staff so that they feel valued and become confident practitioners. Their enthusiasm for caring for the children is evident and, as a result, outcomes for children are very positive. High quality resources across all areas of the nursery, including staff that are confident and well deployed, contribute significantly to promoting children's welfare, learning and development. Children are provided with many opportunities to explore the surrounding farmland and village as well as frequent opportunities to use the exciting, safe and well-equipped gardens.

Equality and diversity is promoted extremely well. Staff are highly effective in ensuring that all children, regardless of their starting points and any additional needs, are fully integrated and supported to make very good progress. For example, rigorous systems for working in partnership with parents and other agencies ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are closely monitored and given valuable support to enable them to participate and achieve. Staff are very aware of the different ways that boys and girls prefer to learn and make sure this is considered when planning play and activities for individual and groups of children. For example, they provide literacy activities such as mark-making in sand and using large sheets of paper in the garden for those boys who prefer to learn actively outside.

Partnerships with parents are highly effective in helping to meet children's needs. Parents receive a wealth of information about the nursery and how their children are getting on. Staff are forthcoming in sharing information and seeking feedback from parents which means children settle in easily and any issues or concerns are dealt with swiftly. An open-door policy and frequent opportunities for parents to get involved in the nursery and their children's learning and development strengthens relationships. Events such as open mornings allow parents to see how their children learn at nursery and parent consultation evenings provide more formal opportunities to discuss their children's progress. Parents enjoy reading their child's Learning Journal, progress reports and contributing to these records with their own 'wow' stars when children have achieved something significant at

home. Children are prepared sensitively for the transition of moving between rooms in nursery and when they move on to school. Very positive links have been made with some of these schools which staff use constructively to help children understand what to expect as they move on.

The nursery monitors and evaluates itself very effectively through self-evaluation. All management and staff contribute to this process and the views of parents and carers are continuously sought in order for the nursery to be responsive to their needs. For example, menus and meal times have been changed in response to parents' comments about some children being hungry at the end of the day. This has been beneficial to those children. Peer observations are also valuable in helping staff reflect and further improve their practice. The ability to constantly look ahead enables the nursery to identify further challenging but realistic plans for improvement.

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

The nursery offers a highly welcoming environment that allows children to play and learn in safe, secure and stimulating surroundings. Age-appropriate and challenging equipment is plentiful and of high quality. The needs of all children are met extremely well because staff have such an in-depth knowledge of their personal developmental stages. Personalised planning based around child observations and individual needs, together with high quality teaching and staff interaction, ensures that all children make significant gains in their learning and development. Young children participate very well in activities because staff are so attentive and skilful at engaging their interests and supporting their learning. For example, children listen intently to identify different sounds played on a cassette during a board game and are all included by having their turn. Those children that show less interest are allowed to explore other activities that interest them more so that all are meaningfully engaged and motivated. Play dough activities are used effectively to consolidate children's knowledge of colour, shape, quantity and size. Sensory experiences are particularly popular with children of all ages and allow children to explore the texture of paint, cold custard, mushy peas, water and bubbles. Babies and toddlers show their enjoyment of such activities through their eagerness and smiling faces. These activities also provide valuable opportunities for children to experiment with mark-making which contributes to their early reading and writing. Pre-school children confidently read their own names, recognise their peers' names and form recognisable letter shapes.

Exceptional use is made of the outside area to maximise opportunities for children's learning. Children explore spacious and well-equipped gardens appropriate to their age group with older pre-school children choosing whether to play inside or out whenever they like. Each garden has been thoughtfully designed to capture children's interests and imagination with areas where they can be physically active, engage in role play, hunt for bugs or tend to plants they have grown. Protection from sun and rain means children can explore and investigate outside whatever the weather. Frequent opportunities to go on walks around the farmland to feed the animals or make trips to the village shops and library further

allow children to explore their surroundings and become active and inquisitive learners. Furthermore, they are encouraged to use a children's digital camera to capture things of interest on these outings and photographs are used to enhance their learning.

The nursery is highly successful in helping children adopt healthy lifestyles and develop safety awareness. Staff are vigilant in promoting safe hygiene practices throughout the nursery in order to prevent the spread of infections. Children from a young age learn to take responsibility for washing their hands, wiping their noses, brushing their teeth and disposing of rubbish safely. They have excellent knowledge and understanding about the impact of particular foods on their health, including an awareness of their own special dietary needs. They learn about healthy diets and how to take care of their bodies through planned activities, displays and daily routines. For example, pre-school children talk enthusiastically about their favourite meals at nursery, which are freshly cooked and nutritious, and know that eating a variety of vegetables helps give them a 'healthy heart'. They take ownership of their health by choosing when they wish to eat snack because there is a rolling snack table which allows children to make healthy choices and develops first-class independence skills. Plenty of fresh air, exercise and challenging outdoor equipment keeps children fit and develops their confidence in all aspects of physical development. The environment is kept secure and safe at all times because staff are well deployed and adhere to safety procedures. Children's understanding of keeping safe is evident. They use the space and resources well by showing high regard for the needs of others and demonstrate awareness for road safety when on outings. Many discussion opportunities and activities based on 'people who help us' are used to reinforce this understanding.

Babies and young children rapidly develop a strong sense of security and build very positive relationships with their carers. Behaviour is exemplary. Staff are excellent role models and empower children to take responsibility for doing things for themselves, and learning to respect each other and their environment. Children in the pre-school, for example, confidently help to set the table and safely carry their chairs to the table for lunch, and get involved in sorting waste materials for recycling. Children play a dynamic role in their learning and are highly motivated to take part in self-chosen and adult-led activities. They show real enthusiasm for what they are doing and talk with considerable confidence and eagerness about their achievements such as when describing the models they have made from glittery play dough and dried pasta. These, and other pieces of work, are proudly displayed around the rooms which helps children feel highly valued and included. Such enthusiasm and high levels of self-esteem mean that children achieve extremely well and thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery.

## 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

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

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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	2
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

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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