



## **Munchkins**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY299719
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Heather Morgan / Janet Butlin
<b>Setting Address</b>	2 Mount Radford Crescent, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4EN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 498814
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Munchkins
<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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Munchkins opened in 2004 and operates from 2 large Victorian houses in the St Leonard's area of Exeter. The main building is arranged over 4 floors and accommodates children aged 1 year and above; there is a separate annexe where children under 1 year are cared for on 2 floors. Each building has an enclosed garden for outdoor play.

A maximum of 90 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is

open each weekday from 07.45 to 18.00, all year round.

There are currently 110 children aged from 6 months to 4 years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special needs.

The nursery is privately owned and employs 27 members of staff. There are 19 staff, including the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are 2 staff working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

The children are developing good hygiene routines as they are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times, such as after using the toilet or before eating. Younger children are helped to do this by members of staff. The children are protected from the risk of infection because the staff implement effective procedures to minimise risks. For example, they wear disposable gloves and aprons when nappy changing and ensure that children use individual face cloths and bed linen that is washed regularly. Children are cared for sensitively if they become unwell and parents contacted promptly to ensure their ongoing care. Exclusion of children suffering from infectious illnesses further limits the risk of cross-infection.

The children are cared for appropriately in the event of accidents as there are always several staff on the premises who hold current first aid certificates and each base room has an easily accessible first aid kit. The children's continuity of care is promoted well by the use of documentation such as accident and medicine records to ensure that parents are kept informed of any treatment administered at the nursery.

The children have good opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle by regularly accessing fresh air and exercise. Children of all ages use the garden daily for vigorous physical activities and sometimes go for walks around the local area. The babies are sometimes taken out for walks and have their own garden to use in fine weather.

The children are developing healthy eating habits as the nursery offers a good variety of nutritionally balanced meals. The children are offered regular drinks, meals and snacks throughout the day to keep their energy and hydration levels high. Older children are able to respond to their own needs by helping themselves to drinks of water from a dispenser. Younger children are encouraged to take extra drinks at appropriate times, such as when they awake from a nap. Children who have special dietary requirements are supported effectively by staff who are well informed about their individual needs. Close liaison with parents ensures that young babies are safely weaned onto a varied and balanced diet.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The children benefit from accessing play areas that are safe and secure. Good attention is paid to ensuring that children are protected from persons who have not been vetted. For example, staff greet visitors at the door and check their identity; new members of staff do not have unsupervised access to children until sufficient checks have been carried out. The children's play areas are regularly assessed in order to identify any potential hazards. Appropriate steps have been taken to minimise risks to children. For example, low level glass is protected by safety film and gates are used to restrict children's access to the stairs. However, children are not always sufficiently well-supervised to protect them from the risk of accidents as the staff are not deployed effectively at all times. The children's toys are all safe and suitable for use; care is taken to remove any resources that may be hazardous to the younger children when they are all grouped together at the beginning or end of the day.

Children are accommodated on several floors so they regularly practise fire drills to ensure that they can evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. However, their safety is compromised by the inconsistent use of documentation to record all persons on the premises.

The children's welfare is supported by the staff's increasing knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. Staff know how to access information and support in the event of any concerns about the children's wellbeing.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children of all ages have access to a range of experiences and activities both indoors and outdoors. They have opportunities to choose resources for themselves, although sometimes the choices are limited. Children's development is tracked using the Birth to Three Matters framework and sometimes activities are designed to support their progress in particular areas. However, the children's stages of development do not always receive due attention when activities and routines are implemented and consequently their interest is not always sustained.

Children enjoy warm, sensitive interactions with staff and in the baby room, this is particularly effective in developing their communication skills.

### **Nursery Education**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children are confident and eager to learn. They settle happily and concentrate well at their activities, such as playing in the sand. They are sensitive to the needs of others, showing concern when a child falls over. They also help to serve their playmates with drinks of water from the dispenser. They are eager to please, for example showing the play leader how quiet they can be. However, use of time and resources and the way in which staff are deployed means that children become bored and restless from time to time and some methods

of behaviour management are unhelpful.

Overall, staff have a satisfactory understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, although not all members of the team are secure in their knowledge. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the stepping stones in all areas of learning. They use and enjoy books and learn about the sounds that letters make. Some children enjoy using writing materials but opportunities for them to extend their mark-making skills in a variety of contexts, for example during role-play, are limited. They count confidently along with their friends when they listen to a story with numbers in it and have some encouragement to think about balance. They have limited encouragement to order, sort and count during their free play or to grapple with new ideas such as simple addition and subtraction. They learn about other cultures in meaningful contexts and have regular use of computers. They also enjoy investigating aspects of the natural world as they explore the garden and grounds. Children exercise and develop their large muscles frequently as they climb and balance on the outdoor apparatus. They run about and show a good awareness of space. They move to music and develop their small muscles by, for example, using tools in the sand and occasionally scissors. Children sing tunefully and confidently and also make their own music using the group's instruments. They set up imaginary role-play situations and explore the textures of various materials, such as foam and jelly. Opportunities to be freely creative in their artwork are limited.

Children are well supported in their learning during some activities although occasionally methods of explanation are too complex for them to understand. Children's learning is not regularly extended by planned activities which link to what they already know and can do.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The children's individual needs are generally met well as staff pay good attention to gathering and recording information from parents. Young babies are able to follow their individual sleeping and feeding patterns and all children are supported in settling in to the nursery environment. Children access a range of appropriate resources that help to raise their awareness of cultural diversity. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's special needs are identified promptly by staff who work closely with parents and other professionals to support children in accessing nursery activities and making progress.

Overall, the children's behaviour is good and rewarded by praise and encouragement from the staff. However, they do not receive consistent support in adapting their behaviour when it is unacceptable. Sometimes children do not receive sufficient explanations of how to behave differently, for example when they are asked to play or sit nicely.

Children's continuity of care is supported well by the effective communication with parents and use of relevant documentation to keep them informed about their

children's daily care. They are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes because staff liaise closely with parents to ensure that individual information is kept up-to-date.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children benefit from the warm welcome that is extended to their parents. They are able to attend explanatory evening sessions regarding the Foundation Stage. There is limited information in their children's files regarding the progress they are making along the stepping stones and this impacts on parent's ability to be involved with their children's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The children are cared for by staff who are appropriately qualified or who are in the process of working towards relevant qualifications. Children are grouped according to their age and ability, which enables them to play alongside their peers in small, familiar base rooms. However, the rooms do not offer comfortable play environments with discreet play areas and places to sit or rest. There are sufficient staff on the premises throughout the day to meet and sometimes exceed regulatory requirements, but they are not always deployed effectively to ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times.

All regulatory documentation is in place and generally used appropriately to support the staff in promoting children's health, safety and wellbeing. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that regulatory requirements are met.

Leadership & management is satisfactory. The setting is working closely with the Local Authority, having supportive visits and attending cluster group meetings. They have identified areas for improvement and have made some progress but monitoring methods have not yet identified all of the areas for improvement .

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.

## **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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

## **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):

- ensure that records of attendance for children, staff and visitors are completed promptly and accurately
- ensure that children can choose from a wide range of resources and activities and that the timing of play sessions reflects their individual needs (this also applies to nursery education)
- develop all staff's knowledge and understanding of using consistent, stage appropriate behaviour management strategies
- improve the use of resources and staff deployment to ensure that adult:child ratios are maintained at all times and that each base area provides a comfortable and welcoming environment for children

### **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):

- ensure that all staff working in the Foundation Stage have a secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum guidance
- improve planning and the use of assessments to build on what the children already know and can do to ensure that they receive sufficient challenge to make progress along the stepping stones

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)