



Mallards Wood Daycare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY273292
Inspection date	05 July 2006
Inspector	Catherine Marsh / Marilyn Rosemary Peacock
Setting Address	157-159 St. Barnabas Road, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 7DG
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Registered person	Mallards Wood Group LTD
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 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?

Mallards Wood Daycare nursery registered in 2004. The breakfast club, after school club and holiday play scheme has just been registered at the time of the inspection. It is run by Mallards Wood Group LTD and is situated in the Woodford area of the London borough of Redbridge. The setting operates from a building formed by combining two houses together providing five activity rooms on the ground and first floors a room built at the end of the garden and a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 19:00 for 52 weeks of the year, the out of school care has a breakfast club open 07:30 to 08:45 and an after school club open 15:15 to 19:00, Monday to Friday, term time only and a holiday play scheme open 07:30 to 19:00 during school holiday periods.

There are currently 57 children aged from six months to four and half years under eight years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 22 members of staff, including the manager who is supernumerary. Of these, 20 hold appropriate early years qualifications and 2 are working towards a qualification. The nursery also have a pool of 10 bank staff.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment where children's good health is maintained because staff follow effective procedures and practices to meet their nutritional and health needs. Toys and equipment are washed on a weekly basis, and staff maintain good procedures during nappy changing to ensure children's safety and avoid the risk of cross-infection. Staff support and guide children helping them to gain an understanding of good hygiene practises. They are encouraged to become independent in their personal care. Older children wash their own hands as part of every day routines, such as before eating and after using the toilet and they clean their teeth after lunch. Babies and the younger children that attend have their hands and faces wiped after messy play and before and after meals with their individual flannels and they are helped to clean their teeth after lunch.

Older children help themselves to drinking water throughout the session and the staff working with the younger children ensure they offered drinks regularly throughout the day. Older children are encouraged to scrape their own plates after they have finished eating, although there are missed opportunities for them to develop further independence during meal times by serving their own food. Staff help children understand good table manners, children are encouraged to sit at the table and use their cutlery, but staff are often busy with nursery routines and children become restless particularly the younger children who are tired. Menus are varied and children are provided with foods which are healthy and well balanced. They enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables every day, and the majority of lunch time meals are prepared using fresh ingredients. Children's individual dietary needs are know to staff, the chef ensures children receive the correct foods by serving the children's food up separately and delivering it to the rooms.

Children's health is maintained due to effective record keeping and good procedures. Parents are kept notified of accidents which occur and provide appropriate consents

in relation to medication and emergency treatment. Most staff hold current first aid certificates and are able to ensure that children receive appropriate medical attention if they have an accident or require medication. Children that require specific care have individual action plans to ensure they receive appropriate care should they become ill while at nursery.

Children have regular opportunities to access fresh air and their physical skills are supported through playing outdoors. They use a selection of small equipment encouraging them to climb, run and jump, contributing to promoting some of their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, attractive open-plan play environment where space is organised and used effectively to enable children to play safely and move freely between activities. Security arrangements ensure that children are kept safe. There is an intercom system which ensures that all parents and visitors to the group are identified prior to their gaining access and an accurate record is maintained of all visitors to the nursery.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe through regular fire drills and well practised emergency evacuation procedures. The staff working with the younger children have a sound knowledge of the systems and equipment to assist them in evacuating the children effectively. Emergency evacuation procedures are evaluated after each practise and all recommendations acted on promptly.

Children are safe in the sun because parents have consented for staff to apply sun creams when required, fans and air cooling equipment keeps children cool indoors and large gazebos protect them from the heat outdoors.

Risk assessments are completed regularly and daily safety checks are made. However, these are not always effective at eliminating hazards particularly in the outdoor play area, for example, the large paddling pool in the garden which still contained water had not been removed before children used the garden for play and the hose was still out posing a risk to children's safety.

Children have access to a range of toys which are safe, of good quality and developmentally appropriate. These are organised so that children are able to make some independent choices. Furniture and equipment provided is age-appropriate and children are encouraged to use them appropriately. For example, babies have access to equipment which encourages them to acquire physical skills, such as supporting rings, and are able to develop increasing independence at snack times due to age appropriate chairs and tables.

Children's wellbeing is safeguarded due to staff's knowledge of child protection. All staff are aware of the signs of neglect or abuse, and know the necessary procedures to be followed if they have concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident in the setting's welcoming and caring environment. Babies receive lots of cuddles and enjoy the positive interaction they receive from the staff. Children have positive relationships with staff, and benefit from the key workers who are caring and aware of their needs and routines. Children play well with the resources provided they are happy and enthusiastic about their time at nursery. They are developing good relationships, they laugh and joke together. The younger children that attend share their experiences at snack time, one makes the others chuckle as he says "this is my funny walk" and confidently demonstrates his funny walk to the other children.

Children cheerfully participate in regular music sessions, moving slowly to classical music and pounding about in time to the music as they catch bubbles. "Music mouse" helps them recognise rhymes and beats. However, there are times through out the day when children loose interest as they are not always fully occupied and become fidgety, which impacts on their behaviour.

Planning for younger children follows the 'Birth to three matters framework'. Most staff have attended training on this which is helping them to plan activities for younger children. However, recent changes in staff means that planning, observations and assessments systems are undergoing changes and this has an impact on children's concentration and motivation as activities and resources are not always readily available or sufficiently planned.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff provide a sufficient range of activities and generally create a stimulating environment where children's work is displayed and labelled attractively. This shows children's work is valued and gives them a sense of belonging. Staff talk to children about what they are doing and respond to children's interests. Some but not all staff use good questioning techniques to stimulate thought and challenge the children and appropriate strategies to support individuals. They praise and encourage and use the role of a 'special person and helper' to build children's confidence and self-esteem, to encourage children to have respect for each other and for the resources and their environment. The children help clear up after activities and are encouraged to work together.

Staff generally manage children and their behaviour appropriately. Although there are times when they have to be reminded of the 'golden rules', which are there to help children understand the need for self-discipline and consideration for others. Staff work directly with the children and there is a balance of free play and group play activities.

Staff have a sufficient understanding of the foundation stage. Written weekly plans are linked to the six areas of learning and focused activity plans make clear what children are expected to learn from activities although they do not show which children are targeted for example older or more able. No records have been

maintained of the children's progress since March 2006 and previous records do not clearly identify the next steps for each child to ensure that appropriate activities or one to one work is included in future planning. The profiles also include sample of children's work, but they are not always dated or evaluated. Children with disabilities are catered for effectively and are supported to maximise their learning.

Children are able to concentrate, sit quietly and involved themselves in chosen activities; However, there are times that they become bored and boisterous waiting for the next activity to start. Children are developing good relationships and get on reasonably well with their peers and adults. They understand the need to share and take turns when playing together and singing to the rest of the group. Children show growing levels of independence in dressing and personal hygiene, they help themselves to drinking water throughout the session. However, this is not always the case particularly at snack time where children struggled to pour milk from heavy glass bottles. Children are beginning to understand differences in their lives to others around them. They talk happily about their home life and family, for instance children were eager to show family holiday photographs.

Children speak confidently and ask simple questions. They talk openly during circle time about themselves and their families. Children enjoy books and handle them carefully, they have been taught the difference between the author, the illustrator and the title of a book. They spend time 'reading' aloud and sharing books with friends and can relate well-known stories such as 'walking through the jungle' by looking at the pictures. They join in enthusiastically naming and making the sounds of the animals. Children are beginning to experiment with writing recognisable letters from their own names but staff do not help extend this and do not link sounds to letters. Interesting activities, such as making a book about Ted who visits the doctor, increases the children's awareness of the different purposes of writing and illustrating.

Children are interested in counting and know their numbers. However, there are limited activities throughout the day and missed opportunities at snack time to enable them to practise a range of mathematical skills such as counting, calculation or comparisons. They recognise the properties of simple shapes and make patterns using beads and pegs. Sand and water are available during free play times to enable children to recognise volume and capacity.

Children have access to a range of resources to build, construct and select tools and techniques to shape, assemble and join materials. Children have few opportunities to use information and communication technology however they do enjoy using tape recorders for musical bumps and telephones during role-play. Children are beginning to understand past and present, they discuss people, places and events in their own lives. They have some concept of time as they follow their daily routines. Children learn about different cultures and beliefs through planned topic work such as homes and religious festivals.

Children express themselves creatively through a range of mediums. They paint, draw and make collages that represent their experiences. They are currently learning about the colour grey and the shape square and have learnt different colours and shapes in the past. A music teacher comes into the nursery once a week and

children enjoy learning about the sounds and matching movements to music. They are also encouraged at circle times to get up and sing simple songs from memory such as 'twinkle twinkle little star', they are also eager to learn new songs. Children use their senses to explore and describe experiences such as tasting and smelling food and feeling a range of textures by using a range of materials, tools, movement, songs and musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are met because staff have a suitable understanding of their needs. Babies have their own individual routines for bottle-feeding and resting. Parents are able to share information daily through verbal discussion. The parents of younger children receive daily communication books to ensure that they are adequately informed about their child's care. However, they receive limited information on their child's progress educationally or their developmental milestones resulting in missed opportunities to share information on children's learning at home. Parents of younger children and babies are consulted about routines, food preferences or weaning, which helps ensure their individual needs are met. All the required parental consents are in place. Staff ensure parents know how to make a complaint, and a complaints log is in place.

Children are generally well behaved, taking turns when playing games and sharing resources with one another. Staff act as good role models gently reminding children of the expectations of the setting. However, there are occasions when children become restless and their behaviour becomes challenging due to the length of time nursery routines take particularly at lunch time.

Children who have additional needs are given very good support from staff, their individual needs are met well. Staff use specific equipment to ensure they are able to reach toys and equipment that interest them. Space is made so that they are able to participate in regular nursery routines. Consequently, they are integrated fully into nursery life. Key staff undertake ongoing discussions with parents and outside agencies in order to ensure that children receive the care and support necessary and individual education plans are used effectively to ensure this happens.

Children are becoming aware of the wider society and develop an understanding of other cultures through celebrating a range of festivals such as Diwali, Chinese New Year and Christmas.

Partnership with parents whose children receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents contribute to an initial settling in questionnaire. This ensures staff have a good knowledge of children's individual care needs, but there is insufficient emphasis on their achievements. Parents receive basic information about the foundation stage from staff that outlines what and how their children will learn. Weekly planning in the Foundation Stage is displayed on the main notice board for parents to view. They receive reports twice yearly and are invited to attend parent evenings to discuss their child's progress. However, the child's next steps are not always clearly identified.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Sound recruitment procedures ensure that staff are vetted, which ensures children are protected. Generally staff are deployed effectively to meet children's individual needs. Most of the staff team hold appropriate early years qualifications and regular appraisals identify areas for professional development to further improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the needs of the children. Monitoring systems are in place to identify strength and weakness in practises however, they are have not identified the current weaknesses in planning, assessments and procedures. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being are in place. Staff are conscientious about keeping records up to date including daily records of attendance. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager leads by being a role model and working hands-on with her staff. She uses observations to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education and the quality of the teaching; she has just designed an evaluation sheet which she intends to use once a month, but this has yet to be implemented. As a result not all aspects of the Foundation Stage are fully covered and little progress made in rectifying the current weakness in the recording of assessments and observations.

The group are currently receiving support from the early year's advisory teacher and staff training is accessed through the Early Years Partnership.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received three complaints relating to the National Standards for Day Care. The first complaint related to National Standard 2: Organisation; National Standard 6: Safety and National Standard 14: Documentation. Ofsted visited the nursery and the providers identified areas to improve to ensure they would continue to meet the National Standards. An action plan was put into place and the providers made improvements and confirmed this in writing. The providers carried out all of the actions and remain qualified to provide day care.

The second and third complaints related to National Standard 2: Organisation; National Standard 3: Care, learning and play; National Standard 6: Safety; National Standard 8: Food and drink; National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers and Annex A: Babies/children under 2. Ofsted visited the nursery and no evidence was found that the National Standards were not being met, no

further action was taken. The providers have made a record of the last two complaints in their complaint record.

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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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):

- review and monitor the effect of current risk assessments, to ensure all risks and hazards are identified and reduced effectively both indoors and outdoors.
- continue to develop staffs knowledge and understanding of the birth to three matters, to enable them to plan activities that provide children with sufficient challenge and sustain children's interests.
- review staffs routines at lunch times to ensure staff are able to support children fully and able to encourage their independence (also applies to nursery education).
- ensure parents are provided with ongoing information about their children's daily routines, achievements and future learning targets (also applies to nursery education).

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):

- further develop staff's understanding of the foundation to enable them to fully support children's individual learning needs
- ensure planning and children's assessment sufficient cover all areas of learning. Clearly show children's' progress through the stepping stones and are used to identify their next steps
- make sure children are provided with regular opportunities to practice

counting and simple number calculations and consolidate their learning

- continue to ensure effective systems are in place to monitor and review the strengths and weaknesses of the setting, planning, assessments, observations and the delivery of the curriculum programme, to ensure weaknesses can be identified and addressed (also applies to care).

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