

Midget Gems

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY264910
Inspection date	07 September 2007
Inspector	Diane Lynn Turner
Setting Address	Units 6-7, Grandale, Hull, North Humberside, HU7 4BL
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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Midget Gems Nursery is a privately owned provision. It opened in November 2003 and is situated in the Sutton Park area of Hull. Care is provided in three separate rooms and there is an enclosed area at the rear of the premises for outdoor play.

The nursery is open all year round Monday to Friday from 07.00 to 18.00, with the exception of bank holidays. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time and there are currently 35 children on roll, four of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery welcomes and supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are seven members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, five have a level 3 qualification in childcare, one has level 2 and is working towards level 4 and one has level 2 and is working towards level 3. The nursery receives support from the local authority development workers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are kept healthy because staff vigilantly follow good hygiene practices in their daily routines, which ensures the risk of infection is minimised. For example, disposable aprons and gloves are worn when changing nappies, tables are cleaned thoroughly before and after food is served, and the nursery's policy for the care of children who are ill is fully implemented. Staff effectively support children in understanding the importance of following good hygiene practices in their self care. For example, wipes are used to clean babies' hands before they are fed and the older children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating, and after toileting and messy play. The children clearly understand the importance of doing so. They routinely use soap and confidently explain that washing their hands helps to prevent germs that may make them ill.

All children have access to fresh air and physical activity each day. For example, babies who are not yet mobile are taken into the outdoor area in pushchairs or low chairs to enjoy fresh air and those that are just becoming mobile are able to use 'walkers' in this area. The older children enjoy using wheeled toys, balls and a play house and a small slide is available for the younger ones. The three and four-year-olds also have regular opportunities to join in with ring games when they learn to move cooperatively together. All children are able to rest as and when they need. The sleep patterns of the youngest ones are discussed with parents and followed, toddlers are able to rest on sleep mats and the older ones can sit quietly in the book corner or on the bench in the outdoor area.

Children are provided with varied, nutritious meals and snacks that contribute to a healthy diet. For example, lunch is provided by outside caterers with the menu being rotated over four weeks and children are free to decide when they want to have their snack. This is offered as a continuous provision when they confidently help themselves to items, such as fresh fruit and bread sticks, as and when they become hungry. All staff hold a basic food hygiene certificate and implement very good practices when storing, preparing and serving food. For example, disposable aprons are worn when serving meals and the temperature of the refrigerator and that of the food, which is delivered for lunch is routinely checked and recorded each day. Staff ensure children have plenty to drink throughout the day and mealtimes are pleasant occasions and provide children with valuable opportunities to develop good social skills and manners.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, well maintained and colourful environment. Posters and examples of their art work are displayed in all rooms, a 'Wow' board is used to acknowledge their achievements and colourful mobiles are evident in the baby room. All of which provides a stimulating learning environment and shows children's efforts are valued and appreciated. There is a good range of toys and resources in all the rooms. These are appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children attending and are well presented, which enables them to make independent choices. For example toys are within easy reach of babies and the older children are able to select items from low-level shelving.

Staff give high priority to keeping children safe. There is a designated member of staff with responsibility for health and safety who carries out regular risk assessments on all areas of the

provision and daily checks are also carried out by a senior member of staff before the children arrive to ensure safety equipment, such as socket covers and safety gates are in place. Accident records are checked each month and action is taken to minimise any reoccurrences. The premises are kept secure at all times and the identification of visitors is checked and their presence recorded. Good attention is paid to helping children learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, the older ones learn about using toys safely in the outdoor area as part of topic work and staff explain why any spills of water need to be mopped up to prevent slips and falls. They also ensure the younger children learn how to use scissors safely during planned craft activities.

Children are well protected from possible abuse. The designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection has attended training in this area to equip her for the role and demonstrates a sound understanding of the possible indicators of abuse, and of the referral procedure. There are good procedures to ensure children are kept safe on collection. Parents sign their child out and detail their time of departure and staff collect detailed information to identify anyone other than the parent or carer who may be collecting the children. A password system is also used.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and enjoy their time at the nursery. For example, pre-placement visits are encouraged, each child is assigned a key worker who takes a special interest in them and parents are welcome to phone at any time if they are at all anxious as to how their child is settling. Children develop very good relationships with the staff, who are genuinely pleased to see them each day. For example, they greet the children on arrival and listen with interest as they share their news with them. Staff effectively support the children with the transition to the different rooms. For example, children have trial visits and key workers pass on important information about the child and any particular needs, fears and skills to the staff who will be caring for them.

Babies and children under two-years-old separate easily from their parents. They are happy and settled in the staff's care and this is evident when on arrival they hold their arms out, and go readily to the staff. They make good progress because they benefit from routines, which are consistent with their experiences at home and they take part in a good range of age-appropriate activities, which are well-planned using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. These include opportunities to experience a wide range of textures, such as paint, water and bubbles. They play with a good range of manufactured toys and they respond to the colours and sounds of these with great interest. They enjoy playing with natural and found items and resources, which staff have made. For example, lots of laughter is evident as they play peek-a-boo using pieces of fabric and they become fully immersed as they roll and shake plastic bottles containing items, such as dried pasta.

Children between the ages of two and three-years-old are very confident in their surroundings. They play happily together and with adults as they explore a range of resources, and they benefit from the good range of activities, which staff plan for them using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They confidently direct their own play and particularly enjoy painting freely at the easel, showing great pride in the works of art they produce for their parents. They enjoy mark making and exploring different sounds as they use musical instruments and they have good opportunities to learn through tactile experiences. For example, they regularly play with sand and photographs show them exploring wet spaghetti. They develop their physical

skills as they use equipment, such as wheeled toys in the outdoor area and they delight in crawling through the tunnel with their friends when lots of laughter is evident.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, which is evident in the planning of activities. These clearly show how all the six areas of learning are covered and how the activities relate to the stepping stones. Clear assessment records are in place to chart children's progress towards the early learning goals and include written observations of their responses to the activities, photographs and examples of their work. All of which clearly evidences what they can do. The children's records are sent home regularly for parents to view and they also receive a written progress report at the end of each term.

Staff pay good attention to providing lots of opportunities for children to see print in their environment. For example, resources, furniture and displays are clearly labelled and posters and alphabet friezes are presented at children's eye level. Staff use resources very well to support children's learning, particularly the role play area, which is changed frequently to maintain their interest. For example, on the visit this was set up with a tent and other equipment so the children could act out going camping. Staff use open-ended questions effectively to promote children's thinking and have very good relationships with them.

All children are very confident. They settle quickly on arrival and are keen to seek out their friends. They are very independent in directing their own play and are very keen to talk about what they do at nursery and what they enjoy. They concentrate well on their chosen activity and their behaviour is good. They are very confident to approach visitors, are very polite when doing so and are very aware of their own needs. For example, they decide when to have their snack, pour their own drinks, access the toilet independently and know when to wash their hands.

All children enjoy listening to stories. They sit quietly and listen when staff read to them and they access books to look at independently when they clearly relate what is happening in the picture. They show great interest in mark making and use this spontaneously, and to copy what they see adults doing. For example, on the visit one child requested a note pad to record how many children were present and another sat next to the inspector and made notes. They confidently self-register on arrival when they find their name card to put on display and they are beginning to recognise letter sounds. They make good attempts to write their own name and evidence in their records of progress shows that they are making good progress in this area.

Children are very interested in number and use this spontaneously in their play. For example, they accurately count how many are present, how many bricks they have used as they build a tower, and how many cakes they have made as they use dough. They confidently match objects as they use board games, are learning about time as part of project on night and day and they show an understanding of sequencing. For example, they confidently relate they are three and will be four on their next birthday. They show good spatial awareness as they complete jigsaws, turning the pieces round to fit and they can recognise a number of shapes. For example, they request a circle shaped piece of paper when drawing a picture.

Children use their imagination very well. For example, they pretend to make items of food from dough and bring these to adults to share, explaining they have made a bun for their snack.

They act out domestic situations as they care for the dolls, carefully packing items into a bag that they will need for their care as they pretend to go out to the shops. They act out going camping when they decide to eat their snack in the tent and request a torch for when it gets dark. Their creative development is progressing well. For example, they explore paint and use sponges as they make pictures of the sun and moon, and draw detailed pictures using pencils and crayons. Displays and photographs also show they use various collage materials creatively. For example, using 'cotton wool buds' to represent the bones of their skeletons.

Children are very interested in how things work. For example, on the inspection they were fascinated by the inspectors lap top and keen to know how it worked and where the mouse was. They confidently operate electronic toys, use the nursery computer to successfully complete activities, such as matching letters, and displays show that they have been learning about the purpose of an x-ray. They are very interested in sinking and floating and readily collect different items from around the room to see what will happen when they put each one into the water. They do not, however, have many opportunities to learn about the wider world and their local community.

Children's physical skills are developing well overall. They use wheeled toys confidently in the outdoor area and are keen to show that they can hop, and jump on two feet. They move confidently around the play room with an awareness of others and show good fine motor skills as they role and cut out dough and use cutlery correctly at meal times. They show a good understanding of taking care of their bodies. For example, when it is hot and sunny they remind staff that they need to wear a hat and to put on sun cream to prevent them getting burnt. They know to sit quietly and rest when they are tired and understand the importance of cleaning their teeth. The opportunities and resources to help them develop their climbing and balancing skills, however, are limited. This is an area staff have identified for development and funding has been secured to develop opportunities for this, particularly in the outdoor area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the nursery and are highly valued as individuals. Staff pay very good attention to finding out as much as they can about the children's individual needs before they start at the nursery, and meet these well. For example, important information is collected on the registration form and parents are also asked to complete an 'all about me form' for their child where they can detail their likes, dislikes and interests. Photographs of the children are also displayed in the play rooms, which helps to give them a sense of belonging. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are very welcome to attend and are supported well. Provision is in place to draw up individual play plans and the child's daily activities are recorded in an individual diary, which is shared with parents each day. Staff also work closely with any other professionals that may be involved in the child's care. All of which, ensures children's particular needs are met and that they are fully included.

Children have some opportunities to learn about the wider world. For example, planning documents show they have celebrated the Chinese new year, Valentines day and Shrove Tuesday. Resources, such as books, jigsaws, posters, dressing-up clothes and dolls also help to raise their awareness of diversity and they learn to help others as they take part in fundraising events for charity. Children occasionally benefit from visitors to the nursery. For example, staff from the 'Deep' recently visited to help the children learn about turtles. The opportunities for the older children in particular to learn about their local environment are, however, limited.

Children behave very well and a very calm and relaxed atmosphere is evident throughout the nursery. Staff have a very good understanding of behaviour management and are very positive role models for the children to follow. They effectively help the youngest ones to learn about sharing and turn taking and encourage the older ones to take on responsibility. Lots of praise is given to raise children's self esteem and reward stickers are used to acknowledge and show their achievements are valued. As a result, the children readily help to put the toys away at tidy up time, showing perseverance as they complete their tasks and they show a kind and caring approach towards each other. This shows their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children benefit from the nursery's positive partnership with their parents and carers. Staff greet parents in a friendly manner and clearly have good relationships with them. They are provided with useful information about the service through the prospectus and well-presented displays in the entrance. Staff pay good attention to ensuring parents are well informed about their child's care and the activities that they have been involved in. For example, they have regular discussion, a daily sheet is completed for the youngest ones and children's records of progress are sent home regularly. Parents spoken to at the inspection were keen to express their satisfaction with the service, the care and the activities provided.

The partnership with the parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education is good. Planning of activities is displayed, which informs parents of the topics being covered for the term and they are actively encouraged to further their child's learning at home. For example, staff encourage the children to take the nursery's bear and monkey home with them and ask parents to detail their experience in the toy's diary. The information that parents receive to ensure they are fully informed about the Foundation Stage is, however, limited.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care needs are met very well and the leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The premises are well organised and the available space is utilised well to maximise play opportunities for the children. For example, a separate area is provided within the baby room to ensure those who are less mobile can play safely. Activities throughout the nursery are well planned and presented and detailed records are kept of children's progress, which link clearly to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Children benefit from good levels of qualified and experienced staff who have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They work very well together as a team and have very good procedures in place to deal efficiently with any emergency that may arise, for example, a child requiring hospital treatment following an accident. They all hold a current first aid qualification and show they are keen to further their professional development and improve their practice by attending regular training courses. They fully understand the importance of regularly reviewing the quality of the care and education and do so through evaluating activities, parent questionnaires and seeking advice from the local authority development workers. Clear systems are in place for the safe recruitment and vetting of any new staff, and for their induction.

Clear policies and procedures are in place, which cover all areas of the service. These are fully implemented and made readily available to parents. However, they occasionally lack up to date information, for example, the policies for complaints and children with learning difficulties and disabilities do not detail the correct contact details for Ofsted. All legally required documentation is in place to ensure the safe and efficient management of the service. This is well organised

and stored securely to ensure confidentiality. Appropriate insurance is in place and the registration certificate is displayed and the conditions adhered to.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the nursery improve the documentation, and the resources in relation to promoting equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Both have been addressed. The nursery has devised a written policy detailing the procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost and now has an operational plan in place, which gives an overview of the service. Resources, such as books, posters and dressing up clothes showing positive images of diversity have been purchased, and are all in regular use. The improvements made have added to the organisation, and to helping children understand about the wider world.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 policies and procedures contain up to date information, particularly those in relation to complaints and children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to learn about the wider world, particularly their local community
- provide more opportunities for children to develop their climbing and balancing skills, particularly in the outdoor area
- ensure parents are fully informed about the Foundation Stage.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk