

Mulberry Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	154888
Inspection date	04 December 2007
Inspector	Glenda Pownall
Setting Address	9 Boyn Hill Avenue, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 4ET
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Registered person	Child Base Limited
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 satisfactory. 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?

Mulberry Day Nursery is one of 34 nurseries run Child Base Day Nurseries. It opened in 2001. It is situated on the outskirts of Maidenhead town centre. A maximum of 66 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 throughout the year, with the exception of public holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 102 children aged from six weeks to under five years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as a number of their parents travel in to work in or around Maidenhead. 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 23 staff. The manager and 14 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are five staff working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Nutritious balanced meals are planned and freshly prepared on the premises to ensure children eat healthily. Staff discuss the health benefits of eating fruit at snack time with the children. The setting records information and ensures that childcare and kitchen staff are aware of children's requirements with regard to food to make certain that the individual dietary needs of children are met. However, staff do not always request additional support from supernumerary staff in time to ensure the needs of all babies are met at lunchtimes. For example, four babies being fed lunch had their routines interrupted as one staff member left the room to collect more chairs and the other had to see to other babies in the room who had been sleeping but woke up at this time. One of the babies that had been eating lunch became upset at the interruption and began crying and another fell asleep.

Children's large muscle skills are developing well as they all have daily opportunities for physical play. Babies have ample space to crawl around and can pull themselves up onto fixed furniture safely. Toddlers have access to age and stage appropriate equipment to practise climbing skills in their base room. Children regularly access the garden and older children can peddle and manoeuvre tricycles with skill avoiding other moving objects. They practise throwing and catching balls with support from staff and join in with action songs following the instructions from the song and further developing coordination skills.

Children develop good personal hygiene routines through effective daily routines and staff practice. All children are encouraged to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and staff provide effective support and instruction for younger children. The nappy changing procedure includes staff wearing disposable gloves and cleaning the mat between each use to reduce the risk of cross-infection. There are efficient systems in place for the recording of accidents and medication. These include obtaining prior written consent to administer medication and sharing both accident and medication records with parents. This ensures parents are kept well informed of the care their children receive.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

There are detailed policies and procedures in place to ensure the setting is safe for children. Daily risk assessments are carried out both inside the nursery building and in the garden. Visitors can only enter the premises after they have identified themselves to staff via the intercom and camera entry system. This ensures that unwelcome visitors do not gain entry to the nursery. There are policies in place for staff to follow in the event of a child not being collected or lost. However, the safety of children is not fully promoted as not all staff are aware of the number of children they are caring for at all times. Fire drills are regularly practised and ensure that staff and children know what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation. Babies are safeguarded whilst sleeping because of the checks made on them every five minutes by staff.

There is a detailed child protection policy in place and management and staff have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if concerned a child is at risk from abuse. However, an accurate record is not always kept of the times staff are working directly in the rooms with the children for future reference to fully safeguard children.

The nursery is clean and well maintained. The space is well organised to enable all children to play safely. Children's work is displayed and there are notice boards with useful information to parents throughout the nursery. This provides a welcoming environment for children and parents. Children access a wide range of resources in good condition, which cover all areas and aspects of learning. Resources are stored in low-level units in each room enabling children of all ages to make decisions about what they play with.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly into the nursery environment leaving their main carers with ease, this is helped by the consistent key worker team in each room who form warm and caring relationships with the children. Staff respond positively to the sounds and actions of young children and babies developing a strong sense of self and their language skills. Staff interact warmly with babies when they change nappies and as they cuddle them to give them their bottles. Resources made of a variety of materials are placed within easy reach of babies enabling them to reach out and experience a variety of different textures. Babies chuckle as they chase a ball across the floor rolled by staff. Children in the Ladybirds take an interest in books as they enjoy emptying the contents of story sacks with staff. They squeal with delight as bubbles are blown as part of the activity. Staff support children to complete inset puzzles and praise their achievements, they follow the child's lead and allow them to do it again or complete another one.

Staff generally value children's own ideas. For example, a child in the Bumble Bees pushes building blocks together and announces that the tower can go in the sea. A member of staff provides the child with a basket of sea creatures to enable the child to develop his play. Children enjoy participating in music activities and the Butterflies enthusiastically sing seasonal songs they are practising for Christmas. They access additional activities to promote physical development, such as yoga and football coaching. Staff record observations of children's progress and the procedures in place include identifying children's next steps in learning and using this information to inform future planning to support children's development. However, this procedure is not consistently followed by all staff in the nursery.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff display good knowledge of the early learning goals and plan an interesting and varied curriculum for the children. As a result, children are keen to learn and make good progress in all six areas of learning.

Staff make regular observations of what children can do and they transfer this information to the individual progress records to chart children's achievements and difficulties. Occasionally, the progress records are not kept up to date for all children. The system in the setting is for staff to plan each child's next steps in learning and use this information to inform the weekly planning. The key workers know their children well and understand what each child needs to do next, but they do not always record these next steps in the children's records or identify on the planning which specific children would benefit from certain activities. It is therefore not easy to see how the planning is influenced by the individual learning needs of the children. However, almost all staff are skilled at listening in on children's play and sensitively extend and develop the activities to further children's understanding. Other staff are less confident to engage with children at activities and take on a supervisory rather than supportive role. They only respond to children's requests, such as, for help to squeeze the paint out or confirmation

of where the paint brush should be put and at times they inhibit children's creativity. For example, a child who expertly uses a brush in each hand to paint with is told that they must only use one.

Children are confident to answer questions in group situations and are not afraid to try as all attempts are encouraged and praised by staff. Children develop independent skills as they put aprons on for themselves to play in the water and their coats to go outside. Children's own work is displayed and labelled around the room developing a sense of self-worth. Children have many opportunities to make marks and some children are skilled at writing their name using clearly identifiable letters. Children increase their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make through activities connected to the letter of the week. Children listen attentively to stories and staff ask interesting questions to encourage children to think.

Children practise their counting skills as part of the daily routine and through planned activities. Children identify how old they and other children are and count confidently to 10 and beyond. Children's understanding of shape and measure is developing well. They recognise flat shapes and can follow simple instructions which use mathematical language. For example, they competently draw small and large circles in the air when asked and correctly identify which side of the scales are heaviest. Children are confident in discussing past and present events in their own lives and they learn about their own cultures and beliefs, and those of other people, through planned activities.

Children's small muscle skills are developing well. They are adept at using small equipment such as scissors, chalk and paint brushes. Children use pencils effectively, holding them correctly. They have good coordination skills and can pour accurately from one container to another in the water tray. Children interact well with each other. They play imaginatively together developing and agreeing storylines whilst playing with the sand and they develop an activity aimed at identifying objects made of wood into making popcorn for each other and staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the provision and are treated with equal concern. They talk happily about their home life and things that are important to them. Planned activities encourage a sense of self-worth. For example, after listening to the story of 'The Rainbow fish' children discuss with staff what makes them special. Staff work closely with parents to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. They carry out activities as suggested by other professionals working with the children and attend training courses, such as Makaton, in order to meet the learning and developmental needs of the children.

Staff's management of children and their behaviour is very good. They act as good role models effectively using praise and encouragement. As a result, children behave very well and are helpful and kind to each other. For example, as a child finishes painting another child asks 'please can I have your apron' the child replies 'here you are' and helps the child to put it on, who then replies 'thank you'. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Parents can watch their children at play via the Closed Circuit Television system in the parents' room and a flexible settling in policy enables both parents and children to feel secure as they settle into the nursery. Staff are available to speak to parents at either end of the day or at parents' evenings. Parents of babies and younger children are provided with daily sheets detailing their children's activities and routines. This effectively supports continuity of care.

Parents receive detailed information about the setting and are kept informed of events and activities through regular newsletters and information displayed on the notice boards.

Partnership with parents of the nursery education is good. The records of children's progress along the stepping stones are held in a wall rack in the room enabling parents to access their child's records at anytime. The setting invites parents to two parents' evenings a year where they can discuss in more detail their child's progress. Details of the planned activities are displayed and parents are invited to share their children's achievements and interests at home with staff. This encourages parents to be involved in their children's learning. Parents state they are happy with the care and education their children receive and particularly like the good exchange of information and the relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Management have a generally satisfactory understanding of their role and responsibilities with regard to the National Standards. However, the setting is in breach of its conditions as it providing care for several children aged five years in the term before they transfer to school. The registration system is generally effective. A record is kept of the times staff and visitors are present in the building and an accurate record is kept of the hours children attend. However, the room registers do not always reflect who is caring for the children as staff do not always remember to sign themselves out when they leave the room for a significant amount of time.

All required documents are in place and there are detailed policies and procedures for the safe and efficient running of the setting. These include clear vetting procedures to ensure that staff do not work in the setting without the appropriate suitability checks. This contributes to the welfare of children. However, staff are not effectively deployed at all times to ensure the needs of babies are met at mealtimes.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are good. They monitor the effectiveness of the education programme through observation of staff practice, staff appraisals and reviewing the planning and assessment documents. However, this is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that staff identify how children's achievements and difficulties are used to inform future planning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made to ensure that the person responsible for child protection was familiar with current procedures and that planning documents indicate a full range of mathematical activities.

Management have a clear knowledge of the steps to take to safeguard children in line with current regulations and planning records a range of activities to promote children's mathematical development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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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):

- improve knowledge and understanding of requirements set out in regulations and set in place a procedure to notify Ofsted of relevant matter with regard to conditions of registration
- ensure at all times staff know how many children are in their care and that accurate records are kept of the times staff work with children
- review the lunchtime procedures to ensure sufficient staff are in place to meet the needs of all babies.

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):

- monitor the delivery of the planning and observation systems to ensure next steps in learning are identified for each child and used to inform future plans. (Also applies to care)
- ensure all staff have a secure understanding of how to engage with children at activities.

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