

# Mulberry Tree Kindergarten

Cromhall Village Hall, Talbot's End, Cromhall, South Gloucestershire, GL12 8AJ

<b>Inspection date</b>	23/06/2014
Previous inspection date	10/02/2014

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	2
	Previous inspection:	4
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is good

- Staff are calm and attentive so children enjoy the supportive atmosphere and make good progress in their learning.
- Indoor resources are to a good standard and are stored in low-level units so children make choices confidently about the equipment with which they play.
- Staff make clear their expectations for children's behaviour so they learn to become self-directing. Children respond to care for each other and their environment.
- Parents and carers are warmly welcomed and share with staff many aspects about the children's achievements at home and in the kindergarten.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not encourage children regularly to choose whether to play in or out of doors to follow their own style of learning.
- Staff do not provide a wide range of outdoor resources, particularly for younger children to explore and learn.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector had discussions with the committee chair, staff, children and parents.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager of role play indoors.  
The inspector sampled a range of documentation, including the self-evaluation form and improvement plan, children's records and planning, safeguarding procedures and policies.

**Inspector**  
Angela Cole

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Mulberry Tree Kindergarten registered in 2013. It is part of an independent school that is a parent-led educational charity and takes children up to 10 years. The kindergarten operates from the village hall in Cromhall, South Gloucestershire with a hall, toilets and kitchen. Children go on frequent walks and there is an enclosed space for outdoor play. The kindergarten opens Monday to Thursday during term times, from 9am to 3pm. A further morning is available subject to demand. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The management provides a minibus service to collect children from near their homes. The kindergarten is on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are five children on roll in the early years age range from one to five years. The kindergarten also supports older children. The kindergarten is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. It supports children who speak English as an additional language. The kindergarten follows the Steiner educational philosophy. There are two adults working with the children, who hold childcare qualifications. The manager is Steiner trained and has early years professional status. There is an assistant with qualified teacher status, who can help when numbers require.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

#### To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- give children more freedom to become deeply involved in outdoor activities at times of their choosing
  
- extend the range of equipment available in the outdoor play area, particularly for younger children.

### Inspection judgements

#### How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The kindergarten's educational programme is based on the Steiner Waldorf approach to learning. It is exempt from an agreed list of learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff provide many effective learning experiences for children. Staff assess children's skills, knowledge and abilities accurately and use this information to identify children's starting points and learning priorities. Staff's planning ensures that each child responds well to the challenges of the learning experiences that they provide. The staff have a good working knowledge about the progress check for two-year-old children. They involve parents in the process well so that they share what they know about children's learning.

Children benefit from a good balance of adult- and child-led activities. The pattern of the day includes times for free play to enable them to follow their own interests. Staff offer a calm and welcoming environment in which younger and older children play and learn together. This approach helps children to feel valued, safe and happy and enables them to make their own decisions. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of how to engage children and capture their attention, including at ring time. As a result, children develop good personal skills and are enthusiastic learners. Children particularly enjoy singing together at changes of routine and during song-times. Staff use these to focus on seasonal themes and include number rhymes so children learn to count competently. Children concentrate for increasing periods of time at a variety of activities so they are well prepared for their next stage in learning.

The teaching is good and staff demonstrate high expectations of children. Adults extend children's responses through skilful conversation and modelling uses of resources. Children learn new words as they engage appropriately with staff in activities related to practicalities of living. Staff reinforce the meanings of these words in their detailed storytelling about relationships and happenings related to the natural world. For example, children listen spellbound to a story that includes the processes involved in cloth making. They understand phrases, such as, 'sheared fleece off the ewe' and 'carded the yarn', because they have talked about and carried out many of these actions. Staff link activities and provide resources to extend children's interests. For example, after children find and examine snails on a walk, staff provide clay for them to make models of snails. They introduce an action song that involves children holding hands and making spiralling movements.

Staff are particularly successful in helping children to learn. Each day, staff offer a known set of craft and domestic activities, such as painting and washing equipment. Children become absorbed in experimenting with colour as they mix powdered paints with water and blend the shades. They continue with the activity for as long as they wish and then tidy away after themselves, cleaning the brushes and setting their paintings to dry. Children gain reassurance from getting to know these patterns of activities and have ample time to practise and reinforce their learning. Staff motivate children to try things for themselves, developing children's ability to express their ideas and use their imagination. For example, older children cooperate as they pretend to give each other rides in a truck to the station. They build dens from large materials and imagine that they are at a doctor's surgery or travelling in a bus. Consequently, children have fun at the kindergarten as they obtain the skills and attitudes they will need to be ready for their next stage in their lives and in learning.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children**

Staff show skill and sensitivity in helping children form secure emotional attachments. They develop strong bonds with children by always attentive to their well-being and offering individual encouragement. This approach begins during unhurried settling-in visits when staff to get to know new families well. Consequently, staff provide a strong base for

children's developing independence and exploration. Children develop self-assurance in varied social situations, including talking with local householders, farmers and the postman. Staff encourage children to take responsibility, for example as they include younger children in their play. Children respond to positive behaviour management because staff have consistent, well-targeted expectations of them and are polite, composed, role models. If a confrontation occurs, this is resolved by clarifying the actions that have led to that point. Staff discuss situations with parents and carers so that they use similar responses, such as helpful stories. As a result, children increase in self-esteem to manage changes confidently.

The staff give strong priority to safety and effectively support children's growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Children learn to manage risks and challenges, relative to their ages. They take turns to extinguish an enclosed candle after meal times. They practise leaving the premises in case of an emergency and learn about road safety on their country lane walks. Children use a variety of tools safely, including table knives and long-handled rakes and brushes. Staff provide an attractive indoor environment with all resources made from natural materials. The low shelving enables children to choose the play things stored at their level. Staff suggest helpful combinations of indoor resources to promote good learning through effectively stimulating younger and older children. As a result, children develop good decision-making skills and enjoy their play. However, staff provide fewer outdoor resources for very young children, which slightly limits their exploration and development.

Staff enable children to achieve good physical development. Indoors, children choose to be active as they lift to build with blocks, crates and planks. When staff take them outdoors each day, children benefit from ample fresh air in different weathers and enjoy energetic and quieter activities. They dig and plant in the vegetable patch and water fruits, such as strawberries. They explore natural materials, including mud and ice and collect leaves to ask their names. However, children may not choose regularly whether to be in or out of doors, so that staff are not fully extending their learning.

Overall, staff enable children to gain a good understanding about healthy lifestyles. Staff encourage children sensitively manage their personal hygiene without help. The small number of adults organise themselves well so that one is always on hand to support children's care needs, including nappy changing. Staff enable children to be as independent as possible in familiar routines. For example, children help to prepare and serve healthy foods, including fruit crumbles, gluten- and dairy-free biscuits with home-made butter, and vegetable soup. As parents send nutritious lunches, children learn through consistent messages from home and kindergarten about the benefits of a healthy diet. Children serve themselves with drinks at meal times and staff offer extra drinks in hot weather so children do not become thirsty. Staff encourage children to manage their outdoor clothing and belongings calmly and efficiently. As a result, children increase in self-esteem and independence to manage changes confidently.

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

This inspection took place following the previous inadequate inspection and monitoring visit. The provider has responded well to the actions given in the notice to improve. This inspection has found that the provider is robustly aware of their responsibility in meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The provider has reviewed and amended the written risk assessments for outings. Older children show a clear understanding about the rules they must follow to stay safe. When young children are involved in outings, staff provide one-to-one care and supervision. When only two adults are present and two children aged two years or under attend, the kindergarten remains on site and children engage in outdoor play, rather than in planned outings. The provider has also reviewed risk assessment as a whole to implement additional security measures on the premises to restrict children's access to the kitchen and the external exit, and to secure the outside area with locked gates. The provider shows a positive response to ensuring that staff keep children safe.

The provider uses effective procedures for employment, which include established practices to review regularly the adults' suitability to be with children. The management uses supervision and appraisal well to support staff to train further and to engage in professional development to improve their knowledge and skills. For example, the manager is volunteering as a trainer for Steiner schools. This is likely to enhance her liaison with parents and to keep abreast of all developments in the early years. Staff demonstrate that they are well equipped for their roles working with children. The management is careful to meet the required staffing ratios so that adults are available to support and engage with children as needed. The staff have a secure awareness of local safeguarding children procedures and work to effectively detailed policies. Through induction and ongoing training, staff are familiar with possible signs of children at risk and with procedures to follow if they have concerns. All necessary records and documents are in place and effectively maintained to support children's well-being.

Staff have a strong understanding of the relevant learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager assesses and monitors children's progress carefully to identify any gaps in their development and learning. She and her staff reflect thoughtfully on the provision for children, in daily conversation, in children's assessment notes, and in comprehensive, recorded self-evaluation, to secure ongoing improvement. They value the opinions of children, parents and a range of outside agencies, including the local authority development worker, to help identify and implement areas for development. In response to the recommendation made at the last inspection, the provider has taken positive steps to improve the self-evaluation of the provision. As a result, the management plans to refurbish the outdoor area and to set up a toddler group for staff to support very young children and their families. This planning demonstrates the provider's commitment to making ongoing improvements.

The manager and her staff are committed to working in partnership with others. When children move to school, staff provide summaries to ensure that children's learning and development continues. The kindergarten staff have good relationships with parents, which contributes to children's well-being and sense of belonging. Families make a number of visits, based on their individual needs, before staying for the whole session. Staff gather good quality information from parents, to help ensure that children settle and

that there is continuity in children's well-being and welfare needs. Parents demonstrate a secure understanding of the kindergarten's ethos so that they and staff work well together, sharing much information to support each child's progress. Families hugely appreciate the friendly, approachable staff and say that their children, 'are nurtured and loved'. They commend the rhythms and balance of child- and adult-led play and say their children have gained much confidence, 'to step out into the world'.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

## What inspection judgements mean

### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.



## Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY463703
<b>Local authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	965376
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	24
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	5
<b>Name of provider</b>	The Mulberry Tree Steiner Early Years Group
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10/02/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01285 831463

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

