

Mulberry Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Moira Oliver

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

The Mulberry Kindergarten opened in 2000. It is situated in the village of Tunstall, Suffolk. The kindergarten operates from a converted extension to the Old School Hall, there are four adjoining playrooms, a kitchen area and toilet facilities. It is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. They offer full or part day care and a midday option of 9am to 3pm. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area which is partly canopied and has a safety surface.

A maximum of 36 children may attend the kindergarten at any one time. There are currently 30 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The kindergarten serves the village and surrounding local area. They also offer a holiday art club for school aged children from 8am until 6pm which is demand led during school holidays. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. They provide funded early education for three and four-year-olds. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are bilingual.

The kindergarten employs seven members of staff, including the manager, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. One of the senior staff members has a degree in Early Childhood Studies and is currently working towards Early Years Professional Status. The kindergarten receives support from the local authority and has completed the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is Good.

Children are happy, have fun and settle with ease in the welcoming, inviting and inspiring setting. The highly effective key person system ensures that the staff know the children very well and plan for their individual needs. Close partnerships with parents are significant in ensuring that the needs of the children are met. Children's health is supported well and very effective systems ensure that they are safe and secure. Managers and staff share a clear vision and value the process of self-evaluation, demonstrating a very good capacity for securing continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further develop opportunities to work in partnership with other providers working with the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure progression and aid transition
- extend activities to celebrate other cultures to further promote and value diversity and difference.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are protected from abuse and neglect due to the staff's robust understanding of safeguarding. Staff have attended training and clear policies and procedures support their practice. All staff working at the kindergarten have been employed through robust recruitment and vetting procedures and they fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Children's safety and security are prioritised. They cannot leave the premises unsupervised and unauthorised persons cannot gain access. Thorough risk assessments take place and the premises are checked at the beginning of every day. For example, the outdoor area is swept and cleaned with a pressure washer to remove any bird fowling and tree debris. Well-considered systems are in place to maximise children's safety when on outings and good use is made of the available space and resources. For example, children use all areas, independently accessing the activities and resources from low-level storage and using them in all areas, including the outdoors. The baby room is designed to ensure that nappy-changing and feeding routines can be dealt with without leaving the room, ensuring children are supervised at all times.

The manager has high aspirations for the quality of the service they provide and inspires the staff to consistently reflect on their practice. Morale is very high and all the staff are proud of their nursery. They work as a close team and their professional development is extremely well supported. They each have an area of responsibility which they take pride in developing. They support each other as they plan together and contribute ideas. Self-evaluation takes into account the views of staff and parents and they are building systems to include the children in the process too. Consistent monitoring has enabled them to write clear action plans which are worked on by all. For example, they are developing the outdoor area further by introducing a sensory area to expand on the children's experiences.

Staff value partnerships they have with parents. Parents are fully involved in their child's learning in the setting and add their comments to their child's developmental records in the form of 'Learning Journeys'. Good information is gathered from parents before their child starts to ensure that they can provide for each child and meet their unique needs. The key person system is very effective and staff know the children and their families very well. They use this knowledge to plan relevant activities that interest the children and move them on to their next step in development. Staff take time to speak to each parent at the end of every session and 'Learning Journeys' are shared every term. Parents speak very highly of the kindergarten and state that they know exactly where their child is in their development. Parent evenings and coffee mornings are arranged to compliment this partnership, providing additional ways for parents to become involved. Staff value the input from other professionals and work closely with the local authority and advisors. They are beginning to build links with some of the schools that the children feed into. However, the children come from a wide rural area and feed into many different schools. Consequently, links have not been built with all schools to aid transition for all the children.

The nursery promotes equality and diversity and inclusion threads through their practice. The staff are sensitive to children's differing family backgrounds and supports them to value their own and other people's lives. They have some good

quality resources to promote discussion about similarity and difference. However, opportunities to build on children's own experiences of culture and tradition have not yet been fully explored.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children have fun in the bright and stimulating indoor and outdoor areas. They happily move between the areas, selecting toys and equipment to use. Close, trusting relationships are built with the staff and many strong friendships have grown between the children. They include others in their games and cooperate to build an aeroplane with the soft-play shapes or to make a train track. Children are becoming independent and help to set the table at lunch time and carry their empty plates to the kitchen to collect their desserts. They enjoy making patterns with their fingers in the foam or in spilt water and have many opportunities to use chalks on the large boards or the ground outside. Older children are encouraged to write their names and the more able ones enjoy copying words from a nursery rhyme. They take part in making up their own stories which are written down by staff and proudly displayed with their pictures. Children enjoy stories and read to themselves or small groups as they remember the sequence and some wording of favourite books.

They use mathematical language as they compare size and shape in a sticking activity and talk about how tall they are and how big their baby siblings are. They use numbers to count and some recognise the numbers on the displays in the playroom. Children explore nature as they look at a fallen nest with magnifying glasses and watch spiders and other insects crawling. They help to take care of their own allotment and grow a wide range of fruit and vegetables which they help to harvest and prepare for meals and snacks. They learn about their local and wider environment as they go on outings and invite people from the community into the kindergarten, such as police officers.

Children become engrossed in role play as they play with the dolls, securing them into buggies or onto their backs to carry them around. They use a range of items to dress them, feed them, put them to bed and take them shopping. They use their imaginations as they chat to the dolls, for the dolls and to other children in their play. They have opportunities to explore a range of textures and describe the feeling of foam on their hands. They use percussion instruments to beat the rhythm of favourite songs and rhymes and happily sing to themselves as they wash the boats in a tub of water.

Children's good health and wellbeing is promoted. Babies sleep, eat and play according to their home routines. They have clean bedding daily and all feeding equipment is clean and sterilised. Cleaning routines in the nursery are excellent; floors, tables and the toilet areas are cleaned at the end of the day and after lunch to ensure that areas are always clean when children arrive. Staff adhere to good hygiene in the kitchen and all food is stored appropriately and food preparation areas are clear and hygienic. Children enjoy a healthy diet of freshly cooked meals and they incorporate their own allotment produce as much as possible. They have many opportunities for fresh air and exercise as they operate a free-flow system, allowing children to play indoors or out. Canopies and trees cover much of the

outdoor area, allowing children to play outside in all weathers. They climb, slide, balance, jump, scoot, peddle and run using a range of equipment. They use soft-play shapes and tyres to make a road or a track so they can practise riding carefully around obstacles. Babies have opportunities to climb on and crawl through small apparatus and have lots of equipment to support them to pull themselves up and walk using push-along toys.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as they understand the importance of wearing sun cream and sun hats. They blow their food before eating it to ensure that they do not burn themselves and learn about road safety when they are on outings. They take part in regular fire drills and help to clear away toys to make room for new ones and to reduce tripping.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally warm, calm and caring environment where the staff are genuinely interested in them and their lives outside the setting. They are treated with kindness and respect, providing good role models for the children to follow. Simple, age-appropriate explanations are given to the children to support them to manage their own behaviour. They are encouraged to be kind to each other, share the toys, and staff support them to take turns on the bicycles. Children play extremely well together, cooperating and negotiating and building close friendships.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean	
Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality	
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong	
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound	
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough	

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met