



Munchkins

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	317389
Inspection date	28 June 2005
Inspector	Karen Ling
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Registered person	Munchkins (Carlisle) Ltd
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?

Munchkins Day Nursery first opened in 1996. It operates from four rooms on the first floor of a business centre adjacent to the Cumberland Infirmary hospital in Carlisle. It is approximately one mile from the city-centre of Carlisle. The nursery serves the local area and beyond. The setting is open for 51 weeks of the year Monday through to Friday. Sessions are from 07:00 until 18:00. It offers full day-care for 175 children from birth to five years. Children are based in four separate rooms according to age.

There are currently 120 children on roll. Of these, 48 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

Seventeen staff work with the children and most hold an appropriate qualification in childcare and education. The provision also receives qualified teacher support through the local education authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy physical activity which in the main occurs indoors. They are helped to develop physical control through a range of interesting daily experiences. Staff have begun to take on board Birth to three matters and have started to implement the framework into their planning for the under three's. Babies and young children keenly take an interest in the suitable range of activities on offer to them, such as sensory toys, music and dancing. They are taken for walks most days either to the local park or the within the vicinity. Older children enjoy climbing, crawling and rolling, showing developing skill in their movements and balance. They develop hand eye co-ordination, for example as they practise throwing and catching balls. They have sufficient space to move freely and show developing agility as they run and stop.

Children are enabled to rest and sleep according to their needs and they are well nourished. They enjoy varied, well presented and nutritious meals and snacks which comply with any special dietary requirements. Younger children are offered drinks throughout the day and older children have access to water.

Children are beginning to understand their own needs and how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Older children, for example talk about the need to keep themselves safe in the sun. Before they go outside, they put sun cream on. Though children and staff follow good hygiene routines, on occasions guidelines are not followed to ensure cross contamination is avoided, for example one hand towel is used by several children in the pre-school room.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in this welcoming setting. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimized because staff carry out risk assessments to ensure the premises are safe for children. In the baby room, for example children are kept safe with appropriate adult support; monthly evaluations are carried out to raise awareness of any occurring hazards, which are then promptly addressed. Although policies and procedures ensure the safety of children overall, on occasions the premises is not kept secure because entrance to the nursery is not effectively managed at all times.

There are sufficient toys, furniture and play materials for children in all areas which

are of good quality and appropriate for the range of ages and individual needs of the children. These are well organized overall to encourage independent access.

Children are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures which are in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery. They achieve well because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. The introduction of the Birth to three framework has led to staff planning and monitoring young children's development more effectively.

Children happily move around their space and are well supported by staff as they choose from the good selection of activities and resources on offer. The babies and very young children develop bonds with their key worker which helps to increase their sense of well-being. They benefit from routines which are consistent with their experiences at home and regular exchange of information with parents helps staff to adapt routines. They enjoy the textures of materials, such as sand and water and the colours and sounds of manufactured toys which they explore with interest. Babies develop early communication skills, making sounds and gestures which staff respond to well. They particularly enjoy musical activities, copying staff as they join in with action songs and rhymes.

The two to three-year-old children develop confident relationships with the adults who respond to their needs appropriately. They play well together and with adults using resources such as puzzles, games and small world toys. Children show growing social skills as they share and take turns. They enjoy singing and action songs and know a good repertoire. They show developing independence and initiative as they select activities, such as taking books to adults to share with them. Staff set clear boundaries for behaviour which helps them to learn right from wrong and behaviour is good.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Some staff have a sound understanding of the foundation stage and use the stepping stones well to plan and provide a suitable range of activities. Other staff are relatively new to working within the foundation stage. All staff work together well to provide an appropriate curriculum. Children enjoy a stimulating range of activities with resources which support their learning across all areas of learning. Staff show a good understanding of how young children learn and enable them to take part in a good balance of adult directed and child initiated activities. Staff manage children effectively, valuing their contributions and generally ensuring all children participate.

Children are keen to learn, engage in play well and are eager to try new experiences, showing confidence as they approach adults to ask questions and share information.

They know and follow the routines of the day, respond well to adults and their behaviour is good. For example, they remind each other of rules such as, 'Whoever plays in the ball pool has to tidy it up afterwards.' Children show developing independence and manage themselves well in matters of hygiene, such as washing hands after visiting the toilet. Children's communication skills develop well. They show good speaking and listening skills, for example as they take turns to speak during circle time. They engage in songs enthusiastically and know a number of familiar songs and rhymes. They enjoy stories and show a developing awareness of rhyme. Although children have regular access to books, the selection is limited and of poor condition. Children show interest in written words with most recognising and writing their own name. They develop skills in using one handed tools, such as scissors and glue spreaders and are becoming quite skilled at using writing tools, though these are not independently accessed by the younger three-year-old children. As a result they do not use them sufficiently to develop their own ideas.

Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play. They show developing knowledge of mathematical language and concepts, such as 'more than' and 'less than' as they group objects. They know many shapes by name and learning is reinforced in fun ways, such as the shape domino game where children confidently identify and match shapes. Children use the good selection of equipment to explore and investigate the properties of sand and water and have fun as they experiment with ingredients and melt ice and chocolate to find out what happens. Older children skilfully complete simple computer programmes while younger ones show developing skill as they control the mouse. They happily talk about themselves and events in their lives and develop a sense of time passing with the clear routines they follow each day. Children enjoy visits to local attractions, such as Ostrich World and develop a sense of the wider world as they learn about aspects of other countries including Antarctica and different festivals, such as Diwali, Easter and Chinese New Year. Children's creative development is encouraged well. They like to explore a range of media and materials to make things in two and three dimension. Older children enjoy dressing up and making up their own stories, however role play equipment is less available to the younger three-year-old children.

Overall staff show a good awareness of where children are at and record what children know and can do. However not all staff use this information sufficiently well to plan next steps in learning. This results in children not being sufficiently challenged on occasions. As yet the assessment system is not sufficiently developed to show progress over time in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the nursery and the good relationships that exist with staff are effective in helping children to settle and be content. Staff show respect for children's different needs and treat children with equal concern. There continues to be a lack of resources which reflect diversity within the setting. Children are supported effectively and their needs are met well as they follow the daily routines. Although there is a policy for special needs, it does not adequately comply with the

Code of Practice 2001 and not all staff are aware of the procedures to follow. Children are helped to share and take turns and as they get older, negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children's self-esteem is encouraged because staff value their contributions. Children in turn, follow set boundaries and behaviour is good throughout the nursery.

The children have good opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities and outings to local places of interest. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, social moral and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. A friendly and open rapport is developed with parents and carers. They have access to information about the running of the nursery and plans which show what children will be learning. Regular verbal exchange together with parents evenings keeps them informed about how their child is doing. However, the records of progress are not yet sufficiently developed to show progress over time in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The needs of the range of children for whom care is provided are met. The nursery is organised in a way that enables children to be grouped appropriately according to age. Each area has clear routines and the policies and procedures in place support the day to day running of the nursery satisfactorily. A good working relationship exists between the owner and manager of the nursery and they value staff's input. Staff reflect on their practice and are continually looking at ways of improving the quality of care provided. Children benefit from qualified and experienced staff. The roles and responsibilities of management are not sufficiently defined and as a result, Ofsted have not been notified of changes in staff at the earliest opportunity. Although the nursery keeps a record of children who attend the nursery, records are not accurately kept and on occasions children are missed off the register. A record of visitors to the nursery has not been made.

Leadership and management for nursery education are good and effectively support the implementation of the foundation stage. Staff who deliver the foundation stage curriculum are involved in assessing the quality of provision. They are aware of what works well and have identified areas for improvement, such as the system for recording children's progress. The introduction of the foundation stage to the three-year-olds is very recent and management and staff are proactive in developing the quality of provision to this age group by sharing the good practices that already exist with the four-year-olds.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the provision develop the range of play materials and resources which reflect diversity, within the baby room. This

continues to be an area to develop.

It was also recommended that staff's knowledge of individual needs, particularly within the baby room be developed. Practices have effectively improved due to the introduction of the Birth to three matters framework. Staff complete individual diaries and have introduced the framework into their planning for this room. This is having a positive impact on provision for the under two's in the baby room.

Nursery education

The nursery was asked to develop and extend mathematical activities in everyday situations. Staff now ensure that such activities are planned for and incidental opportunities are used to extend mathematical challenge with the four-year-olds. It was also recommended that children have time to recognise names and familiar words and use writing tools as a means of communication. The environment in the room for the four-year-olds reflects a range of vocabulary and simple text. Children enjoy using writing tools in a range of ways including in the sand and on whiteboards. These experiences are greatly improving their skills.

Teaching has been reviewed and children now receive an appropriate balance of structured and practical activities. This includes good opportunities for the older children to dress up and take part in role play situations. They also enjoy a range of activities which allow them to explore natural, living and man made objects because a good range of resources are made available.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- ensure hand drying facilities are adequate to avoid cross infection

- ensure that the premises are kept secure at all times and keep a record of visitors
- develop the special educational needs policy so that it has regard to the Code of Practice 2001 and ensure that all staff are aware of it
- develop a range of resources which reflect diversity across the nursery
- improve the system for registering children on a daily basis to accurately show who is present and hours of attendance
- make management roles and responsibilities clear to ensure that whoever is responsible for notifying Ofsted of any changes does so at the earliest opportunity.

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):

- ensure consistency across the foundation stage provision so that information gained about children's learning is effectively used to build on what children know and can do
- develop the assessment system so that it is manageable and effectively monitors children's progress over time from their starting points towards the early learning goals
- ensure children have independent access to a good selection of books, role play equipment and writing tools across the foundation stage.

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