

Milford Day Nursery

Milford Road, Walton-on-the-Hill, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST17 0LA

Inspection date	19/04/2013
Previous inspection date	05/01/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Highly skilled and knowledgeable staff support children very effectively in their learning. They extend children's ideas, offer challenge within activities and the environment and ensure that a child-focused approach supports children to make excellent progress.
- Staff's extensive knowledge and understanding of how children learn means that all children have excellent opportunity to play and explore, learn actively and become creative thinkers.
- Children's well-being is supported extremely effectively through the key person approach. Babies form strong attachments and bonds with their key person as staff acknowledge that emotional security is vital for the youngest children to flourish.
- High expectations of staff mean that children are cared for by well-qualified, experienced and knowledgeable people who recognise how children learn and can implement strong and effective practice to facilitate excellent progress.
- Partnerships with parents and others is very strong which means that children's needs are supported very well and transitions are as seamless as possible.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in all four play rooms and in the outdoor area.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including policies, procedures, children's developmental records and staff files.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery manager and the training manager.
- The inspector spoke with children, staff and parents throughout the inspection.

Inspector

Juliette Jennings

Full Report

Information about the setting

Milford Day Nursery is part of the Asquith national chain of nurseries. It was registered in 1991 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in a two storey Victorian building which was previously a school, in the village of Walton-on-the-Hill, south of Stafford. The nursery serves the local area and the ground floor is accessible to children, although arrangements can be made to ensure enable access to the first floor. It operates from five rooms and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 25 members of childcare staff. Of these, 23 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. Two members of staff are qualified to level 4, one has a foundation degree, whilst two others are working towards their foundation degree. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round, except for a week at Christmas and bank holidays. Sessions are from 7am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 56 children attending who are within the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery work closely with senior management staff from Asquith and advisors from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider enhancing the already excellent outdoor area by providing babies with areas of different texture to explore.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development because highly skilled and knowledgeable staff support them very effectively. They extend children's ideas, offer challenge within activities and the environment, and ensure a child-focused approach. They hold the children at the heart of all they do, and this is evident in their interactions with every child. The characteristics of effective learning are supported very well because staff provide rich, varied and interesting opportunities for all children. Their extensive knowledge and understanding of how children learn means that all children have excellent opportunities to play and explore, learn actively and become creative thinkers.

Older children's all round development is supported very well through access to a routine which is rooted in child-led play. They are able to lead their own play, think through ideas and solve problems as they engage in child-initiated play for much of the day. The role of the adult is extremely effective in supporting their progress because they recognise their own crucial role in enhancing, guiding and offering some structure to activities where needed. For example, children are encouraged to discuss their own ideas in role play activities using the large wooden blocks. Children travel to the moon and back, and talk about what they see and experience, with the sensitive support of the adult. Learning intentions from appropriately brief, adult focused activities are threaded into these opportunities. For example, children are encouraged to name shapes and think about how they would travel to the moon and back. In addition, skills that children have started to practise in adult-focused activities are available to them throughout the session so that they have plenty of opportunity to reinforce their learning.

Babies and young children are offered a broad range of opportunities to support their communication and language development, as well as their physical development. Staff recognise the importance of the three prime areas for learning as a basis to extend experiences. Babies enjoy a wide range of sensory experiences, such as natural, open-ended resources in the sand, availability of different thicknesses of shredded paper and opportunities to explore paint. The baby room space encourages them to reach out for items, explore by crawling and shuffling, or pull themselves up on low-level equipment. This all supports children's physical development very well because caring and knowledgeable staff are on hand to offer guidance and reassurance. Staff use every opportunity to talk to the babies, smile and mirror sounds or expressions that babies make. This helps to consolidate those early communication and language skills and offers an excellent basis for future development.

Toddlers experience a varied range of resources, activities and equipment which fully supports them in their ongoing development and progress. Small scale, wooden climbing equipment is available indoors, sensory and exploratory play is planned for everyday and simple puzzles and discovery toys are available at low-level. Children develop the physical skills which will prepare them for early literacy as they dig in the sand with small tools, make marks with chalk and crayons or enjoy moving around the open space to develop their spatial awareness. Staff are attuned to the needs of the children and offer activities which will interest and engage them.

Observation, assessment and planning is sharply focused and sensitively acknowledges children's individuality and uniqueness. Staff have worked hard to ensure that observations are meaningful and reflect children's learning styles. This helps them to make secure assessments of not only what children are learning, but how children learn. Their deep understanding of the characteristics of effective learning, as well as of child development, means that highlighted next steps in children's learning are focused and specific to each child. As a result, planning is simple, yet robust, remains child-centred and reflects the development needs of all children very well. Ongoing written summary assessments include the views of parents, and staff show a very good understanding of how to complete the progress check at age two.

Parents are fully involved in their child's ongoing learning and development. There is a real sense of partnership working, as parents are recognised as their child's most important educator. Relationships between parents and their child's key person are very strong and this means that children's development needs are fully met. The provision of home learning stories, for those parents who want to contribute more formally, work well alongside informal daily talk and discussion. As a result, they have a secure overview of their child's progress and development. This all means that parents are fully involved in their child's development journey and play an active role in preparing them for the next stage in their learning. Staff have made strong links with local schools which ensures that transition arrangements support children very well. For example, children visit the reception class with their key person on a regular basis and school staff visit the nursery in the time leading up to starting school.

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

Children's well-being is supported extremely effectively through the implementation of a robust key person approach. Babies form strong attachments and bonds with their key person, as staff acknowledge that emotional security is vital for the youngest children in order to flourish. They have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the importance of personal, social and emotional development and this is emphasised in the routines and environment for babies and young children. For example, young babies are held close whilst being fed or rocked to sleep because staff know that this closeness helps babies feel relaxed and emotionally secure. This extremely effective key person approach is supported very well through detailed discussions with parents about routines, good information gathering as children start, and a timely, sensitive approach to settling in sessions. The move to their next room in nursery is supported very well because staff recognise the importance of the key person approach throughout. Children spend time in these new rooms with their key person for as long as is necessary for them to feel settled.

Children have excellent opportunities for plenty of fresh air and exercise as they access the outdoor area on a daily basis. Most children are able to move freely between the indoors and outdoors. Children from the upstairs pre-school room are given very regular opportunities to come downstairs and take their learning outside. Children play and explore as they dig in the large sandpit, or spread paint with brushes and their hands on large pieces of paper. Babies investigate discovery toys as they sit on a large blanket in the fresh air. Older children make complex models with large wooden blocks or simply enjoy making patterns or drawing letters on the brick wall using brushes and water. This outdoor space has been a focus for improvement and staff implement a wide range of ideas so that children can use the outdoor space to its full advantage. There is some scope to improve the outdoor area further, for example, by broadening the types of surfacing for babies to explore. However, the staff team as a whole have successfully highlighted what it is that they need to do to improve the outdoor provision further for all children.

Children enjoy a healthy, varied and nutritious diet during their time at nursery. The menu on offer is extensive and offers a wide range of fruit, vegetables and other fresh, wholesome food on a daily basis. Even the youngest children enjoy serving themselves

their own lunch and eagerly request second helpings. Staff take full opportunity to use mealtimes as a learning experience. For example, they encourage children's independence in self-serving and pouring drinks, support children to count the dumplings onto their plate, or to recognise the colours of the vegetables. All food on offer to the children is freshly prepared using fresh ingredients by a dedicated cook. Individual dietary preferences and requirements are met very well. Staff implement a simple colour coded plate and placemat system to help ensure a consistent approach. For example, for those children where there is a parental preference or for those with a specific dietary need, then a different colour plate and placemat is used.

A safe and enabling environment is maintained for all children. Older children become aware of their own safety as they walk to and from the local school, or use the stairs up to the pre-school room. Younger children are encouraged to become aware of their own safety and the safety of others as they are reminded to walk inside nursery or to look out for others as they pedal the wheeled toys outside. An extensive range of interesting and stimulating toys and equipment are readily available for children, mostly all at low-level. All areas of the nursery are extremely well resourced, pleasantly furnished and decorated to a high standard and this ensures that children are comfortable.

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

There is a very strong commitment to, and understanding of, the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is an extremely strong and successfully implemented drive for improvement within the nursery. Staff and the senior management team show a strong commitment to continual improvement so that all children are able to develop to their full potential. The well-structured management team is extremely effective in ensuring a well-organised nursery that has a clear aim to provide the best quality care and education for all children. Ongoing self-evaluation includes the views of staff, parents and children. Strengths and areas for improvement are discussed in an open and honest way, which means that staff and managers can be fully reflective in what they offer children. For example, the most recent improvement has been in relation to enhancing the outdoor space so that children are able to take their learning outdoors as they wish. A cohesive approach by all staff has ensured that the needs of all children are supported in the outdoor learning environment. They acknowledge that there is still scope to further improve this aspect and know what they want to do next.

The organisation which owns the nursery, as well as nursery management, all have high expectations of staff. This results in well-qualified, experienced and knowledgeable team who recognise how children learn. These well-qualified and experienced staff implement strong and effective practice in order to facilitate excellent progress. Arrangements for safeguarding children are strong and embedded in practice. All staff have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities to promote children's safety and welfare. They are supported by clear policies, procedures and operational systems which ensure the day-to-day provision supports children's safety, well-being and development very well. This combined with excellent provision for continuous professional development, robust induction and supervision and a clear management structure offers a first rate, child-

focused environment for children to flourish and become well-prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Opportunities for ongoing training and development for staff are excellent, and they have access to an internal programme of specialised and focused training. For example, staff have recently accessed training on the characteristics of effective learning and this knowledge is already embedded within daily practice. Supervision, appraisals and peer observations are used well to highlight any training and development needs. For example, the manager often observes practice within the rooms and offers insightful and meaningful feedback on where any improvements can be made. This all helps to ensure that the educational programme is monitored very well and ensures children receive outstanding education and care.

Partnerships with parents and others mean that children's needs are supported very well and transitions are as seamless as possible. Relationships between all those who care for children are relaxed and friendly and this helps to reinforce the key person relationship further still. Parents are fully involved in their children's care and education and have ongoing input into their children's developmental records. Their views are sought both formally and informally, for example, through daily discussions and parent comment forms. Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection were extremely happy with the way their children are cared for.

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	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
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 inspected again within 12 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

Unique reference number	EY288114
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	908667
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	78
Number of children on roll	56
Name of provider	Asquith Court Nurseries Limited
Date of previous inspection	05/01/2009
Telephone number	01785 665663

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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.

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