

Inspection report

Mulberry Bush Day Care of Children

12 Balfron Road
Killearn
G63 9NJ
01360 550916

Inspected by: Patricia Bunyan
(Care Commission officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 20 December 2010

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Service provided by:
Mulberry Bush Montessori Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003001127

Care service number:
CS2003005395

Contact details for the Care Commission officer who inspected this service:

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Easy read summary of this inspection report

There is a six point grading scale. Each of the Quality Themes we inspected, is graded using the following scale:

We can choose from six grades:



We gave the service these grades

Quality of Care and Support	 5 Very Good
Quality of Environment	N/A
Quality of Staffing	N/A
Quality of Management and Leadership	N/A

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection due to other regulatory activity; for example, if we have to take enforcement action to improve the service, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

What the service does well

We found that the service provided by Mulberry Bush was consistent with the stated aims, objectives and philosophy of the service and that children attending benefited from a caring, stimulating and supportive learning environment.

The service uses consultation, evaluation and quality assurance methods effectively to inform ongoing development and improvement in quality of provision.

The service actively pursues continual quality improvement in the care and education provided for the benefit of children attending.

What the service could do better

Changes to staffing and management, some of which were unavoidable, had for a period, impacted to some extent on the quality of the service experienced by families using the service. We consider however that the service was responsive to issues raised by parents and that they had managed necessary changes with as little disruption as possible for children and families using the service.

In order that management responsibilities can be more easily devolved and supported by staff, the service should continue to develop opportunities for staff to develop management and leadership skills.

They should continue to focus on effective communication with families to ensure they have sufficient information about any changes to the service.

What the service has done since the last inspection

The service has further improved recording of information included in the children's early years profiles.

There are have been changes and improvements made to the building which have resulted in improved access to outdoors for younger children.

Conclusion

Overall, we found that children and their families using the service experienced a very good quality of care and support. The nursery was well-managed with very good systems in place to support and maintain standards.

Parental participation continues to be encouraged and promoted.

Who did this inspection

Lead Care Commission Officer

Patricia Bunyan

Other Care Commission Officers

N/A

Lay Assessor

N/A

Please read all of this report so that you can understand the full findings of this inspection.

About the Care Commission

We were set up in April 2002 to regulate and improve care services in Scotland.

Regulation involves:

- registering new services
- inspecting services
- investigating complaints
- taking enforcement action, when necessary, to improve care services.

We regulate around 15,000 services each year. Many are childminders, children's daycare services such as nurseries, and care home services. We regulate many other kinds of services, ranging from nurse agencies to independent healthcare such as hospices and private hospitals.

We regulate services for the very young right through to those for the very old. Our work can, therefore, affect the lives of most people in Scotland.

All our work is about improving the quality of care services.

We produce thousands of inspection reports every year; all are published on our website: www.carecommission.com. Reports include any complaints we investigate and improvements that we ask services to make.

The "Care services" area of our website also:

- allows you to search for information, such as reports, about the services we regulate
- has information for the people and organisations who provide care services
- has guidance on looking for and using care services in Scotland.

You can also get in touch with us if you would like more detailed information.

About the National Care Standards

The National Care Standards (NCS) set out the standards that people who use care services in Scotland should expect. The aim is to make sure that you receive the same high quality of service no matter where you live.

Different types of service have different National Care Standards. When we inspect a care service we take into account the National Care Standards that the service should provide.

The Scottish Government publishes copies of the National Care Standards online at: www.scotland.gov.uk

You can get printed copies free from:

Booksource
50 Cambuslang Road
Cambuslang Investment Park
Glasgow
G32 8NB
Tel: 0845 370 0067
Fax: 0845 370 0068
Email: scottishgovernment@booksource.net

What is inspection?

Our inspectors, known as Care Commission Officers (CCOs), check care services regularly to make sure that they are meeting the needs of the people in their care.

One of the ways we check on services is to carry out inspections. We may turn up without telling the service's staff in advance. This is so we can see how good the care is on a normal day. We inspect some types of services more often than others.

When we inspect a service, typically we:

- talk to people who use the service, their carers and families, staff and managers
- talk to individuals and groups
- have a good look around and check what quality of care is being provided
- look at the activities happening on the day
- examine things like records and files, if we need to
- find out if people get choices, such as food, choosing a key worker and controlling their own spending money.

We also use lay assessors during some inspections. These are volunteers who have used care services or have helped to care for someone who has used care services.

We write out an inspection report after gathering the information. The report describes how things are and whether anything needs to change.

Our work must reflect the following laws and guidelines:

- the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- regulations made under this Act
- the National Care Standards, which set out standards of care that people should be able to expect to receive from a care service.

This means that when we register or inspect a service we make sure it meets the requirements of the 2001 Act. We also take into account the National Care Standards that apply to it.

If we find a service is not meeting these standards, the 2001 Act gives us powers that require the service to improve.

Recommendations, requirements and complaints

If we are concerned about some aspect of a service, or think it could do more to improve its service, we may make a requirement or recommendation.

- A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions the care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service but where failure to do so will not directly result in enforcement.
- A requirement is a statement which sets out what is required of a care service to comply with the Act and Regulations or Orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Where there are breaches of the Regulations, Orders or conditions, a requirement must be made. Requirements are legally enforceable at the discretion of the Care Commission.

Complaints: We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service (or about us). Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints. Depending on how complex it is, a complaint may be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

How we decided what to inspect

Why we have different levels of inspection

We target our inspections. This means we spend less time with services we are satisfied are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care. We call these low-intensity inspections. Services where there is more concern receive more intense inspections. We call these medium or high intensity inspections.

How we decide the level of inspection

When planning an inspection, our inspectors, or Care Commission Officers (CCOs) carefully assess how intensively each service needs to be inspected. They do this by considering issues such as:

- complaints
- changes to how the service provides care
- any notifications the service has given us, such as the absence of a manager
- what action the service has taken in response to requirements we have made.

The CCO will also consider how the service responded to situations and issues: for example how it deals with complaints, or notifies us about incidents such as the death of someone using the service.

Our inspections take account of:

- areas of care that we are particularly interested in (these are called Inspection Focus Areas)
- the National Care Standards that the service should be providing
- recommendations and requirements that we made in earlier inspections
- any complaints and other regulatory activity, such as enforcement actions we have taken to improve the service.

What is grading?

We grade each service under Quality Themes which for most services are:

- **Quality of Care and Support:** how the service meets the needs of each individual in its care
- **Quality of Environment:** the environment within the service (for example, is the service clean, is it set out well, is it easy to access by people who use wheelchairs?);
- **Quality of Staffing:** the quality of the care staff, including their qualifications and training
- **Quality of Management and Leadership:** how the service is managed and how it develops to meet the needs of the people it cares for
- **Quality of Information:** this is how the service looks after information and manages record keeping safely.

Each of the Quality Themes has a number of Quality Statements in it, which we grade.

We grade each heading as follows:

6	5	4	3	2	1
excellent	very good	good	adequate	weak	unsatisfactory

We do not give one overall grade.

How grading works.

Services assess themselves using guidance that we given them. Our inspectors take this into account when they inspect and grade the service. We have the final say on grading.

The Quality Themes for this service type are explained in section 2 The Inspection.

About the service we inspected

Mulberry Bush Kindergarten is a privately owned nursery offering day care and education for children aged from birth to those not yet attending school. It has been registered with the Care Commission since April 2002 and operates from 8:00am to 6:00pm, Monday - Friday throughout the year. The nursery can accommodate up to 60 pre-school children at any one time.

Situated in the rural village of Killearn, the service is accommodated in single-storey premises comprising 3 individual childcare rooms to accommodate the various age groups of children attending. Ancillary facilities include office and reception, kitchen, toilet, changing and staff room.

There is a large, safely enclosed garden for the children to the rear of the premises

The premises are bright, well ventilated and of a suitable size for the number of children attending. The nursery is well maintained and provides a safe, stimulating and attractive environment for children.

The aims of the service are defined as,

"to bring out and develop a child's individuality in preparation for the rest of their lives; to enhance self-confidence and to encourage respect and love for the individuality of other children.

to ensure that all children are confident learners, successful individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors".

Commitment is made to provide children with opportunities to participate in a range of activities and experiences, which will encourage their development and learning and to create an environment that enables each individual to acquire self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth.

The service values and encourages parental involvement as well as fostering links with other agencies within the community.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support	5 - Very Good
Quality of Environment	N/A
Quality of Staffing	N/A
Quality of Management and Leadership	N/A

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection due to other regulatory activity; for example, if we have to take enforcement action to improve the service, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

You can use the "Care services" area of our website (www.carecommission.com) to find the most up-to-date grades for this service.

How we inspected this service

What level of inspection did we make this service

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What activities did we undertake during the inspection

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection.

The inspection was carried out by Care Commission Officer, Patricia Bunyan on 13 December 2010 between the hours of 09.30am and 2.45pm.

The service submitted an annual return. The service also submitted a self-assessment.

We issued a total of 25 care service questionnaires to families using the service, seventeen of which were completed and returned before the inspection. We spoke with 2 parents on the day of the inspection

In this inspection, we gathered evidence from various sources, including relevant sections of policies, procedures, records and other documents, including:

- * Service information : Playgroup / Nursery Welcome/information Packs
- * Written and photographic evidence of a variety of work undertaken in the service since the last inspection
- * Planning documentation
- * Health and safety records
- * Accident and incident records
- * Complaints information
- * Registration Certificate
- * Children's profiles records

Discussion with provider, staff, children.

The Care Commission Officer also inspected the environment and spent time observing staff:child interaction.

All of the above information was taken into account as part of the inspection process and used to assess the performance of the service in relation to the chosen Quality Statements.

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

Each year we identify an area, or areas, we want to focus on during our inspections. We still inspect all the normal areas of a care service; these are extra checks we make for a specific reason.

For 2010/11 we will focus on:

- Quality assurance for care at home and combined care at home and housing support services.

You can find out more about these from our website www.carecommission.com.

Fire safety issues

The Care Commission no longer reports on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function. Where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Care service providers can find more information about their legal responsibilities in this area at: www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Has the service had to take any actions as a result of or since our last inspection?

The service must ensure that accurate staff attendance records are kept, which clearly state arrival and departure times.

This is in order to comply with Scottish Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 114, The Regulation of Care (Requirements as to Care Services)(Scotland) Regulations 2002, Regulation 13(a) - Staffing.

Timescale; upon receipt of this report.

Action taken on the Requirement

The service has improved staff attendance records to clearly state arrival and departure times and they are in use within the service. New policy introduced and staff advised through staff meeting.

The requirement is:

Met

The service must ensure that accurate children's attendance records are kept, which clearly state arrival and departure times.

This is in order to comply with Scottish Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 114, The Regulation of Care (Requirements as to Care Services)(Scotland) Regulations 2002, Regulation 4, (1)(a) Welfare of users.

Timescale; upon receipt of this report.

Action taken on the Requirement

The service has improved children's attendance records to clearly state arrival and departure times and they are in use within the service. New policy introduced and staff advised through staff meeting.

The requirement is:

Met

The annual return

We use annual returns (ARs) to:

- make sure we have up-to-date, accurate information about care services; and
- decide how we will inspect services.

By law every registered care service must send us an annual return and provide us with the information we have requested. The relevant law is the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, Section 25(1). These forms must be returned to us between 6 January and 15 February.

Annual Return Received

Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

We received a fully completed self-assessment document from the service provider. We were satisfied with the way the service provider had completed this and with the relevant information they had given us under each of the headings that we grade them under.

The nursery identified what they thought they did well, some areas for development and any changes they planned.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

During the inspection, children and parents had collected to attend a nursery Christmas celebration and children were excited and enthusiastic about the event. They were looking forward to their parents and grandparents coming to see them and hear them sing. They chatted excitedly to staff about this.

Later, we talked with some of the children informally as they took part in different activities. Children were confident and well supported by staff. They happily talked about what they were doing. "I'm painting a picture for my granny...she will put it up on the wall". Children in the Montessori playroom showed good imagination as they played and were confident in describing what they were doing. Older children very ably described and identified sizes, shapes numbers and colours as they participated in a range of activities.

Taking carers' views into account

Out of 25 Care Commission questionnaires distributed to parents using the service 17 were completed and returned. We also spoke with 2 parents on the day of the inspection.

When asked about the overall quality of the service their children received 100% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy with the quality of the service.

There were some isolated responses questioning whether there were always enough staff available and some queries raised which centred on the impact of recent staff changes and communication within the service. These have been described in the body of this report.

Positive comments included,

"highly trained and very caring staff-top quality nursery"

"Overall my child seems settled and stimulated in Mulberry Bush"

It is strongly anticipated by both parents and provider that the return to work of the nursery manager in January 2011 and the embedding of staff changes will restore parents' overall confidence in staffing and communication within the service.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service Strengths

We found that the service continued to maintain and improve the ways in which children and their families could be effectively involved in assessing and influencing the quality of care and support provided by the service.

A parental participation strategy was in place and a guide to parental involvement helped to show parents how they could be involved and contribute their ideas and opinions on improvement and quality within the nursery.

The parental guide to involvement showed that parents could be involved to varying degrees, for example:

- * Sharing important information with staff
- * Attending planned events such as concerts
- * Attending parents evenings
- * Involvement in parent groups
- * Completing questionnaires
- * Sharing skills, interests and talents within the nursery setting.

Communication with families was undertaken at varying levels both formally and informally, including discussion at drop-off and collection times, nursery noticeboards, newsletters, questionnaires, email, parents evenings and issue of Standards and Quality Reports. Recently parents had appreciated the increased use of email contact and have commented that this increases their opportunities to respond to information about nursery business and to contribute their ideas towards planning. Examples of how the nursery has responded to parental feedback included increased time allocated for parent's meetings and increased informal parents' meetings throughout the year.

Staff consistently involved children in their learning and encouraged effective consultation which was undertaken in various ways, for example:

- * individually through observations and conversations and asking the children what they would like to learn next.
- * in circle/group times

* through children's pictorial questionnaires

Throughout the nursery, children continued to be involved in planning, choice and decision-making.

Systems for assessment and evaluation were well established within the service and the information gathered was used to inform planning and future development.

Parents told us that their children had become much more confident and outgoing as a result of their experiences at Mulberry Bush. They also commented that they could approach staff for advice and support at any time. They told us that staff listen to their views and that they had plenty of opportunities to get involved in the nursery if they wanted to and could attend the parents partnership group.

Areas for Improvement

Through their self-assessment, the service identified their commitment to ensure that all employees are reminded about the value base which must inform their work in the early years sector.

Grade awarded for this statement

6 - Excellent

Number of requirements

0

Number of recommendations

0

Statement 2

We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential.

Service Strengths

The service aims to support all children to make individual choices and to support them in achieving their potential. The service works very well to incorporate the ethos, values and principles of Montessori with the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence and have been recognised by the local authority partnership for innovation in this respect.

Significant changes in staffing had been implemented and we noted that a decision had been made to employ only qualified staff within the service. Staff currently employed within the service were qualified and experienced with backgrounds in early years and teaching. All staff were given further training in the specific Montessori approach, as well as other training, in-house and external which kept them up to date and aware of good practice in the field of child care. As a result we found that children were being very well supported by experienced and well-informed staff who applied a consistent approach to children's care and learning.

There were very good systems in place to support children with additional support needs and their families.

Management had a proactive approach to assessment and evaluation of the service being provided and were regularly using a range of methods to evaluate quality outcomes. For example, "Take a Closer Look", and "Iters/Ecers" , (infant and early childhood environmental rating scales) were being used for continuous self-evaluation and to indicate where improvements could be made to practice, policies and procedures within the service.

Since last inspection, work had been undertaken to improve the content of children's early years profiles, to encourage systematic and consistent styles of recording information and to seek comments and feedback from parents. This was being introduced throughout the nursery. As a result, parents were regularly able to view their children's developmental progress and share in their children's nursery activities and experiences.

Overall we felt that the service worked hard to ensure all children benefited from very good experiences during their time spent in the nursery and were given lots of opportunities and support to achieve their full potential

Areas for Improvement

Recent changes within the service, which should prove to be beneficial in the longer term had some impact on the service which a few parents raised with us. For

example one parent told us that, up until February/March 2010 they had been "delighted with the service", but this had been followed by a period where they felt staff had been "overstretched and that communication had "suffered."

They raised other concerns that around this time there had been issues particularly during morning drop-offs in the baby and toddler rooms, where very few staff were struggling to cope with children arriving.

One parent told us that she had raised her concerns about staff turnover and continuity of care with the nursery owner. She had felt however that her concerns had been taken seriously, that full explanations and feedback were provided and each concern addressed appropriately.

Discussion with the owner indicated that the nursery had taken necessary action in relation to resolving some staffing issues. She was confident that the nursery had taken the actions needed to overcome temporary problems regarding staffing issues. From our discussions with owner, staff and parents, we found that on balance the service responded appropriately to the above-mentioned issues and had implemented changes which were in the best interests of the children attending the nursery.

Grade awarded for this statement

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Other Information

Complaints

The service had one complaint which was upheld since the last inspection. You can find information about complaints that have been upheld or partially upheld on our website **www.carecommission.com**.

These complaints may have affected the service's grades.

Enforcements

We have not taken any enforcement action against this service since our last inspection.

Additional Information

Action Plan

Failure to submit an appropriate action plan within the required timescale, including any agreed extension, where requirements and recommendations have been made, will result in the Care Commission re-grading the Quality Statement within the Management and Leadership Theme as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme for Management and Leadership being re-graded as Unsatisfactory (1).

Summary of Grades

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	6 - Excellent
Statement 2	5 - Very Good
Quality of Environment - Not Assessed	
Quality of Staffing - Not Assessed	
Quality of Management and Leadership - Not Assessed	

Inspection and Grading History

Date	Type	Gradings	
2 Feb 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	<i>Not Assessed</i>
		Staffing	5 - Very Good
		Management and Leadership	<i>Not Assessed</i>
13 Nov 2008	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	5 - Very Good
		Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good

Terms we use in our report and what they mean

Action Plan - When we inspect a service, or investigate a complaint and the inspection report highlights an area for improvement; either through recommendations or requirements, the action plan sets out the actions the service will take in response.

Best practice statements/guidelines - This describes practices that have been shown to work best and to be achievable in specific areas of care. They are intended to guide practice and promote a consistent and cohesive approach to care.

Care Service - A service that provides care and is registered with us.

Complaints - We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service or about us. Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints which can have more than one outcome. Depending on how complex the complaint is, the outcomes can be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

Enforcement - To protect people who use care services, the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 gives the Care Commission powers to enforce the law. This means we can vary or impose new conditions of registration, which may restrict how a service operates. We can also serve an improvement notice on a service provider to make them improve their service within a set timescale. If they do not make these improvements we could issue a cancellation notice and cancel their registration.

Disclosure Scotland- Disclosure Scotland provides an accurate and responsive disclosure service to enhance security, public safety and protect the vulnerable in society. There are three types or levels of disclosure (i.e. criminal record check) available from Disclosure Scotland; basic, standard and enhanced. An enhanced check is required for people whose work regularly involves caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or adults at risk; or to register for child minding, day care and to act as foster parents or carers.

Participation - This describes processes that allow individuals and groups to develop and agree programmes, policy and procedures.

Personal Plan - This is a plan of how support and care will be provided. The plan is agreed between the person using the service (or their representative, or both of them) and the service provider. It is sometimes called a care plan mostly by local authorities or health boards when they commission care for people.

How you can use this report

Our inspection reports give care services detailed information about what they are doing well and not so well. We want them to use our reports to improve the services they provide if they need to.

Care services should share our inspection reports with the people who use their service, their families and carers. They can do this in many ways, for example by discussing with them what they plan to do next or by making sure our report is easily available.

People who use care services, their relatives and carers

We encourage you to read this report and hope that you find the information helpful when making a decision on whether or not to use the care service we have inspected. If you, or a family member or friend, are already using a care service, it is important that you know we have inspected that service and what we found. You may find it helpful to read previous inspection reports about his service.

The Care Commission

We use the information we gather from all our inspections to report to Scottish Ministers on how well Scotland's care services are performing. This information helps us to influence important changes they may make about how care services are provided.

Reader Information

This inspection report is published by the Care Commission. It is for use by the general public. You can get more copies of this report and others by downloading it from our website www.carecommission.com or by telephoning 0845 603 0890.

Translations and alternative formats

This publication is available in other formats and other languages on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

ہے بایں تسد یم وونابز رگی د روا دولکش رگی د رپ شرازگ تعاشا ہی

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

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本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.

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Improving care in Scotland