

## **Ofsted report**

An Ofsted childcare inspector visited the nursery education provision at Manor House School on 30 June 2008.

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

### **The Quality and Standards of the Nursery Education**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection, the quality and standard of the nursery education are good.

What sort of setting is it?

Manor House School Kindergarten is part of Manor House School which is an independent school in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire. The kindergarten operates from a room within the school. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. The kindergarten is open each weekday from 8.30am to 3pm during term time for 36 weeks. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 16 children aged from four to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for early education. The kindergarten supports children from the local and surrounding areas who will enrol for attendance at the school. The kindergarten currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The kindergarten employs three members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

### **The Effectiveness of this Provision**

#### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The learning environment is good and children engage in well planned themes and topics. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn which means they are making good progress in most areas towards the early learning goals. However, this is not always implemented consistently by all staff. For example, some writing efforts are erased in an effort to encourage correct letter formation showing no recognition of children's current stage of development and no opportunity to reflect and compare ongoing progress. Although children engage in a range of well organised activities, there is an unequal balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities to allow them to

make active choices about their play and learning. Staff recognise that children learn best during the morning and most structured learning takes place at this time. Children build sound relationships with staff and effective use of open questions encourages and provokes their thoughts as they learn. They respond to a positive behaviour procedure, developing respect for themselves and others. Staff regularly observe and assess children's development. Termly reports are maintained to record their progress in the six areas of learning and these are used to identify further steps in their development.

Children settle quickly, on arrival separating from parents with varying levels of support, into routine activities. They develop good attitudes to learning although this is mainly through adult-led educational programmes. There are opportunities to engage in some child-initiated activities. Children play co-operatively and enjoy free time in the home role play area, building with construction bricks and access a wide range of books for individual and shared reading.

Confidence and independence are supported very well as children carry out designated tasks. They set tables for snack time, successfully counting out the beakers to reflect the number of children present and develop dexterity as they pour drinks and serve fruit. Children are very respectful, using impeccable manners as they receive their snack. They also hold doors for staff and each other as they move around the school. A sense of community is established within the school as they join older children for assembly and sports day. Children applaud each other's success in obstacle, skipping and egg and spoon races, and encourage less enthusiastic children. They learn about different cultures through themed activities as they develop an awareness of diversity and the wider community.

Children are developing very well as they tend to their own personal needs. They access facilities independently and know to use soap to wash their hands. They persevere determinedly as they change for physical activities, gallantly attempting to fasten small shirt buttons before seeking help. They fold their clothes, placing these carefully on their chair and return shorts, t-shirts and plimsolls in their bags as they take responsibility for their own possessions.

Good relationships are forged with adults as children engage in discussions and conversations. They giggle gleefully as they identify body parts at a drawing activity. An adult, guiding their progress, jokes about arms being attached to the neck. 'No, they come from your body', a child replies. Children play very well with peers. They work together to complete a large jigsaw puzzle and take turns with construction bricks to build a 'massive tower'.

Communication skills are given high priority and children's spoken language is good. They listen very well and confidently talk about the difference between fiction and non-fiction books at story time. They know that one provides information and the other tells a story and how to use information books using content pages. They recall favourite stories as they choose one for today.

They decide on a poetry book and are enthralled as they sit in peaceful silence listening to a Caribbean poem about tranquil shores.

Children sing enthusiastically in assembly and join in actions to accompany familiar hymns and songs. They develop an appreciation of music through organised sessions of dance and drama and classical music played in the room provides background listening. Children talk about events from home which they also record in writing and pictures in their daily diaries. They know to write from left to right and most children form recognisable letters and understand sentence formation. However, writing is very formalised with few opportunities to use this for fun in areas such as role play in child initiated activities. Although most children hold pencils effectively, there are times when staff intervene to hold and direct their movements in order to form letters which are sometimes beyond their developmental capabilities.

Sounds and letters are successfully linked as children move very quickly from systems such as 'jolly phonics' to recognise initial sounds and letters through visual aids and skills.

Children rote count very well to 20 and beyond. They practise skills in early calculation as they prepare for snack and develop awareness of concepts and mathematical terms of more or less and big and little. They discuss whether the square milk bottles, provided today in place of the normal round ones, hold the same amount and a child declares 'the toast will not fit in the toaster because the slot is too small and the toast is too thick' as she plays in the role play area.

Two computers provide children with opportunities to develop good skills in information technology and communication. They select and use a range of educational games confidently to develop hand-eye coordination using the mouse. Although creative materials are available, there is limited time during the very organised day for children to access these. Much of the creative work is adult-led giving children few opportunities to use their imagination to design and express their own creativity. However, children talk excitedly about an activity to make treasure maps. They recall dipping paper into tea and coffee and scrunching it together to make 'old parchment' when it dried and watching carefully as the edges were burned by a staff member to add to the authenticity. There are very limited opportunities to play with natural resources such as sand and water.

Children enjoy a practise session for the forthcoming sports day. They develop a sense of space as they line up to take part in their race and try hard to do their best. A child, reluctant to join in running events, joins in 'throwing the beanbag' and receives applause from peers and adults for his effort. Children develop healthy body awareness and discuss the positive effects of milk and fruit at snack time to develop strong bones and teeth. They listen intently as they are reminded to bring sun hats and drinks for sports day as the forecast is for hot weather. When asked why water is important, a child replies 'because we get hot in the sun and it helps to stop us sweating'.

Children take part in weekly organised physical education sessions with a specialist in this subject. They access a range of equipment to enhance physical skills. However, there are no resources available at the mid-morning and afternoon play times and children wander aimlessly about.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents is good. They receive good information about the setting through a clear and concise prospectus which includes daily routines, learning structures and advice on supporting children's learning at home. Parents are advised to share in children's learning and development using books and stories to assist in their early reading and writing skills. A questionnaire, completed by parents prior to place commencement, provides staff with an overall knowledge about children's individual needs and starting points for early education.

Children attend 'settling sessions' during the term before they commence. These consist of morning sessions with the option for children to stay for lunch. This enables them to become familiar with daily routines and involvement in the school environment as they eat in the main hall with older school pupils.

Parents attend a parents' evening approximately two weeks into the Autumn term when most children commence. This enables them to meet and discuss any initial issues and form relationships with staff. Arrangements are made for parents of children commencing during other terms to discuss issues with staff. Two further evenings are arranged during the school year to discuss children's progress. Termly reports, with reference to the six areas of learning, are issued prior to these meetings so parents are fully informed about their children's progress.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. The nursery teacher has a clear vision for the setting and has identified areas of improvement and is acting on some of these. New initiatives are planned to improve opportunities for outside play but have yet to be implemented to impact on children's enjoyment and learning.

The staff work well together as a team to provide for children's learning and development and support them in small and large group activities. However, consistent teaching methods are not always maintained to ensure children's individual capabilities are recognised and valued and methods are adapted appropriately to meet their learning needs.

Children benefit from a well-planned curriculum which is based on a two-year cycle so no topics or themes are repeated during a child's presence. Good systems are established to evaluate the curriculum and the impact of planned activities on children's learning.

Inclusive practice ensures that children are included in all aspects within the kindergarten and the school. Children are greeted warmly and benefit from high adult ratios and receive individual support to meet most of their needs. Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **The Quality and Standards of the Nursery Education**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:  
The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

What must be done to secure further improvement?

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further, the registered person should take account of the following recommendations:

- improve opportunities for children to explore and experiment with natural materials and improve the provision for outside play;
- provide an environment with an equal balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities so children learn through a broad variety of learning experiences and can express their own imagination and creativity;
- ensure children's individual achievements are recognised and their efforts are valued in their learning development.