

The Elms Private Nursery School Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY363632
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Inspector	Angela Rowley
Setting Address	The Elms Private Nursery Ltd, 717-719 Blackburn Road, Bolton, Lancashire, BL1 7JJ
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Registered person	The Elms Private Nursery 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 good. 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?

The Elms Private Nursery School Ltd has been open since 1990. It was taken over in 2007 by the daughter of the previous owner, who also manages the provision. The nursery operates from two adjoining Victorian houses, converted to provide day care. It is situated in a residential area of Astley Bridge, Bolton. The whole of the ground floor is used for children's care. An enclosed area is available for outside play.

The nursery may care for a maximum of 56 children at any one time. It operates each weekday from 08.00 until 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. At present there are 85 children on roll, of whom 33 are in receipt of funded nursery education.

The nursery employs 19 staff to provide care for the children, the majority of whom hold suitable early years qualifications. The manager holds a supernumerary position and domestic staff are also employed. The nursery receives support visits from Bolton early years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

A range of mostly effective procedures help protect children's health. The nursery and equipment are kept to a good standard of cleanliness, aided by the provision of domestic staff with specific cleaning responsibilities. Staff use protective clothing in addition to antibacterial spray when nappy changing. They ensure that children use individually labelled bedding and are adequately provided with individual face and change mat cloths each day. Clear procedures ensure the safe administration of medicines, although the recording procedures are inconsistently followed leaving some records without specific details of administration to support the parental request and consent. An adequate number of staff hold a current first aid certificate, although most have recently expired and are awaiting the imminent training which is booked for them.

Children are learning about being healthy. They clean their teeth after mealtimes and they routinely drink water from their own individual sports bottles and cups. They exercise for short periods each day in the fresh air and sunlight, and babies sleep outside safely. The provision for children's physical development enables children to enjoy physical exercise. They enjoy using the outside area which provides a range of opportunities to refine physical skills and explore the interesting natural grounds. However, it is not used routinely to provide opportunities that link to other areas of the curriculum to enable children who prefer playing outdoors to access a wide range of provision. Children use the interesting and challenging range of equipment very confidently. They run through the concrete tunnels, balance on top, run up the steps on the climbing frame and slide, and they ride the trikes and bikes at speed. Weekly outings to the swimming pool and commercial gym sessions broaden children's experiences and development opportunities. Indoors, a wide range of opportunities are provided within continuous provision that facilitate the development of children's fine motor skills.

All children have a diet which includes many healthy options. The nursery cook prepares freshly made meals each day including fresh fruit and vegetables. Individual dietary requirements are taken account of in all meal planning including the provision of differently blended meals for babies at different stages of weaning. This enables all children, including young babies, to eat the full compliment of fresh nursery food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery is very welcoming for children. The premises retain a homely feel and are clean and brightly decorated throughout. Space is well planned to provide separate rooms to cater for children at different stages in their development. A wide range of good quality furnishings and equipment throughout the nursery ensures that all children's play and care needs are met. Babies benefit from some domestic style furniture which allows them to be comforted when needed or to pull themselves up on familiar sturdy equipment, whilst pre-school children benefit from well planned space which enables them to access a wide range of activities and resources provided in sectioned off areas using low level dividing units.

Attention to safety is good. Staff routinely headcount to ensure they know how many children they have in and out at any one time. Clear systems are in place for signing children and staff in and out of the building. Children's security is given high priority. Close circuit television is used at the key entrance and exit points, although it is not always monitored, and staff are

vigilant regarding authorised persons to collect the children. Everyone is familiar with emergency evacuation procedures because they are practised regularly. Attention to maintenance is satisfactory. Routine servicing of electrical equipment and fire servicing equipment takes place and general risk assessments are completed. Health and safety audits are occasionally conducted although these do not always focus upon or identify maintenance issues, for example, the overgrown areas including ivy in the outside grounds and the loose coping tiles on the garage roof.

Children are suitably safeguarded. Key staff have a clear understanding of general procedures to follow in the event of concerns, although they have not updated their training to ensure they are following the most current local procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are settled and appear happy to be in the nursery. Many have formed secure relationships with their key workers who know them well. Informally, staff know what children can do. Through play and everyday interactions they provide many opportunities, which help them make progress in their own unique ways. For example, when a toddler attempts to pedal a large trike their keyworker notices and provides a smaller trike to support them. The child succeeds and gains confidence riding around the playground happily. The written assessments, next steps and planning of activities, however, are not as focused. Babies are nurtured and staff spend time giving them cuddles or rocking them off to sleep when needed. They largely follow their own routines for sleep and activity and staff quickly recognise when they are tired.

A wide range of interesting activities and experiences are provided for all children. Many activities promoting sensory stimulation are provided, encouraging babies and young children to explore. Young children have enjoyed play with spaghetti, jelly and paint alongside exploring the contents of natural objects in treasure bags. All children develop creativity and imagination because of the focus on 'make and do' sessions, small world and role play, and many conduct their routine play whilst dressed up as a fairy or bridesmaid.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A clear planning system ensures that children are provided with a good range of meaningful experiences and activities. This includes a broad range of continuous provision that is routinely enhanced to provide interesting areas for children to explore. For example, water play is enhanced with under the sea creatures, sponges and shiny pebbles, whilst in the sand children dig for buried dinosaurs. Staff understand the focus of the activities they deliver although differentiation is not clearly planned for in either focused activities or group sessions in to meet individual development needs and learning styles.

Children have a positive attitude to learning and acquire new knowledge and skills as they join in the good range of activities. They concentrate during group sessions aided by the teaching aids, such as finger puppets used to grab children's attention. During story time they show good listening skills and comprehension, for example, they know the names of the fruit and the animal that gave 'Handa' her surprise. They join in with the parts they are familiar with and confidently answer questions afterwards. They are provided with a range of opportunities to recognise their own names, such as on their trays, in the mark making area, and to stick on the wall to indicate they have had a turn on the computer. More-able children also use their name cards to form some of the letters in their names. Children count confidently. Many children are

able to count to 10 and beyond aided by staff's everyday practice, such as doing the headcount. They see number and shape all around their environment and, consequently, even the youngest children are able to recognise a rectangle shape forming in the parallel lines they have drawn. More-able children match numerals to the dots on the fish using the interactive sticky board.

Children are independent in their self-care. They independently go to wash their hands after spaghetti play and they brush their teeth after lunch. The effective organisation of the environment encourages independent thinking as children are able to access their own drinks when they are thirsty and make choices in the range of opportunities they access. Children play imaginatively with the small world toys and are supported well in pretend play. They pack a case and name countries that they are going to fly off to then discuss how long it will take to get there, showing a sense of time as well as concepts of 'more' and 'less'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are loved and valued as individuals. Consistent key staff ensure that the personal routines of babies are followed and that their health and learning needs are known and met. Consequently, children new to the nursery settle quickly. Staff work positively to provide support to children with learning difficulties. They are developing their awareness of local procedures and work closely with external agencies in seeking advice and support to plan the next steps. Opportunities for children to experience diversity are built into everyday play. Pre-school children access a range of resources which promote positive images of the wider world, such as dolls, books, posters and attractive silks and ethnic dress. Staff also have access to some good quality resource bags which support this theme.

Behaviour within the nursery is good. Children are dealt with sensitively and so in turn they show care and concern for each other. Clear boundaries and expectations for behaviour are set and so children know about the 'nursery rules' and know that there are limits for the number of children allowed in each play area at any time. Their self esteem is boosted when they are given responsibilities, for example, setting the dinner table and when they receive recognition and rewards when they have done well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Effective verbal and written communication with parents ensures that information about children's needs is shared. Informative nursery brochures are shared with parents as their child progresses through nursery. This clearly informs them about how the nursery and each room operates. Regular newsletters keep them informed about the provision and forthcoming events. The parents of the youngest children receive some written information about their child's care each day.

The partnerships with parents of children receiving funded nursery education are good. In addition to a comprehensive nursery prospectus parents receive a good range of on-going information. Daily activity sheets are displayed. Parents are also encouraged to become involved in children's learning through suggestions of activities to do at home in newsletters linked to each theme. Children take 'Milly' or 'Billy' bear home where parents are invited to help their child record what they have done with the bear at home and to share the information with the children at nursery. A library book system is also in operation. Parents are informed about their child's progress through an annual parents' evening.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are settled and confident in their relationships with a consistent staff team. All staff hold suitable early years qualifications and most exceed minimum requirements. Some staff show commitment to enhancing their knowledge and skills, although there is currently no system of ensuring that identified areas for development are followed up, including the updating of some first aid certificates. Clear recruitment and selection procedures ensure that safe, suitably experienced staff are employed to work with the children.

The leadership and management of the funded nursery education is good. The management team focuses on staff self-evaluation to help identify strengths of the provision and drive future improvements. For example, staff have conducted the setting's self evaluation programme as a team. Through regular observations of sessions, examinations of written plans and assessments of children's progress, they develop a practical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in relation to the quality of teaching. Consultation exercises with parents' and use of parents comment sheets helps them continually monitor quality. Some staff training linked to future development has taken place.

All required records are maintained. Additionally, a comprehensive operational plan is in place and is regularly reviewed. Further documentation kept in the interests of good practice, for example, daily diaries for babies and admission questionnaires, ensures that the needs of children are known and met.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- improve medication recording systems so that consistently clear information is recorded about administration
- improve staff development systems to enhance staff skills in identified areas and to keep staff certificates, such as first aid, regularly updated
- improve maintenance procedures particularly in relation to the outside grounds and identified issues, such as the garage roof.

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):

- continue to develop clear links between assessments of children's learning, identified next steps and plans which differentiate to meet the learning needs of all children (also applies to care)
- continue to develop use of the outdoor area to enhance learning across all areas of the curriculum and to meet different learning styles.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk