

# Letter Box Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

---

**Unique reference number** EY369169  
**Inspection date** 30/09/2008  
**Inspector** Lynn Denise Smith

**Setting address** Letter Box Day Nursery, 99 High Street, Walton On The Naze, EssexCO14 8BA  
**Telephone number** 01255 851400  
**Email** letterboxdaynursery@tiscali.co.uk  
**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## Description of the setting

Letter Box Nursery is privately owned and managed. It opened in 2008 and operates from a converted Post Office Sorting office in Walton on the Naze. A ramp to the hall entrance means that the premises are easily accessible. The setting is currently operating in phase one of its intended building. This comprises of one large playroom with integral toilets, milk kitchen and baby changing room. A maximum of 26 children aged from birth to eight years may attend the setting at any one time. The group is open five days a week from 08:30 to 17:30 for fifty weeks of the year.

There are currently 34 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They live in the local and surrounding areas.

There are six members of staff, including the owner who manages the early years provision. Five of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting is part of a local Children's Centre and works closely with other settings connected with the centre. The setting is registered on the Early Years Childcare Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, Letter Box Nursery provides satisfactorily for children in the EYFS. Their welfare is suitably met and children develop clear knowledge about keeping safe and healthy. The premises are welcoming and well-presented, however, do not currently provide a conducive environment to meet the needs of all children. Procedures to promote inclusive practice are in place, but are not always being fully implemented. Systems to monitor practice are not yet sufficiently robust, for example, planning and assessment practices are not effectively evidencing children's abilities and the next steps in their learning.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop a systematic and routine approach to using observations
- use assessment to plan the next steps in a child's developmental progress and regularly review this approach
- review current systems to ensure that the individual needs of all children are met. This is with regards to the deployment of staff, the organisation of the premises and the specific requirements of all children attending.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

A clear and effective safeguarding policy is in place which ensures that children are well-protected. Staff are employed by the providers using their robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure that they employ the right people. Some provision is in place for the provider to monitor and evaluate the setting, however, the policies and procedures to reflect inclusion are not being effectively put into practice by all staff. Regular meetings are held with the manager to discuss the day-to-day operation of the provision and the current building work which is taking place. The implementation of practices and procedures with regard to observation and assessment of the children has not been effectively monitored during the setting's early days. This has resulted in poor record keeping in respect of observation, assessment and future planning for the next steps in children's learning.

Staff are motivated and keen and are building close working relationships through regular meetings. They are supported by the larger staff team who work at the setting's sister group and effective provision is in place to ensure that adequate numbers of staff are always on hand to provide cover should the need arise. Staff are encouraged to participate in further training both in-house and externally.

The setting is developing good links with the children's parents and other outside agencies. It is part of a local Children's Centre and works closely with other local settings.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children attending this setting are provided with a range of opportunities to help them make progress across all areas of learning and development. Their welfare requirements are suitably met to enable them to stay safe and well. They are provided with good opportunities to make choices about their play and learning as the equipment and resources are effectively presented in low-level storage units for easy self-selection. Children develop an understanding about keeping safe and healthy as they follow the staff's clear directions. They understand the importance of good hygiene practices and demonstrate an awareness of their own needs by informing staff when they want to use the bathroom and when they are hungry. Children have some opportunities to participate in physical activities when they go for walks in the local area and to use the large scale play equipment in the park. A good selection of nutritious and healthy meals and snacks are provided for children. Their individual dietary requirements are met well and children thoroughly enjoy sharing these important times of the day with their friends.

Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of how to create a safe and secure environment for children. They carry out daily risk assessments of the premises to ensure that they are safe. Staff risk assess the walks and trips they take children on prior to embarking upon their outing. Staff understand the setting's safeguarding policy and implement this effectively.

Children are currently cared for in one room. Whilst the current set-up of the room is well-organised and provides a bright, colourful and welcoming environment, it does not effectively enable staff to meet the needs of all the children. It limits their ability to provide a calm, secure base for either the babies or the older children on days when the setting is busy.

Planning for the EYFS is in place and all staff play an active role in developing the planning through a weekly meeting. The staff are beginning to use the children's interests to develop future activities and to tailor the planning to meet children's individual needs. At present, however, the planning for individual children is not evidenced effectively to help staff to identify the next steps in their learning. Children are cared for by an individual key person who meets with parents and establishes knowledge and information regarding their child. There is a procedure in place for assessing and recording children's abilities and progress, however, the process is in the early stages of development and does not currently reflect an accurate picture of each child's stage of development.

Children actively participate in a range of activities which enhance their communication language and literacy. They chat freely with staff and enjoy looking at the interesting selection of books. They are beginning to draw and make marks in a range of ways, however, have few opportunities to begin writing recognisable letters or their names. Children learn about nature and the local environment through topics and themes, such as, nature and autumn. Staff and children bring a selection of natural products found in the woods to nursery and explore these items by feeling them and talking about them. Children enjoy exploring paints and creative materials. They participate in activities which enable them to feel a range of textures such as gloop, dough and shaving foam. Access to technical equipment is limited. Children enjoy construction and model making. Children's knowledge of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy is extended through appropriate equipment and everyday activities. Children are caring towards each other. They play well and enjoy each other's company. Children learn about right and wrong through the staff's effective guidance. Children have opportunities to participate in role play and imaginative play and they thoroughly enjoy expressing themselves through the range of dressing up clothes.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	3
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

## **Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted**

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

### **Detail of the complaint/s**

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted.

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