

The School House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY265818
Inspection date	19/03/2009
Inspector	Ann Bamford
Setting address	Meins Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 6QF
Telephone number	01254 689808
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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 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

The School House Nursery was registered to the current provider, a limited company, in 2003. It operates from both ground and first floor rooms in a detached property in the Billinge area of Blackburn. There is level access to the building. There is an enclosed area available for outside play.

The facility is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 55 children may attend the setting at any one time. The facility is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year.

The facility employs eight childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are currently undertaking Early Years Foundation Degrees. The manager currently works alongside staff for the majority of the working day. There is also a cook and part-time cleaner in employment. The setting receives support from the local authority early years team.

At the time of inspection there were 63 children on roll, of whom all are in the early years age range, and of these, 22 children are in receipt of the Nursery Education Grant. The setting supports children who have learning difficulties and have English as an additional language.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the provision is inadequate. Children are not fully treated as individuals. Their needs cannot consistently be met as the organisation of staffing allows little flexibility in order for children to have their individual needs met. Though the setting gathers quality information from parents on each child's requirements and needs as they enter the setting, it is unable to provide experiences which meet every child's needs with regard to development and how children spend their time. Children make some progress in their learning and development as a result of staff planning enjoyable learning experiences for them.

Children's welfare is not fully maintained in the setting. The recruitment and selection processes are not sufficiently robust to ensure that all adults who have contact with them are suitable to be so. The setting has established partnership with parents in some areas. Staff engage in discussions with parents as they enter and leave the setting. However, parents receive limited information about how their individual child is progressing in their development as a result of being in the nursery. Staff have a robust ability to evaluate their own practice. However, development from this is impeded as a result of lack of time and other resources needed to drive forward improvements.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- ensure that there is a clear policy and procedure in place for safeguarding children which includes the action to be taken in the event of an allegation about an adult (Safeguarding and Welfare) (also applies to the compulsory part of the Childcare Register) 02/04/2009
- ensure that all staff who work with children are suitable to do so (Suitability of adults) (also applies to the compulsory part of the Childcare Register) 02/04/2009
- ensure that there are effective systems in place to ensure that the individual needs of each child are met (Organisation) 02/04/2009
- ensure that there is a balance of adult-led and freely chosen or child-initiated activities through both indoor and outdoor play (Organisation) 02/04/2009
- provide and plan experiences which meet each child's individual needs and stage of development as they progress through the early learning goals (Organisation) 02/04/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting has undergone a period of immense change. Many members of staff and the management team of the nursery are very new in post. Many of the records required for safe care of children were not in place at the time of staff changeovers and this has had an impact on the care of children. The current staff have worked hard to implement effective record-keeping. However, the lack of records, for example of suitability of staff, means that the setting cannot demonstrate how it ensures children's safety by demonstrating that adults who care for children are suitable to do so. All staff hold relevant childcare qualifications and three staff are currently undertaking foundation degrees. As a result of this children are starting to benefit from staff knowledge and understanding of children's development. However, during the inspection children were largely cared for as groups rather than as individuals. This impedes children's experience of care which meet their individual needs.

Staff in the setting at the time of inspection work very hard to ensure that minimum ratios required for childcare were maintained. However, the deployment of staff is based on the minimum requirements and allows little time for adults to spend individual time talking and playing with children. This impedes the rate at which individual children learn.

Adults in the setting have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery and are highly committed to providing an enjoyable and challenging experience for children. The lack of resources in terms of time and the quality of resources impedes their ability to do this effectively. Staff identify areas that need improvement, for example the maintenance of the building and the lack of resources, such as toys and equipment. However, the speed at which this moves forward is not sufficient to meet the needs of the children in the nursery. Toys and equipment in the tweeny room are sufficient to meet the needs of children cared for there. However, babies and older children have insufficient resources to meet all their needs and this impacts on the quality of care they receive.

In all areas of the nursery staff are able to make risk assessments in order to keep children safe. However, the lack of time and organisation of staffing means that many children are denied access to areas of outdoor play that they desire for large parts of the day. This impedes their ability to take the risks associated with climbing, pedalling and playing outdoors. Children are not fully safe in the nursery as not all staff are aware of how to act in the event of a concern about a member of staff.

The nursery's capacity for improvement since the last inspection is unable to be measured. There have been recent significant changes in management and staff, and many records are not available, therefore, it is not possible to assess the changes that the nursery has made since the last inspection. However, the current staff team have produced a detailed action plan and have made significant improvements to the decoration, production of policies and procedures, increases in toys and equipment, and planning for groups of children to have enjoyable learning experiences which provide opportunities for development. Although each of these areas is currently not fully meeting children's needs, staff commitment to do so is high.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are making some progress in their development whilst in the nursery. However, this is significantly impeded by lack of staff time to spend with individual children in order to observe what they can already do and plan the next steps in their development. The nursery has begun to implement the Early Years Foundation Stage and has started to make observations on individual children. However, it has not yet reached the stage where it plans next steps for individual children and this impedes children's progress. Staff do planned activities in all six areas of early learning for groups of children. Children enjoy experiences, such as exploring shaving foam, making Mothers Day spoons, and obtaining their own drinks from the water dispensers in each room. However, the rate at which children make progress is slow as activities are planned but are adult-led. There is insufficient time to plan individual next steps for children. This fails to provide the challenge needed in order for individual children to move forward in a sustained way. Children do learn some independence skills, for example, to wash their hands following use of the toilet and how to pour and carry their own drinks. However, their development of the ability to pedal, climb and run is slowed as children grow.

The outdoor equipment in the nursery is suitable for children aged under three. This limits the achievements of older children whilst in the nursery. In addition, children of all ages have limited access to the outdoor environment as staffing levels are insufficient, particularly over break periods, to allow children any choice in activities as they wait for sleeping children to awaken. As a consequence, children are bored and restless at times during the day. Children are developing some sorting and self-help skills as they help set and clear tables at lunchtime. They are developing some ability to apply reasoning and numeracy in a practical way as they define whether there are sufficient plates and cutlery for the number of children at the table. However, the rate at which this moves forward is impeded as staff are involved in clearing away and cleaning and are therefore unable to challenge children's learning at this time. This fails to meet children's needs. In addition, staff move around groups of children frequently which impedes their ability to know where children's starting point are. Although the setting gathers information on such things as a child's first language, the use of this cannot be seen in practice when working with children.

Parents are provided with information about the setting and have recently been given new policies and procedures. Staff are beginning to observe what children can do but are not yet using this to plan next steps for individual children and agreeing this with parents. As a result, parents are not aware of the progress children are making and until very recently some parents have been unhappy with the service provided for their children.

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

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	4

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	4
How well are children safeguarded?	4

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	4
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	4
How well are children helped to stay safe?	4
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	4
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

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (CR2) 02/04/2009
- take action as specified in the early years report (CR3) 02/04/2009