

The Cottages Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY375589
Inspection date	19/03/2009
Inspector	Hazel Christine White

Setting address	The Cottages, 54 King Street, Leicester, LE1 6RN
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises
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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

The Cottages Pre-School opened in 2008 and is situated in Leicester City Centre. The setting is one of two settings which are privately owned and managed by D.H. Nursery Limited. It is housed in a row of seven cottages with a large open covered atrium space. The premises are on two levels, there is no lift access to the first floor. The rooms are inter-connected and the atrium provides children with opportunities for physical play. Children are also taken to local recreational areas on a daily basis to have fresh air and exercise. The pre-school covers a wide catchment area, as most parents travel to work in Leicester.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 50 children on roll, all of whom are within the early year's age range. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language. The group opens five days a week all year round from 07.45 until 18.00. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions.

The setting employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager has an early years degree and is in the process of completing Early Years Professional Status. There is two staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the provision is good. Children are happy and settled in a relaxed environment. All children are effectively supported by enthusiastic and caring staff and the valuable partnerships with parents and carers ensure individual needs are closely met. The pre-school practice is fully inclusive where all children are valued and treated with equal concern. Good capacity to maintain continuous improvement is demonstrated through well-organised systems of monitoring and assessment and regular staff appraisals are used to identify training needs.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- use number and mathematical language in a variety of situations to increase children's counting skills and understanding of adding and subtracting
- explore ways of increasing children's independence during meal times.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The effective leadership, management and staff relationships promote efficient team work. An effective recruitment and induction programme together with

robust vetting procedures ensure that all adults working with the children are suitable to do so. On-going suitability of staff is monitored through an appraisal system, whilst regular staff meetings are held to ensure staff have ongoing opportunities to discuss their practice, views and ideas. The staff work together well, they are enthusiastic, dedicated to their work and are deployed effectively. The manager has attended the Early Years Foundation Stage training and staff have received in-house training to ensure that children's individual care and learning needs are fully supported.

Policies and procedures are in place to suitably safeguard children. Risk assessments are still being developed to ensure that they include everything which a child may come into contact with and children's attendance records are generally well-kept. Staff undertake daily checks of the premises and written records to evidence that this has taken place are adequately maintained. Some staff have attended training in child protection and this knowledge is underpinned by a clear policy which is shared with parents. Staff have a sound understanding of their role in safeguarding children and are clear about the procedures to put into practice when necessary and this means children are kept safe from harm.

Key persons are assigned to individual children to monitor their development and to form notable relationships with parents and carers. The inclusive approach ensures all children's needs are met and arrangements are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language. There is a daily exchange of information between staff and parents and regular parents evenings are held whereby they can spend quality time talking to staff about their child's progress. Parents receive good information about the nursery, for example, through notice boards, newsletters and leaflets. The results of a recent questionnaire confirm that parents are happy with the service provided and they comment on the friendliness of staff and how effectively they support their children.

The useful methods of self-evaluation have improved staffs understanding of elements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the welfare requirements. Systems have been reviewed to include the opinions of staff, parents and carers. For example, introducing a parent questionnaire and using this information effectively to evaluate practice and make changes which have a positive impact on the children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

All children enjoy the balance of adult-led, freely chosen and child-led activities. Staff's good interaction extends discussions and challenges the children with realistic goals across the six areas of learning and development. Valuable systematic and spontaneous observations are recorded well within individual learning records. Key workers use this information to identify learning styles and to plan activities for individual children's next steps. Children use their environment well and have free play sessions both morning and afternoon whereby they can access both levels to play with their favourite resources.

Children enjoy being creative and make pictures, using paints, pencils and pens. They engage easily in conversation with each other and in small groups and confidently introduce themselves to visitors and enquire what they are doing in the pre-school. Children listen intently to stories and are extending their vocabulary by learning words such as author and illustrator. In the role play area they select favourite outfits for dressing-up and have great fun picnicking with their friends. Construction toys are popular for building towers and comparing size and dimensions. The nature area enables children to learn about textures and the natural world. They follow visual aids to help them recognise numbers and count. For example, a card shows three fir cones, or two pebbles and children count out the required amount from the basket. Number and mathematical language to increase children's counting skills and understanding of adding and subtracting is less evident in everyday routines and situations. Therefore they do not fully extend their skills in this area.

Children show particular interest in using programmable toys and information technology. They competently use the computer, directing the mouse to the icon they require and choosing the colours they wish to use to draw pictures and make patterns. The remote controlled bees cause great laughter as they try to make them go in the right direction. Musical instruments are readily available; children select their own and listen to the sound it makes. They happily sing along to music and have a good repertoire of songs and rhymes.

Outside children thoroughly enjoy the open spaces of local parks. They balance and climb on frames and slide down and eagerly ask staff to push them when they are on the swings. A large covered indoor area enables children plenty of space to play football and other structured games, ride wheeled toys and select from varied equipment such as bats, balls and hoops. Photographs, which are displayed, show children taking advantage of the recent snow by building snow structures, throwing snow balls and exploring the changes to the environment.

Children behave well, they learn to negotiate, share toys, take turns with equipment and show consideration for each other as they play together. They respond positively to the calm manner used by staff and to their well-directed praise. Staff encourage children to learn about their own and other's safety through discussion, for example reminding children of stranger danger and road safety. Children understand that they must not throw sand because it could get in their eyes and are actively encouraged to tidy away when they have finished playing to prevent a tripping hazard.

Positive steps are taken to promote children's good health and well-being including minimising the risks of cross infection and by following sound procedures when children are ill. All staff have a current first aid certificate. Children develop their own personal hygiene skills, through independent toileting and reminders to wash their hands. They learn the importance of healthy eating as they are provided with an excellent range of nutritional balanced meals and snacks which are freshly prepared by the chef at the other nursery, which is in close proximity to this setting. Food is safely transported in an insulated trolley and probed before being served to ensure it is at the correct temperature. Therefore, food is prepared and served in accordance with food hygiene legislation. Menus are varied and good

information is gathered about children's dietary needs to ensure that they can eat safely. The independence of more able children is not actively encouraged at meal times. For example, they are not involved in helping to set the tables and pour their own drinks. Children sit together with their friends in a relaxed atmosphere. There is ample food for children to have seconds, and many do. They are not rushed and good manners are encouraged.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
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?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

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

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

Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.