

Alphabets Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY263151
Inspection date	24/02/2009
Inspector	Susan Jennifer Scott / Freeda Wildon
Setting address	2 Hillary Road, Penenden Heath, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 2JP
Telephone number	01622 762045
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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 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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

Description of the setting

Alphabets Nursery opened under new management in April 2003. It operates from three main rooms in a converted shop in the residential area of Penenden Heath, Maidstone. The nursery serves the local and surrounding area. There is a secure outside play area.

The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00 hours. It is registered to care for up to 36 children in the early years age group. There are currently 52 children on roll. This includes 18 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who have English as a second language are welcome.

Eight staff including the manager have early years qualifications and there is a cook. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. There are excellent individual learning plans, which are developed in collaboration with other agencies or parents in order to provide very good support for all children. Staff provide sensitive support for children's needs and ensure that no individuals are disadvantaged. All the children really enjoy their time in the nursery and are confident because their contributions are valued and this successfully promotes their independence. Staff successfully strive to promote their welfare through reflective practice and excellent self-evaluation. Parents have seen and commented favourably on the evaluation, acknowledging the exceptional practice at this setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- ensuring staff preparing meals receive training in food hygiene matters
- assessing the risks to children in relation to the use of the outdoor slide and taking action to minimise these

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager uses her expertise to enable staff to become familiar with the framework and assessment process so that they can enable all the children to achieve good progress. There are well established systems to enable staff to contribute to evaluations and plan for children's individual learning effectively. The strong leadership of the stable staff team is recognised by the provider, who promotes their autonomy. There is very good support for staff training, which

underpins their positive approach to improvement; this has also enabled the manager to complete the kitemark accreditation and introduce vigorous systems to build upon the quality of provision. The positive outcomes for children are the result of staff commitment and investment in the nursery.

There are up to date policies and procedures in place that benefit children and their families and support staff in their work. For example, staff are able to contribute their knowledge and skills through regular staff meetings and, as a result, children's welfare, care and learning are of exceptional quality. The manager and staff have completed a comprehensive self-evaluation and identified improvements they wish to make, as well as instituting changes after monitoring the delivery of the programme.

Parents confirm that children benefit from the close links with the nursery and all the staff. The required documentation required is all in place and the provider prepares monthly, informative newsletters which are shared with all parents. There are systems to encourage children and parents to contribute information and expertise and this supports children's enthusiasm for their play and learning. For example, children regularly bring items for the show and tell group time and it is clear their contributions and ideas are listened to and valued. Parents have good opportunities to see examples of work their children have done, and receive regular updates on their progress. The nursery provides information about the curriculum in various languages, as well as information on activities. Users of the nursery benefit from questionnaires which are used to ascertain levels of satisfaction and suggestions for improvement. The setting has continually improved facilities by investing in new resources, such as the outside awning to enable frequent use of the garden in all weathers.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children benefit from practitioners' secure knowledge of the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff observations and assessments of children show a very good understanding of child development and are used to build up meaningful individual learning plans. Children are confident and secure as staff work together effectively, evaluating daily experiences to get to know them well and using this information to support their planning. Staff ensure there are regular and frequent assessments to identify plans to support children's progress in all six areas of the curriculum. The planning of activities is based upon the interests of individual children, which results in high levels of engagement. Children are making excellent progress because the staff support and value their individual contributions to activities and base their plans on extending children's skills and knowledge. Most activities and plans are chosen by the children who are able to initiate their own choices because of the accessibility of toys and resources. Staff evaluation is perceptive and accurate and leads to good decision making about the programmes for learning and the organisation of the facilities.

Children derive great benefits from the free flow play between the indoor and outdoor environments which are well organised and promote a variety of interesting play and learning opportunities. They express their interest in nature

through discussing their observations of bulbs and plants they are growing and the wildlife they observe. They communicate their ideas and questions with great confidence and staff encourage them skilfully; for example, children are building a pretend camp fire and staff suggest red crepe paper could represent the flames. Children show great enjoyment when they share books and discuss stories, re-enacting them in their imaginative play. Staff happily enable children to endorse their imaginative play during routines when they decide to be characters from nursery rhymes or stories, and extend this to promote role play amongst many younger children who are developing their understanding of roles.

Children show enthusiasm for dance and movement, engaging in write dance which is very successful in supporting their developing coordination. This results in children becoming confident writers, spontaneously signing their names on the white board and writing their names on work. Staff utilise frequent opportunities for children to build upon their understanding of numbers and calculations through conversations about quantity and shapes. One young child responds with confidence when asked if he would like a quarter or half of an apple.

Children's welfare is successfully promoted because the staff treat all children with respect, for example, by asking if they would like their nappy changed before embarking on the process. This results in children understanding how to treat each other with respect. Children's behaviour shows consideration for others, for instance a pre-school child immediately fetches a tissue for a baby playing in the garden when an adult requests this. Children learn about self care and healthy routines as these are encouraged through good procedures that promote children's independence, such as washing, brushing their teeth, and mealtimes.

Children learn valuable lessons from the whole group eating together, such as learning to listen to others. They learn to take turns and show very good awareness of the rules which they discuss. Children enjoy their meals at the nursery, they are able to select from a good range of fruit and vegetables, and the introduction of hot meals has increased their healthy appetites. A recent health inspection resulted in the award of five stars for the nursery. The person who cooks the children's food has not yet had training in food hygiene, although a place is booked on a course in the near future, and other staff have had this training so are able to offer support.

The extensive risk assessments and frequent cleaning and checking routines promote a sense of freedom and security amongst all children. This enables babies and the younger children to confidently join older groups of children and staff skilfully nurture this by offering plentiful opportunities to visit siblings in other rooms or to wander into these rooms to observe and to join in. Staff are skilled at treating each child as unique, establishing their interests, knowing backgrounds and supporting these through the use of my family photo books and a good understanding of individual routines and needs. A minor safety issue was discussed during the inspection as there is a slight risk to children in relation to the use of the outdoor slide because there is no safety matting to protect them from injuries if they fall.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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 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 the last inspection.

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.