

Silks Farm Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY387704
Inspection date	03/07/2009
Inspector	Clare Elizabeth Pook

Setting address	Silks Farm Nursery School, St. Ives Road, Somersham, HUNTINGDON, Cambridgeshire, PE28 3ET
Telephone number	01487843525
Email	
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

Silks Farm Nursery School is a privately owned provision. It opened in 1995 and has been under current ownership since 2008. It operates from six rooms in a converted barn. It is situated in between the village of Somersham and the small town of St Ives in Cambridgeshire. There is level access to the premises. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 19.00, throughout the year. All children share access to two secure play areas, nature reserve and extensive grounds.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 94 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) may attend at any one time. The nursery is currently caring for 155 children in the EYFS, some of which are part-time places. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel to work in and around Somersham and St Ives. The nursery supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 28 staff, 19 of which hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff members are working towards a recognised qualification and one member towards Early Years Professional Status. The nursery also makes provision for children older than the early years and is therefore registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the provision is good. Children are making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's uniqueness is recognised, respected and valued. Their individual needs regarding their routine care and learning requirements are met well. The leadership and management of the setting is strong with an effective system of self-evaluation in place. The staff team work well together, identifying strengths and areas for improvement and where necessary promptly address areas of concern, thus striving to improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide more opportunities for older children to select and use activities and resources independently
- develop systems to provide a summary of children's achievements so that their progress can be tracked
- ensure the outdoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys are safe and suitable for their purpose. (This relates to the outdoor paved garden and limited resources/storage for self-selection.)

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure records are accurately maintained for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children. (Documentation)

06/07/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The majority of the setting's documentation is effective and well maintained. The management generally oversee and monitor these records, however, not all accident records in the under twos unit contain the necessary detail. An inaccuracy in the recording of attendance records in the pre-school means not all staff are aware of the children to be accounted for. Together these errors impact on children's safety. The management, however, demonstrated the systems they use to ensure these inaccuracies are not repeated and continue to monitor these records.

Policies and procedures are understood by staff, are shared with parents and reflect practice well. Risk assessments are mostly effective and ensure action is taken to minimise hazards to children, such as not using certain areas of the premises. The main paved area in the garden is in poor condition, but action has been taken, such as placing furniture over uneven ground as a temporary solution. Staff are able to protect children from harm or neglect as they have a good understanding of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and signs and symptoms of child abuse. Children are learning about how to keep themselves safe through practical activities, such as appropriate use of equipment and through topic work.

Staff are appropriately qualified, or working towards recognised qualifications. Robust recruitment procedures are in place ensuring children are looked after by suitable staff. Staff are committed to training and have undertaken recent courses, both in-house and through external sources such as behaviour management and EYFS training. The staff and management work well as a team, striving towards better outcomes for children. This is done through effective monitoring of staff, use of appraisals and action plans which clearly identify weaker areas to build on for improvement. This has a positive impact on children's welfare and learning.

Staff are deployed throughout the nursery ensuring that staff who are first aid qualified are present in each room. Appropriately experienced and qualified staff work directly with children and less experienced staff support them. Most rooms have adequate resources and are organised so that, where possible, children are able to select resources and make decisions about what they do. This is, however, limited in areas used by the older age range.

Relationships with parents are strong and parents speak highly of the setting. Parents are provided with comprehensive information about the setting, including information on the EYFS. Monthly newsletters provide parents with an insight into

what their children have been doing and how it links to the EYFS. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. For example, making observations at home which are used to contribute to their child's learning records or by placing leaves on the 'interest tree' to share information from home with staff and their peers. This contributes positively towards their sense of belonging. Parents' views are sought through questionnaires and consultation meetings. These are valued and considered when staff evaluate their practice.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff have a sound knowledge of the EYFS and how to deliver it, ensuring children are provided with many opportunities to reach their full potential. Staff work to the best of their abilities to challenge and nurture children's curiosity given the limited resources available for older children. They use open-ended questions to encourage children to think critically and make connections in their learning. However, due to lack of resources to self-select, children's independence skills and opportunities to make decisions about what they do is limited in the pre-school room.

Staff work together in each room to plan for all children taking into account their individual needs. The staff look at past planning, previous evaluations and next steps and use these together with children's interests to plan a varied and enjoyable range of activities for the next week. Planning shows the six areas of learning, the learning intentions and activities. All staff make observations and assessments on all children and key workers are responsible for collating them in the children's files. Staff have some understanding of how to analyse and review the children's assessments to identify any gaps in children's developmental progress, but this is not yet fully effective.

The outdoor space is used as an extension of the classroom for the pre-school children. Staff use water play in the garden to teach older children about capacity. They predict how many cups of water will fill the staff member's hands. Children explore initial sounds in their name and use paint to write their names on the paper posted on the barn wall. Children listen to stories and independently look at books in the shade of the garden. Opportunities, however, to self-select resources to initiate their own ideas and be creative are limited, owing to the limited storage facilities.

Staff working with the children aged under two years engage them in singing and action rhymes. Children respond by dancing, swaying and clapping at their success in copying the actions. Staff praise them for this. They share dolls and take it in turns to bath them, carefully washing their hair and faces, teaching children about how to care for their bodies. Slightly older children actively take part and contribute to the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' by helping with props and talking about the caterpillar growing in size. The interest the children show in different sizes and growing is extended into other activities such as planting different sized seeds. New vocabulary such as 'enormous' is introduced to describe sizes in addition to 'big' and 'little'. Children's interest in the role play kitchen leads staff to introduce a restaurant in their play where children write menus, pretend to cook

and talk about whether different food is found in an oven or freezer.

Staff effectively promote the five 'every child matters' outcomes. Children understand about healthy lifestyles through having healthy snacks and meals made from organic produce and having good opportunities to be physically active. All ages of children have input from a yoga teacher each week. In addition, pre-school children take part in football and golf sessions where qualified professionals help promote these skills. Their sense of belonging and self-esteem is promoted through praise from staff and having their work displayed. They learn about other cultures and our diverse society through planned activities and playing with multicultural resources. Children's skills for the future are successfully introduced through the use of computers, using digital cameras and finding out about how a photocopier works. They take part in activities relating to problem solving, reasoning and numeracy and are developing good communication and literacy skills.

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