

Spring Meadows

Inspection report for early years provision

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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).

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.

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

Spring Meadows registered in January 2009. The provision operates from a building on the Barclay School campus in Stevenage, Hertfordshire. The building is accessed via ramp. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

The provision is open each weekday during term-time and in the summer holidays. Sessions during term-time are from 15:00 to 18:15 and from 08:00 to 18:15 during school holidays with the exception of Christmas. A maximum of 32 children may attend the provision at any one time. The children who are on role attend various schools in the surrounding area. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register.

There are currently 60 children on roll, 11 of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). 11 children attend other settings such as the early years unit of the local primary school or childminders. There are six staff members. Of these, four hold relevant childcare qualifications.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Planning for activities is appropriate and generally promotes children's welfare, learning and development in line with the principles, practice and requirements of the EYFS. Staff create a welcoming environment following clear risk assessments to make sure that children are safe and follow robust safeguarding procedures. They build good relationships with parents and other settings that children attend providing effective inclusive care. Procedures for self-evaluation are basic but general procedures result in a service that is responsive to the needs of its users.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of children; this refers to updating appropriate permission from parents and those related to emergency medical attention
- undertake sensitive observational assessment in order to plan to meet young children's individual needs
- use self-evaluation and quality improvement processes as the basis of ongoing internal review
- develop the educational programme, with reference to supporting children's knowledge and understanding of the world, with particular reference to broadening awareness of culture, religion and disability.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Policies and procedures ensure that children's needs are met. Staff use daily routines to check that hazards are minimised and that children may be independent. For example, children move freely between indoor and outdoor areas making choices between activities and requesting materials to complete planned tasks. Staff review and update training such as safeguarding and qualifications such as NVQ Level 3; this promotes continued development. Staff work with key children to address the needs of those within the early years age range. However, whilst plans have been made to observe and assess the needs of children these are not yet implemented meaning that whilst children enjoy their activities they may not be fulfilling their learning potential.

The provision carries out risk assessments for the premises and for each outing undertaken. Security is monitored with no person able to enter without being admitted by staff; signing-in and out procedures are thorough. Robust safeguarding procedures ensure that children are safeguarded at all times. However, some records are not fully maintained with regard to required permissions and emergency care and this places children at risk. Self-evaluation procedures are in the early stages and are therefore basic. Ongoing training, staff meetings and evaluation of activities, and systems to gather feedback are used but the setting does not evaluate the extent of the provision and its impact on the children attending to ensure continued development.

The provision works well with parents offering flexible hours of care to meet family need. There is an informal exchange of information to promote consistency of care. Partnership with other settings are well established with effective daily feedback, information regarding school topic works and clear personal links with relevant teachers enhancing those links. The setting is pro-active in supporting children as individuals both seeking guidance from parents and taking part in co-operative meetings where needed.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are offered a range of activities and suitable resources that enable them to continue making progress. Resources engage children's interest and rotate frequently and at children's request. For example, children are seen to request dolls, tennis racquets and train sets. They move equipment from indoors to outside utilising a castle and figures first inside, then outdoors and later within the sand area. They sustain interest for long periods taking both lead roles and following each other's direction to the satisfaction of all playing. Staff support children well knowing when to step in and suggest new activities and when to allow children freedom to create their own activities.

Children are competent at sharing and arranging games between them showing developing social skills. For instance, a popular activity is the construction of paper aeroplanes where children construct, add weights to make them fly longer, adjust the design and make obstacles to fly through. They are developing clear evaluative

skills. Children enjoy play outdoors including tennis, water and sand, and planting. They plant and grow tomatoes learning about the care needed and identifying parts of the plants such as roots, shoots and fruits extending their interest in the world around them. Children discuss community events with staff such as school fairs or fundraising events such as Children in Need. They have some opportunities to engage in activities related to cultural events. For instance, at Chinese New Year they explore the 'Year of the Bull' and try some Chinese foods. However, they have few opportunities to gain first hand experience or explore the wider world looking at religion, cultures or disability.

Planned activities offer children the chance to extend their interest and explore new knowledge. In specific topic works, they make badges and explore magnets, take part in a goal scoring challenge and a construction task, explore bubbles and decorate biscuits. They enjoy larger physical tasks such as learning how to set up the gazebo, later extending this to making their own tents. However, staff are not yet using regular observations of children's spontaneous play and this means they may fail to capitalize on opportunities to offer planned activities to foster children's development using their current interests.

Children gain an appreciation of personal safety when they practice emergency evacuation routines. They gain a sense of personal health through broad physical activities and regular planned challenges. Children eagerly help themselves to tea choosing from, for example, crumpets, pitta-breads, rolls, and spreads chatting and sharing daily news. Children take a full roll within the provision. For instance, they complete feedback forms about activities and their snacks to share their opinions. They help to equip the club by completing a baking session and later selling the cakes they make at their respective schools. Once completed, the children count the funds and choose what equipment they would like to buy through catalogues which staff then complete for them. This process enables children to be socially aware and to gain broad skills to equip them for their future lives.

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?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

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

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	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?	2
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: Met

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