

Strawberry Fields Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	09/11/2009
Inspector	Stacey Sangster
Setting address	37 Stuart Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 4AD
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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 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.

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Description of the setting

Strawberry Fields Day Nursery opened in 1990 and operates from four rooms in a house in Gillingham, Kent. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register, the compulsory part of the Childcare Register and the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. The setting may care for no more than 45 children under eight years; of these, not more than 30 may be under three years, and of these, not more than 18 may be under two years at any one time. They currently have 78 children on roll, 71 of whom are in the early years age range.

The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6.00pm for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 19 staff, 17 of whom, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting supports children well to make good progress in aspects of their learning. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, and inclusion is given high priority. Strong links with parents help to promote children's learning both at home and in the setting, although records do not accurately reflect this good practice. The setting has very good arrangements in place to monitor their own provision and keep up to date with changes in childcare practices to ensure that they are continually moving forward and improving on what they already do well.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure the assessment of children's learning reflects what staff know the children can do, by recording general observations and comments; include parents' observations of what they see outside of the setting to enhance the record and include some form of benchmarking which enables identification at a glance that children are developing above, below or in line with the EYFS
- organise the adult to child ratios more flexibly, where appropriate, to give as much opportunity as possible for children to move freely between indoors and outdoors
- make clear to staff where they need to record records of new risk assessments that may arise from temporary situations such as water leakage or equipment failure.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting has robust arrangements in place to safeguard children. Safeguarding children is given high priority and child welfare concerns are identified and responded to appropriately. Staff are fully aware of the child protection policy and procedures, most have attended child protection training in some format and parents are provided with details of the setting's role and responsibility. Recruitment procedures include stringent vetting and the induction is thorough, leaving all staff clear about their own role in keeping children safe from day one. Risk assessments are detailed and effective in identifying that all risks have been addressed as well as identifying when they next need to be checked and by whom. The system for including new or temporary risks that might arise from events such as water leaks or equipment failure has been considered but not put formally into place, as a result if this type of incident occurs it will not be clear where staff need to record this. All records are well organised, professionally kept and meet the requirements to ensure the safe and efficient management of the early years provision and meet children's needs. Staff are clear about where these are kept and so are able to access them easily when needed.

Parents receive good quality information from the setting, about both its aims and objectives and about how their own children have spent their day. The setting helps parents and carers support their children's learning in different ways. Staff share information about what the children have enjoyed, make parents aware of which areas they are focusing on to best support children's development to the next developmental milestone and, on a basic level, share how they intend to do this.

Parents share information with the setting about what they have seen, but currently most of the emphasis is in relation to welfare rather than education. When parents do share information about children's progress staff take account of it, but do not include it in the record of assessment. The assessment records are well organised and record much detail, such as which areas of learning an observation relates to and which aspect or early learning goal it might be linked to. However, staff are 'waiting' to record a formal observation of children 'doing' something which evidences that they have reached a certain milestone, when they are aware of many informally observed examples which tell them that a child is at a certain level. For example, a member of staff stated that she knew a certain child 'anticipates food routines with interest', which is an example in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) practice guidance of a developmental milestone. Although the practitioner knew that the child in question did this, because she had witnessed it daily, she had not ticked this off in the child's file, as she had not sat and watched the child, noting what they were doing, as meals were served. She was able to predict exactly what the child would do in great detail, because of her earlier, general observations.

Although staff are aware of where children of different ages are in their learning, and this enables them to identify children's strengths and weaknesses, the written

assessment does not contain any benchmarking that can easily be followed. The records are a useful tool for tracking what children have done but are not as effective at supporting staff to move children forward as they could be. Arrangements to include the observation of children who attend other EYFS settings alongside this one are being developed.

The setting has a strong management team, who are clear about the aims for the setting and support staff development and professional growth, with access to training, which in turn improves the service that they can offer. The setting has a good system in place to review and reflect on what they do and how they do it with a view to continually finding ways to improve. Currently, children do not use the outside area with sufficient frequency and children all go out at set times, rather than when they want to go out. Free flow arrangements have been discussed but the rigid application of the adult to child ratio is hampering the move to free flow.

Resources are well organised, plentiful, well maintained and arranged so that children can easily access those which are suitable for their age. Babies are able to see the resources and make choices by gesturing or reaching for those which they want to play with, and staff are skilled at reading these signs. Older children have access to clearly labelled storage, which gives them opportunities to freely select and identify where to find and return items. Many labels are in picture and written form to support children's early reading skills. The range on offer includes those which support children's awareness and promotion of equality and diversity. Children celebrate and learn about a range of festivals that are important to them and their families as well as other less familiar ones which are important to others in their community. All children learn simple sign language to extend their understanding that not everyone is able to communicate through spoken words and to ensure that children who attend who use sign language can be understood and included.

The setting is skilled at identifying and working to improve both its strengths and weaknesses. Priorities for improvement centre around children's needs. Some thought has been given to how to meet the needs of older children who need to sleep in the day, as currently they nap on sleep mats on the floor of the main playroom. This suits the needs of the children who currently want to rest, but staff are aware that it may not always be suitable for all children. The setting address most issues before they arise or have plans in place, however, they are also skilled at reacting quickly to the changing requirements of children and understand that they need to be creative in order to offer tailor made care to a large number of children, all of whom have unique aspects to their individual needs.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children enjoy their time in this setting. The atmosphere is busy and purposeful with children appearing relaxed and happy. They move around the setting and interact with staff confidently. Staff know the children well, they take account of their different knowledge, experiences and personalities to organise activities and

play which will build on what they know, engage and interest them and provide them with appropriate challenges. Children make good progress and have equal access to a range of experiences throughout each day which results in them making good progress in all six areas of learning. Threaded through all that they do is support for children to stay safe and to learn the actions and behaviours that will help them to recognise hazards and develop an understanding of how to manage risk for themselves. Staff talk to children about what they think would happen if for example they run in nursery without looking where others are, or what would happen if they leave lots of toys on the floor. Children build ideas about the consequences of their own and others' actions, which helps them to make choices based on helping to keep everyone safe. Staff support children's positive behaviour, they role model good manners and reward acts of kindness, being helpful or thoughtful with lots of praise. Children respond well to this and following a member of staff heaping praise on a child for doing really well with the tidying up, many more children hurry to help and delight in hearing the member of staff say how wonderful they are.

Children learn through the routines of the setting about how they can contribute to keeping themselves and others healthy. They know that washing your hands before eating helps to stop germs getting into your tummy and that covering your mouth when coughing stops you giving your cough to your friends. The arrangements for children to access fresh air and exercise are being reviewed and children enjoy the pre-planned opportunities to play outside, where they can be more physical and use the large apparatus at will. Inside, children have plenty of space to move around and enjoy physical activities such as children's music, dance and exercise CDs. Children's dietary needs are met effectively, with very strict adherence to parents' wishes and children's medical, cultural or religious needs. All staff are given and sign to say that they have read the special dietary needs list and a covered copy is kept on the wall for staff to remind themselves as they need to.

Overall, the setting provides children with a good start, the skills and behaviours that they learn from the support that they receive in this setting support the children's future success both academically and socially. They leave the setting confident to ask questions, to explore, investigate and take responsibility for aspect of their own and others' care. Most importantly they have fun, make friends and have the freedom to develop at their own rate, while being given every opportunity to reach their full potential.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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