

Cotton Socks Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY287323
Inspection date	24/08/2009
Inspector	Jill Milton
Setting address	Cotton Socks, 13-15 George Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 2HU
Telephone number	01296 339696
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

Cotton Socks Day Nursery is one of a small group of nurseries privately owned by Sunhill Day Care Limited. The nursery has operated from its current premises for over 10 years and has been registered with the present owners since 2004. The accommodation is spread over three floors of a converted office building in the centre of Aylesbury. There is a small outside play area. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for up to 100 children in the early years age range. It is also registered on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 62 children in the early years age range on roll. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. The nursery opens on weekdays all year round from 07.30 until 18.30 and children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support is provided to children for whom English is an additional language. The nursery employs 16 staff to work directly with the children and of these 10 have appropriate early years qualifications and three are attending training.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is inadequate. The nursery is currently not meeting the needs of the children who attend, especially with regard to their health and safety. Staff do not meet a number of legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are some satisfactory aspects of the day such as the partnerships developing between the nursery and the families using the setting. Children are making some steady progress with their learning and development and in the main, they appear to be happy and settled. Senior staff monitor the quality of childcare across the nursery and although they respond to advice, they lack a clear picture of the current standards.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- review the hygiene procedures and cleanliness of the nursery to promote the good health of children and prevent the spread of infection (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 14/09/2009
- take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the event of fire (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 14/09/2009
- maintain an accurate record of the names of children 07/09/2009

looked after on the premises and their hours of attendance (Documentation) (also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register)

- improve staff's awareness of how to conduct risk assessments to identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, covering anything with which a child may come into contact and to include all types of outing (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) (also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register)

14/09/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The managerial staff follow most of the procedures outlined by their parent company. Policy documents are available for staff and parents to view and some aspects are in line with requirements. There are appropriate checks in place, for example, to ensure adults working in the nursery are suitable and there is an acceptable number of qualified staff on the team. Staff are able to name signs and symptoms that would cause them to have concern for a child and they know the child protection procedures to follow in the nursery. A designated member of staff for safeguarding is booked on suitable training. Staff supervise the children appropriately through the day as they play or rest, though they do not always accurately record children's presence in the setting, which is a legal requirement. This compromises the safety of children in the event of a fire, along with the fact that some staff have not been part of a fire evacuation procedure. Staff visually monitor rooms and react when a maintenance issue requires addressing, for example, a broken fence in the baby area. However, staff do not make proper use of risk assessments, as required by regulation, to assess potential hazards and plan how to reduce identified risks. This potentially compromises the safety of children inside the nursery and when on outings. Managers are completing a self-evaluation form to help them reflect on practice, although there is little input at present from other staff in this process. There is some response to recommendations from previous inspections and other early years professionals on areas for improvement. However, there is a lack of awareness of the day-to-day processes in the rooms where childcare takes place. Standards of hygiene are poor in some areas of the nursery. For example, torn changing mats with exposed foam do not protect children adequately from potential cross-infection and a refrigerator in the baby area is not clean. Most staff have recent first aid training and they record children's accidents, sharing the information with parents. However, first aid supplies in one area are stored in a dusty box and some dressings are years out of date. Staff work appropriately with parents and a broad range of information is available through notice boards and newsletters. Staff demonstrate their respect for family cultural backgrounds and invite parental participation through the sharing of foods and celebrations. Some ideas help to forge links between nursery and home, such as the introduction of scrapbooks to share photographs of events in children's lives in and out of the setting.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are making steady progress in their learning and development. They are able to access a wide range of resources in their rooms and although some items are not very clean, there is plenty of choice at child-height. Children are learning to feel secure away from their parents and to develop their social skills with their peers. Staff step in to offer guidance on sharing toys and they offer lots of support to toddlers who are at the stage of toilet training. Children eat an adequate range of foods and staff ensure they receive regular drinks throughout the day. Meal times take place around tables to aid social development and children learn to use cutlery appropriately. Staff go through routines of wiping children's hands before they eat, though some nappy changing procedures do little to protect children's health. Older children develop their independence as they visit their bathrooms but staff's checks on these areas in the day are not sufficient. Sinks are not adequately clean and toilets are not always flushed making it unpleasant for the next child using the area. Staff are aware of the children's routines and they help younger ones to settle to sleep. All children spend some time in the day in the outdoor play area. This small area has a basic range of equipment suitable for younger children but provides little challenge for older or more able children. There is also the option for children to spend time in the gym area on the top floor of the nursery. Here children can use the spacious room to use equipment for climbing, bouncing and balancing. Older children are aware that their hearts beat faster when they have been energetic. Overall, staff supervise the children in this area adequately, though an instruction to 'all run' is potentially risky to children's safety as they decide which way to go.

Singing times are popular with all age groups, and staff use this opportunity to introduce counting to the children. Through the day, there is an adequate introduction to literacy with the availability of book collections in all areas and activities to explore early mark making. Older children make reasonable attempts at writing their names and they recognise their letters on placemats and trays. There is an introduction to nature through the presence of some nursery pets, though attempts at growing plants outdoors are largely unsuccessful. As children progress up to the pre-school room they have a chance to use a computer, though this can be frustrating when the equipment requires resetting and time runs out before a turn starts. Most staff interactions with children are appropriate and during activities, the staff sit with small groups and initiate conversations. Staff liaise with parents whose home language is not English so that they can learn some key words to help children settle. Toddlers bathing dolls are prompted to talk about bath time routines at home, using relevant vocabulary such as soap and shampoo. There is some basic exploration of materials like sand, water and paint. Staff monitor the children's development adequately over time. They understand the need to provide children with special educational needs and/or disabilities the extra support they may require and they set targets for assessing progress. Staff in all rooms use weekly sheets to see which activities the children engage in and they are starting to use this in their forward planning to support progress. Photographs and observations of children's achievements are available for parents and shared through informal conversations and twice-yearly parents' meetings.

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?	4
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	4

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	4
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	4

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?	4
How well are children helped to stay safe?	4
How well are children helped to be healthy?	4
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
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:

Not Met (with actions)

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability and safety of premises and equipment) 14/09/2009
- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Records to be kept) 07/09/2009

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability and safety of premises and equipment) 14/09/2009
- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Records to be kept) 07/09/2009