

Arc Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY391949
Inspection date	26/10/2009
Inspector	Chris Banks

Setting address	39 Crosby Row, Southwark, London, SE1 3YD
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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*.

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Description of the setting

Arc Nursery was originally registered in July 2002. It was re-registered in 2009 when management of the provision was transferred to a parent-led charitable trust. The setting operates from purpose built premises in the SE1 area of Southwark. Children have access to a number of playrooms and there is also a secure enclosed garden for outdoor play. Operating times are between 8.00am and 6.00pm. The setting is open all year round with the exception of public holidays.

A team of 14 staff work with the children. Of these, 12 hold qualifications in early years childcare.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. It may care for a maximum of 47 children in the early years age group at any one time. Of these, not more than 15 may be aged under two years. Children may attend full or part time sessions. There are currently 47 children on roll. The setting receives funding for provision of free early education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are secure and very happy at the nursery. They are cared for by a well qualified and committed staff team. They know the group well and have developed warm and supportive relationships with their individual key children. Children's overall welfare, learning and development is effectively promoted. They enjoy an extensive range of good quality play and learning experiences and their progress is well monitored. There are effective systems in place to promote continuous improvement with a strong commitment 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:

- review use of the outdoor area to ensure babies have more opportunities to spend time in the open air
- further extend the outings programme for all children as part of developing an awareness of the world around them

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a secure setting where their safety is given high priority. Their overall welfare is positively safeguarded because staff demonstrate a commitment to act in their best interests at all times. They are well informed about their role and responsibility in protecting children from possible abuse and have clear, up-to-date procedures to guide them. In line with requirements, there is also

a written procedure to follow in the event that any allegation is made against a member of staff. Effective recruitment procedures with careful checking of staff and students for their suitability to work with children is an added safeguard. Staff practice is closely monitored through regular supervision and some strong colleague support.

Children's safety is further protected as arrangements for their safe arrival and departure are very well managed. Carefully completed attendance records, countersigned by parents, combined with vigilance about checking the suitability of those collecting children adds to helping children feel safe and secure. Carefully planned staff rotas also helps ensure children receive good continuity of care.

Children benefit from the good overall safety awareness demonstrated by staff. Effective day to day practical precautions are taken to protect children, with suitable systems in place to ensure any potential safety risks are minimised. Good routine safety procedures such as regularly practising fire drills with children also helps raise children's own safety awareness.

Recently updated policies and procedures relating to children's overall safety and welfare are effectively put into practice. Staff are well deployed throughout the setting and children are vigilantly supervised as they confidently practise their independence skills. Rooms are very well organised enabling children to move around in safety and comfort as they explore their bright, welcoming surroundings.

Leadership and management of the nursery is very effective. Since re-registration, a complete review of the service has been undertaken and funding secured to make planned improvements to the premises. Through effective partnership working with parents and others, the new management team have potentially safeguarded the future of the nursery and there is now a clear vision for the future. A process of comprehensive self-evaluation clearly identifies areas for development and a strong commitment to improve outcomes for all children. Skills sharing amongst staff is strongly encouraged and training with outside agencies forms an important part of staff development.

Children are positively valued and their backgrounds and abilities respected. Through a variety of activities, children are encouraged to learn about other cultures and traditions and to respect people who are different from themselves. Boys and girls take equal part in activities and cooperate well together. If children require extra support for any reason, good working links with professional outside agencies helps ensure their individual needs are met with activities planned to promote specific areas of their development.

Some excellent partnership working with parents helps ensure children's overall learning and development is a positive, shared experience. Parents are valued partners and the individual needs of each child are taken into good account. Highly comprehensive information is gathered as part of the settling in period and effectively used by staff to plan for children's future care. This includes establishing what a child enjoys, already knows and can do. Parents continuing involvement is strongly encouraged with many contributing suggestions for activities which they know their child particularly enjoys. Detailed monthly newsletters and a dedicated

website also keep parents well informed about planned improvements to the overall service.

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

Children benefit from good continuity of care because the key worker system works very well. Individual staff work closely with parents to ensure children are happily settled and keep in close touch during the transition period. Their reassuring, supportive approach helps promote an inclusive atmosphere where both parents and children feel valued.

Children and happy and enjoy some warm, close relationships with their assigned key person. Staff respect the individual sleeping routines of babies and all children are closely monitored during rest periods. Some staff instinctively know when nappy changes may be needed. This helps minimise any prolonged discomfort for babies and young children. During the changing process, parents wishes about the use of wipes and creams are closely followed.

Children's overall learning and development is well supported. Their progress is closely monitored through some well documented observations which are then effectively used to plan for children's next steps. Plans are based on the emerging skills and interests of individual children and parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning and development. This is through regular meetings with key workers and free access to some comprehensive portfolios of children's achievements.

Babies enjoy an interesting range of tactile experiences in their comfortable, welcoming setting. Easily accessible and well resourced 'treasure baskets' are excitedly explored and staff effectively use feathers and fine materials to add to children's sensory experiences. As babies grow, they are accompanied to the toddlers playroom where they are introduced to their next new setting. A sensitively planned handover to their new key person helps ensure a smooth transition.

Most older children are very confident and are learning good social and independence skills because staff support them well and are extremely encouraging. Their overall learning and development is also well promoted because staff create a calm, relaxed atmosphere and ensure children enjoy a stimulating and extensive range of free play and planned small group activities effectively reflecting each area of learning. Very well considered and imaginative purchases of new equipment provides all children with an improved and diverse range of resources, all of which are made easily accessible. Older children make free and independent choices about what to play from well labelled learning areas, some of which are also extended into the outdoor area. Children's creative efforts are valued. They are consulted as to whether they prefer to display their work or take it home and their wishes are respected by staff.

Children enjoy being part of a group especially during informal circle times. They

exchange news from home with staff, who, at the start of each week encourage the sharing of children's weekend experiences. Children's vocabulary is extended and they learn to count as they are introduced to new songs, some of which have been imaginatively adapted to reflect the change in season.

Children interact well together and new children learn the benefits of sharing, taking turns and making friends. Their behaviour is kindly guided by staff who sensitively intervene in minor conflicts if children are unable to successfully resolve them. Older children play a productive part in daily routines by helping set tables for lunch and serving themselves from a communal main dish. Meals and snacks are quite nutritious and children are kept well hydrated during the day. Preferences for certain foods are respected and staff take effective precautions to protect children who may have allergies. Babies are well supported during feeding by staff who are gently encouraging.

Children's overall good health is positively promoted. Suitable hygiene standards and a clear sickness policy helps ensure the risk of infection and spreading of contagious illnesses are minimised. Parents are immediately alerted to the outbreak of any infectious illness and are given guidance about symptoms and exclusion times. Effective practical steps are taken if a child becomes unwell whilst at the nursery. They are closely monitored by staff who demonstrate a strong commitment to act in children's best interests. A valid first aid certificate is held by over half the staff team which means they are well prepared in the event of an accident or emergency. All required record keeping is maintained to a good standard.

Older children have good opportunities to extend their physical skills and enjoy the open air in the well equipped outdoor area. They use fixed play equipment with confidence and also engage in imaginative play and construction activities. They mix sand and water in a large toy concrete mixer and thoroughly enjoy creating 'houses' with life sized building bricks. They also practise their mark making skills in fine sand using a range of implements. Children are extending their knowledge and understanding of the world within the nursery setting. They have recently planted flowers, herbs and potatoes and are learning how to nurture living things. Planned outings to the South Bank, local market and park also form part of the programme but need to be further extended to ensure children continue to develop an awareness of the world around them. Use of the outdoor space should also be reviewed to ensure young babies spend as much time in the open air as older children.

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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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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