

Methwold Nursery School Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Denise May Smith

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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

Methwold Nursery School Ltd registered in 2009, having been previously registered under the same ownership since 2006. The nursery operates from a converted Court House in Methwold, a rural village between Thetford and Downham Market in Norfolk. The nursery is open five days a week from 7.30am to 6.00pm all year round. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is all on one level with wheel chair access.

A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time and there are currently 50 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Of these, 21 children receive funding for early education. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. Children come from the local area and surrounding villages. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children settle into the nursery well, they are happy and quickly become fully involved in a broad range of activities and experiences. They benefit from being cared for in a well thought out enabling environment which is calming, free from unnecessary clutter and which ensures children are the focus of the many learning opportunities both indoors and outside. Practitioners continue to develop positive relationships with parents, effective systems are in place to ensure children's care needs are known and met and new systems are in place to share information about children's learning. The management team have a clear vision for the nursery and have instigated a variety of monitoring systems to help evaluate practice. However, these do not always include the whole team.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the use of observations from parents or carers when identifying learning priorities, and planning relevant learning experiences for the children
- further encourage a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion within the staff team to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Practitioners are very confident and clear about their responsibilities in relation to ensuring children remain safe and protected. They have a good understanding of how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and each member of the team has clear procedures to follow should they have any concerns. They attend training to keep their knowledge up to date which helps to protect children from harm. The setting has robust recruitment procedures in place to check practitioners' initial and ongoing suitability to work with children and to ensure they know their responsibilities. A long induction period enables the registered provider time to get to know the new practitioner and to understand their strengths and identify any training needs.

Practitioners ensure children are well supervised at all times. This good deployment ensures children are well supported in their learning as well as remaining safe. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken and regularly reviewed which enables the registered provider to be pro active in ensuring children's care and safety is given the highest priority. Documentation is well maintained and organised effectively to support children's needs and the efficient running of the nursery.

The team work well together, they are aware of the settings policies and procedures and effectively implement these to promote children's welfare, safety and development. The registered provider and manager share a clear vision for the nursery and have implemented systematic reforms throughout the nursery which have improved the care and learning opportunities for all children. The team have embraced these changes and worked hard to embed them into practice. Many systems are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of these changes, but the rest of the team are not currently directly involved in the settings formal self evaluation process, which is a missed opportunity to utilise their many skills and knowledge.

Good relationships are developed with parents and carers, this means they are well informed about the provision and are able to share quality information about their children's care needs. Parents welcome the new planning and assessment procedures and feel they are easy to follow and make it clear the progress their children are making. Practitioners are proactive in sharing information with parents about their children and in encouraging them to provide information, such as photographs of activities children take part in at home so that children can be supported in talking about these with their peers. However, information about children's changing interests and achievements at home has not yet filtered into the children's individual plans so does not directly inform the individual planning for the children's ongoing development. Parents receive detailed information about the nursery through the prospectus and are updated regularly through newsletters and the parents' notice board.

There are good systems in place to support children with special needs and/or disabilities. Practitioners liaise closely with parents and external agencies to ensure children's needs are met and they are fully supported and included within the

setting. The nursery have developed links with other settings who are delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage, including childminders and the local school, which helps children with the transitions between settings.

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

Children throughout the nursery enjoy the time they spend at the nursery, they are happy, settled and secure. Effective use of the key person system ensures children are able to form appropriate attachments and provides parents with a focal point for information sharing. Children are encouraged to become independent learners with practitioners having the skills to know when to support children in extending their learning. Children make choices about where and what, they wish to play with as they freely access the art room and the garden, in addition to the main play room. Practitioners are well deployed so they can be flexible and follow the children's individual interests. Children select equipment for themselves as resources are very well organised and support their individual choices.

Children's learning is planned for and promoted effectively through a relatively new observation, assessment and planning procedure. Regular observations made by practitioners and collated by the child's key person, are used to support them in planning activities which will interest and challenge them appropriately. There is a good balance of group and child led activities and children often choose to play outdoors, either under the newly installed covered all weather area, or in the large garden. Attention is given to ensure all of these different areas promote the six areas of learning. For example, children can practise their numerical skills and develop an understanding of quantity, size and shape as they build a bungalow, with real bricks, planks of wood and crates in the garden. Practitioners support this learning well by providing real bungalow plans for the children to look at, making this activity interesting and helping to develop their imaginations. Children use tools to 'dig' the foundations and use the planks to make fences. They develop an understanding of safety as they wear safety helmets and hi-visibility jackets while on their 'building site'.

Children's language skills are well supported with practitioners helping children to think and to problem solve as they play. They use open ended questions to encourage conversation as they confidently chat to practitioners. Children using the computer are animated as they describe what they see, how an 'alligator will be caught and have his mouth taped up to stop him biting'. Children are happy to talk to visitors, but retain an appropriate shyness with these strangers. Mark making and pre-writing skills are evident throughout the nursery as children draw and note, use stamps to print and diaries to record pretend appointments. Children access books in the comfy corner which has been designed to give the illusion of privacy. Children sit together sharing stories which they pretend to read. The art and craft room provides children with many opportunities to make and create, to paint and explore different textures as they mould 'foam' and model with play dough. Their art work is well displayed on plain walls so that the true impact of their work can be appreciated.

Babies development is supported through having access to a range of suitable resources in their play, including sand play and they respond well to practitioners interaction. Photographs from home have been collated into books for the babies to look at and help them to feel secure. Babies have time to mix with their siblings to maintain a sense of family in the nursery. Children are involved in gardening activities, growing a pumpkin from seed which they nurtured and eventually carved for Halloween. They make pretend meals in the home play area with real vegetables and dress up in a range of clothes which supports their fantasy play. They have daily access to technology, using the computer and programmable toys which will support them in later life. Children begin to develop an understanding of the local community as they walk to the post box to post their letters and visit the local school. They celebrate festivals from around the world and use a range of resources which are representative of other cultures.

Children are polite and talk kindly to each other. They learn to take turns and share equipment as they play together with any disputes used as opportunities for practitioners to develop children's understanding of fair play. Children know what is expected of them through familiar routines and clear explanations. Children learn good procedures regarding personal hygiene through regular routines and discussion. They develop an understanding of health and nutrition as they are encouraged to eat freshly cooked, healthy meals and to access water throughout the day. All children have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise to promote their health. Overall, children have many good opportunities to develop and make good progress towards the early learning goals. They are beginning to develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe and to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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	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

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