

Elmore Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Elmore Kindergarten has been registered since 1990, and was re-registered at this location in 2009. It operates from a large refurbished house in the Broomhill area of Sheffield and serves the local and wider communities.

Children are accommodated, according to age, in six rooms on two floors. They have access to a secure enclosed outdoor area. The building has disabled access to the ground floor.

The nursery operates from 7.30am to 6pm each Monday to Friday throughout the year. It is registered to care for 62 children. There are currently 62 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery provides support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare register, and offers care for children in the later years age group, providing out of school care and care during holiday periods for limited numbers of children. There are currently no older children on roll.

There are 17 members of staff that work directly with the children, of whom 16 hold an appropriate early years qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority. They achieved the local quality assurance scheme, Pathways to Quality Gold Award, in 2008.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Nursery staff have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, so that children are safe and their welfare is promoted very successfully. The environment is warm and welcoming, enabling children to feel secure. The stimulating play environment reflects children's interests, and staff use observations effectively to support children's ongoing progress. A reflective approach to practice is emerging, so that planning for continuous provision and evaluating the impact of routines and use of space on children's learning, are clearly identified as areas to strengthen. Staff nurture a strong partnership with parents and have effective links with other professionals, helping to ensure that children's individual needs are fully respected and supported well.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase opportunity for children to consistently select resources independently to support all areas of their learning within the daily environment, both indoors and out, to enhance choice and challenge
- review the impact of routines and use of space on children's opportunity for

- independent learning
- extend routine action planning to encompass ongoing evaluation of how effectively outcomes for children are being promoted.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management in the nursery is strong and supportive. Staff are fully involved in the challenging process of re-organisation and re-evaluation of practice, following the move to new premises. They have a good understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children, ensuring children are protected and cared for in a safe and secure environment. There is clear planning to update and strengthen awareness of safeguarding procedures. Risk assessments are detailed and carefully considered to ensure that children remain safe, both indoors and out. Staff encourage children to think about ways to keep themselves safe, as they learn to negotiate the stairs safely, recognise that they must not run indoors and think about why they should not throw the sand. Records, policies and procedures reflect current requirements and are shared with parents. They are implemented effectively to ensure children's welfare is fully promoted and their individual needs are met.

Staff liaise daily with parents, both verbally and using diary sheets, so that they are kept fully informed about all aspects of their child's welfare. Parents share their child's starting points in the 'All about me' book. Staff interact constantly with children, talking all the time about their home and family. They value their individuality, helping them feel secure and included, for example using words in their home language for reassurance and pictorial planning to aid communication. Parents are given home observation sheets to encourage ongoing sharing of home experiences. Staff have recently introduced a 'nursery to home' book, and a nursery library encourages reading at home together. 'Elmore bear' goes home in turn with each of the children and parents record his escapades in a diary. Written questionnaires are used to seek parents' feedback about nursery practice. Staff recognise the need to continue to encourage ongoing parent contributions, and to find further ways to increase parent involvement in their child's learning. They have close links with local schools and other settings attended by the children, assisting planning for continuity in their care and learning.

Staff are developing a good understanding of the ethos and requirements of the early years framework, and are using routine monitoring and action planning at regular staff meetings to incorporate this into practice at the new premises. Determining effective use of space and accessible storage has proved quite challenging, especially coupled with recent staff changes, but staff have now clearly identified the issues to be addressed. They have recognised the need to extend the process of self evaluation to encompass clearly how well overall practice is helping to promote the outcomes for children. Strong teamwork, together with clear identification of training and development needs, is helping the nursery build on its significant strengths and clearly supports the capacity for continuous improvement.

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

Children are very settled and happy in the nursery. They are motivated and interested, express their own needs well and confidently seek support, if needed. They enjoy close, warm interactions with staff. Staff know children very well and respond readily to non-verbal communications, recognising when children are tired or just need a cuddle. Close attention is given to ensuring staff consistency in rooms. Children's ideas and interests are reflected well, through observations, in day-to-day planning. They are able to plan their own play and select resources freely from those available. As storage is very limited, resources to support activities in all areas of learning are set out by staff in each room. A few resources are stored accessibly and some stored on high shelves are visible to the children, but are labelled only with words. Staff do encourage children to ask for additional resources, but have no clear system to ensure they know what is available. This limits challenge and reduces opportunity for children to make choices, solve problems and extend their thinking independently. Colourful displays of work and photographs reflect activities enjoyed by the children, but stimulus at child height in all the rooms is quite minimal. Planning for continuous provision does not currently include the outdoor environment.

Staff support children's learning well, with clearly planned activity ideas, which develop their language and awareness of number, broaden their understanding of the wider world and stimulate their creativity. They interact with children in their spontaneous play to promote new learning. Staff use spontaneous and focused observations to help in planning next steps, so that activities are appropriate to children's stage of development. They record and track children's progress systematically. Two rooms are designated as 'quiet rooms', used mostly for adult led activities, like stories, music and movement and group activity. This means that children's free play is interrupted to go into the quiet room time to enjoy these activities. Nursery routines impact significantly on children's opportunity to access all learning areas. For example, older children did not access either creative or role play activity until after rolling snack was finished, and they did not have independent opportunity to paint. Babies and toddlers enjoy treasure baskets, heuristic play and stories in the quiet room, but selection of these activities in the main play room is limited.

Children behave very well and make an active contribution to nursery life. Staff are fully tuned to their needs and encourage their full involvement in day to day activities. Children help to make the play dough, clear their own snack dishes and serve their own food at lunchtime. They are constantly praised and their achievements valued, helping them develop understanding of expected behaviour, like being kind, sharing toys and taking turns. Well considered resources, varied artefacts and a wide selection of books, help to stimulate children's interest in other cultures and countries. Staff plan activities to help raise children's awareness of themselves, their feelings and the ways in which they are similar to and different from others.

Children develop good levels of concentration, as they explore wet sand and very

sticky play dough, read quietly to themselves in the book corner and listen attentively at story time. They are confident communicators and practise writing for real purposes. They recognise numbers and make a teddies' number line. They explore shape, size and colour in construction activity, make a car out of boxes and build steps to the climbing frame with crates. They participate enthusiastically in action and number rhymes. They learn about festivals enjoyed by other cultures and find out about their local community, occasionally visiting the museum or exploring the local park.

Children become aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, as staff raise their awareness of the importance of exercise and fresh air. They enjoy time being active outdoors each day. They climb confidently on the climbing frame, use crates to make obstacle courses and stepping stones, and negotiate the sloping grass in their cars. They enjoy hilarious chasing games. Resources are accessible to support children's developing mobility. Children enjoy healthy snacks and freshly cooked meals. They develop independence in their own self-care, as they learn good hygiene practices, help prepare their own snack and learn to care for their play environment.

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?	3
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	3
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	3
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

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	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
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	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