

The Firs Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Cilla Rachel Mullane

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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

The Firs Nursery opened in 1994, and operates from a main play room and a craft room in premises located in the grounds of Chartham Primary School, near Canterbury. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is on one floor, access is via a ramp, and there is a toilet for disabled people. It is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.15, term time only.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 37 children aged from two years to under five years on roll, 27 of whom are in receipt of government funding. The setting is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are seven members of staff, including the manager, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ level 2. Two members of staff are currently working towards qualifications.

The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's emotional wellbeing is well-promoted by caring staff. The key person system is effective: staff know the children very well, and have a good knowledge of each child's learning styles and individual needs. This enables them to plan activities which help individual children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Children are confident to initiate their own activities, and make the most of the accessible range of toys and equipment, both indoors and outside. Partnership with parents is strong: they are well informed about their children's progress, and are able to contribute to their developmental records. The setting is continually evolving and improving, due to thoughtful self-evaluation and ongoing action plans.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that planned daily physical activities offer sufficient challenge to all children
- improve the availability of art and craft resources so that children can freely create, explore and design

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting is well managed. The enthusiastic staff group meet regularly, and are all involved in planning, self-evaluation and decision-making. The nursery staff work well together as a team, and are committed to providing a good service to children and their families. Staff development is considered very important, and they keep their skills up to date by attending regular training on subjects such as 'wellbeing and involvement' and 'working towards inclusive practice'. This ensures that they bring fresh ideas to the setting, and contributes to their ability to make continuous improvement. Self-evaluation is ongoing, and is also an effective tool to ensure that the setting achieves and maintains improvement. Action taken as a result of self-evaluation has a positive impact on outcomes for children. For example, it was noted that checking of the toilet area was ad hoc, and so regular checks are marked on a board, ensuring that the area is kept clean for children.

Good use is made of resources: the well planned learning environment provides children with opportunities to select toys and equipment, and initiate and develop their own activities. They take the zoo animals to the construction cupboard and make cages for them, and make good use of the mark-making table, helping themselves to scissors and glue. There is frequently free flow to the outside area, where many indoor activities are also available outside, such as a tray containing sawdust. The well-equipped craft room is often in use, but at other times children do not have access to a full range of creative materials to enable them to design, explore and make their own unique creations. Staff are well deployed: there are rotas in place for various duties, for example, checking the toilet area, preparing snacks, and adult-led activities, which ensures that routine tasks are not missed.

Partnership with parents is a strength. Induction days give them opportunities to meet their child's key worker, and to share information about their child's abilities and personalities. They have regular access to their children's records, and meet with staff to discuss activities planned to help their children progress. Nursery staff establish good links with outside organisations, such as the area special needs coordinator and the special teaching service, and this results in a supportive network for all children. Nursery staff visit other settings where children receive support, in order to provide consistency of care.

All staff have recently completed appropriate training about safeguarding children, so that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from harm and neglect. They have accurate and up-to-date information in their child protection procedures to guide them should they have concerns about children's welfare.

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

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) achieve well, and enjoy their learning. They develop positive relationships with staff and with each other, and

are settled, well motivated and ready to learn. The atmosphere is busy, with children engaged in purposeful activities. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of individual children's learning styles: children's keyworkers plan activities tailored to their needs. For example, if a child is very interested in cars, then activities with cars are planned across all areas of learning, such as mark making in sand using car tracks, to practice early writing skills. Planning in general is detailed, ensures all areas of learning are included, and meets children's individual needs by responding to their interests and building on what they already know. Plans ensure a balance between adult-led activities, and those which children initiate and then develop for themselves. Adults skilfully question children, they are on hand to support children's learning, and they show interest in children's contributions and achievements, which builds children's confidence to explore and take part.

A strength of the nursery is the emphasis staff place on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and wellbeing. Children settle quickly because they have visited with their parents, staff learn from their parents about children's likes and dislikes and can therefore provide for their needs. Children's social skills are good: they are spontaneously kind and caring towards one another, showing concern if another child is upset, helping each other to pour from the water jug, and sharing and helping willingly. Children's behaviour is generally good and staff are skilled at encouraging sharing and turn taking. Children are able to talk about their feelings, using the stepping stone cushions with faces showing different emotions, such as 'scared' and 'happy'. Stickers are used as rewards, which help to promote good behaviour, and children are proud to show these off, for example, for successfully and happily parting from their parent.

Children are creative in their role play and use their imaginations well: they crawl around barking like dogs as another child takes them for a walk, and they carefully design enclosures for the zoo animals so that they cannot escape. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted as they use magnifying glasses to examine the toy animals, and dig, find bugs, and plant vegetables outside. They try to solve problems, such as working out why the wheel in the sand is stuck, and succeed in preventing a crayon from falling out of a bundle of pencils when drawing rainbows by putting tape over the ends. The concepts of weight and balancing are discussed and understood as children add and take objects from the scales to make them balance. Their fine motor skills develop as they persevere and concentrate cutting tape with scissors, and serve themselves fruit using tongs. Children practice their large motor skills during twice-weekly trips to the school to use their apparatus, and they balance, ride bikes and develop spatial awareness and coordination in the outside area. However, there is a limited amount of challenging climbing equipment available in the garden on a daily basis.

Children feel safe within the setting. The key worker system is effective in helping children to feel safe: they develop a bond with their key person, and are happy to be comforted by that person when feeling poorly or upset. When a child starts attending the nursery, staff find out from parents about routines, likes and dislikes, thus increasing their sense of security and belonging. Visitors to the setting help children learn about their personal hygiene and safety, for example, the community warden visits, with his road crossing kit, and a dental hygienist also

visits. Children are starting to understand about personal hygiene. They know that they need to wash when snack time is announced, and help themselves to tissues, and place them in the bin after use. Healthy snacks are sometimes linked to the colour of the week, for example, yellow pepper and banana, which helps to reinforce the message about making healthy choices. There are frequent opportunities to play in the fresh air, and large apparatus is available to the children in the school hall twice a week.

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