

The Centre MK Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	07/01/2010
Inspector	Susan Marriott
Setting address	1 Eelbrook Avenue, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK13 8RD
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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

Asquith Nursery - The Centre (MK) is one of many nurseries run by Asquith Nurseries Limited. It opened in 2005 and operates from several rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated in a residential area, close to the centre of Milton Keynes. A maximum of 126 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30 am to 6.00 pm for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery is closed between Christmas and New Year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 117 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these 37 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide geographical area. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 26 staff, including a cook, kitchen assistant and an administrator. Of these, 19 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This is a welcoming and friendly nursery which promotes mostly good standards of care and learning in a fully inclusive manner. However, fire drills are practised with insufficient frequency and observation systems are not yet fully effective. Staff maintain a competent standard of interaction which supports the good progress which children make. The nursery has good partnerships with parents, carers and other providers and keeps them well-informed of their children's progress through daily dialogue, informative notices and regular discussions. The staff's increasingly positive approach to evaluating the nursery practice means that they are beginning to grasp a clear picture of their strengths and weaknesses and can implement plans to continue to improve the daily care and experiences for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase the frequency of fire drill practice
- develop the consistency of observation and assessment, to clearly demonstrate the progress which children make, using the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage criteria. Use the information gained to ensure that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's care, learning and welfare are greatly enhanced by the effective way in which the setting is led and managed. Current safeguarding requirements are fully met because the nursery has stringent policies and procedures in place to establish the suitability and qualifications of all adults looking after children. Staff are fully confident in recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. All required documentation is readily accessible and underpins the efficient organisation of the nursery. There are good security measures, and risk assessment generally ensures the safety of children and staff. However, evacuation drills are not always practised with sufficient frequency which may compromise children's welfare.

The company and the manager are developing their vision for leading the nursery forward and engender a real team spirit amongst the staff team. Sustainability is high on the agenda with the children and staff involved in recycling and parents being kept informed via electronic communication. The development of systems for monitoring the quality of provision through self-evaluation is beginning to promote identification of the setting's strengths and weaknesses and demonstrates a good capacity for continuous improvement. The setting is fully inclusive and staff make genuine efforts to address the varying needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

Key workers gather information about children's interests and preferences on entry, but this information is not used effectively to establish a clear baseline from which progress can be measured. Staff plan, observe and assess activities in line with the Learning and Development requirements, using pro-forma sheets which provide a clear structure for staff to follow. This means that children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities tailored to their individual interests during the nursery day. However, some staff do not always use the system effectively. Relevant information is not always transferred from this system to the children's individual records effectively and in some cases, does not demonstrate the progress which children make. Parents and carers are welcomed into the setting and every effort is made to settle children and help them to feel secure through visits and allowing parents to spend as much time as necessary. Strong links with external agencies and good communication with outside professionals, facilitate appropriate support for children with additional needs.

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

Children enjoy good support from the staff in relation to their care and learning. The education programme is planned well, with weekly themes and activities tailored to the attendance patterns, interests and abilities of the children. Staff ensure that some time is allocated for spontaneous, child-initiated activities to balance the adult-led, planned activities. These cover all aspects of the early

learning goals, ensuring children enjoy a broad range of play-based activities, designed to meet each child's developmental needs. Staff sustain a consistently good standard of interaction with children of all ages and are developing their questioning to elicit critical thinking skills. For example, staff ask open questions to make pre-school children solve problems and think for themselves as they attempt to program a programmable toy robot to take four steps across the farmyard on the laminated farm map.

All children are supported in making good progress through the staff's awareness of individual learning needs, and staff effectively meet children's daily care needs with care and dedication. For example, staff sit in small groups with the babies to attract their attention with hand puppets and toys, imitating the noises of cows and ducks for the children's entertainment. Children respond positively by squealing with excitement and smiling, giggling and gurgling. Clear labelling and signage promotes children's awareness of the printed word and numbers as labels. Space is used creatively to promote various areas of learning and the nursery staff are constantly implementing improvements to the outdoor area to enable their shared vision for outdoor play, maximising their use of the garden resource all year round.

Children stay safe and healthy because the nursery promotes healthy living and exercise. Children run, jump, climb, pedal and take risks in a safe and well-supervised environment. They develop good eating habits, and fresh water is available throughout the day. Turn taking, patience, role play, cooperative play and communication skills are all developed, both indoors and outdoors. Children mostly enjoy and achieve well. because staff take a real interest in the children and consistently engage them in conversation and discussion. Positive relationships develop within a warm and homely environment. Children are helped to make a positive contribution as they are treated with respect and their opinions are valued. Children learn to negotiate with each other and resolve issues for themselves. Children develop skills for the future by becoming effective learners. Their questions are listened to and answered with thought and care, encouraging the development of confidence and self-esteem.

Regularly documented observations are maintained on all children and many effective strategies are used to strengthen partnership working between home and nursery. Parents are encouraged to regularly read their child's 'Incredible Learning Journey' and are informed of their child's progression and achievements. Electronic communication, newsletters and notice boards are used to inform parents of activities, learning and outcomes and how they can support this at home. Parents are encouraged to write comments in the children's learning journeys and knowledge between the parent and key person is shared during consultation evenings and this supports children's learning at home.

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