

# Saffron Walden Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	650123
<b>Inspection date</b>	20/11/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Sarah Johnson
<b>Setting address</b>	Shire Hill Industrial Estate, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3AQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01799 522 108
<b>Email</b>	swns@aol.com
<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## 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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## **Description of the setting**

Saffron Walden Nursery School registered in 1993. It is a registered charity and managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents of children who attend the setting. The nursery school operates from three classrooms within a purpose built building, situated on Shire Hill Industrial Estate in Saffron Walden, Essex. The building has a ramp leading to the main entrance doors and there are accessible toilets available. A large enclosed outdoor area is used for outdoor activities. The nursery is open each weekday from 9.00am to 3.15pm, during school term times. A play scheme is offered during school holidays, with sessions from 9.00am to 3.15pm. Children are able to attend either full time or part time.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 50 children aged from two years to under eight years may attend the nursery school at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age group. There are currently 117 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) years. Children live in the local area and surrounding villages. Some children also attend early years sessions at other nearby pre schools and nurseries and some are cared for by registered childminders. The nursery school provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds. The staff currently support a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who are learning English as an additional language.

There are 23 members of staff, including the manager, who work regularly with the children. Most staff hold appropriate early years qualifications, and four members of staff are working towards further qualifications. The nursery school has achieved accreditation through a Pre-school Learning Alliance quality assurance scheme.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Confident children are animated and motivated to learn as they explore the rich and stimulating environment of the nursery school. They reap the benefits of excellent partnership working with parents and carers and establish an excellent sense of belonging due to the strong community spirit at the setting. As a team, the manager and staff are genuinely committed to meeting the individual needs of all children and their families and have established highly effective interventions to support children's complex additional needs. Links with outside health and social care agencies are a significant strength. There are robust systems in place to fully evaluate the provision, ensuring all staff maintain constant momentum towards making ongoing improvements to their existing high quality practice.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- opening up further opportunities for parents and carers to have free access to their child's learning and development record.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

The management and staff are highly successful in creating an environment in which children are fully protected from abuse and neglect and where staff are trained effectively to enable them to promptly respond to any concerns about children's welfare. Top priority is given to discussing safeguarding issues with parents and staff when first join the setting, ensuring everyone involved with the nursery school has excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from harm. Highly robust and well organised recruitment procedures ensure that all staff, committee members, volunteers and students complete the necessary checks to confirm their suitability to be in contact with children. The premises is maintained to an extremely safe and secure standard as a result of the stringent risk assessments which are carried out each day. Children are safeguarded further as there are very well considered arrangements in place should any emergency situation occur and the systems for checking the identity of any visitors are highly efficient. The layout of the three classrooms and the effective deployment of staff help to ensure that children are supervised constantly as they flow freely between indoor and outdoor play.

Children experience excellent levels of continuity of care because of the staff's unquestionable commitment to working closely with parents and carers. The welcoming and approachable staff encourage parents to readily share information about their children and inspire them to take an active part in nursery school life. For example, parents willingly get involved in making decisions about new initiatives and fundraising events as part of the committee and along with grandparents, they have rich opportunities to read stories to the children and lead art and craft activities. Weekend information sessions enable new children and parents to spend time purposefully getting to know the premises and staff and to ask questions about different aspects of the provision. Close links are fostered between home and the nursery school. Children regularly take home books to share with their parents and delight in telling others about the experiences they share with the setting's resident soft toys, 'Billy Bear' and 'Eddy Teddy', over the weekend. Parents speak highly of the progress their children make at the setting and feel very well informed through daily discussions, an informative website, displays of photographs, newsletters and regular developmental progress reports. Although, staff stress that parents do have regular opportunities to access their children's developmental records and can ask to see them at any time, these records are sometimes locked away in a cupboard and not always as freely shared as they could be. The setting has established excellent links with professionals from outside health and social care agencies. For example, the setting's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) values guidance from speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and health visitors when drawing up

individual education plans for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Partnerships are extended to ensure parents can also access this valuable expertise, including monthly 'open surgeries' with nursery nurses from the local hospital.

The manager has very high aspirations for the quality of the service provided at the nursery school and inspires the staff to conscientiously reflect on their practice. Morale is very high amongst the well qualified staff team, as they feel that their professional development is well supported and they are provided with ongoing opportunities to contribute their ideas. This includes their contribution to the setting's self evaluation form, which used as a tool for establishing ambitious targets for improvement and reviewing feedback received from parental questionnaires. As a result, the manager and staff are in a very positive position to enable them to exceed the existing outstanding provision at the setting.

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

Children thrive in all areas of their learning and development as the knowledgeable staff have excellent understanding of how children learn and develop through play. They are offered a vibrant child friendly environment, with spacious and well defined areas in which to explore and spread out as they play with a stimulating range of resources. Resources are set out extremely well, most being labelled with photographs and stored in low-level 'pick and mix' trolleys and boxes to promote children's self selection and free choice. Children remain fully engaged and enthused throughout the session as staff inspire them to discuss their thought processes and ideas. For example, children confidently chat about their pictures as they draw, ascribing meaning as they explain that the ladder they have drawn leads to a house in the clouds. The recent introduction of free access to the outdoor environment ensures that the rich facilities here are fully embraced. For example, a group of boys enjoy working together as they gather sticks and build bonfires and younger children spent time searching for small sea creatures in the water trough. Children's physical experiences are fostered extremely well. They demonstrate strong spatial awareness as they manoeuvre ride-on toys to avoid obstacles and willingly join the staff for a yoga session of stretching and balancing their bodies. Children's problem solving, reasoning and numeric understanding is expertly extended as they are actively encouraged to think about numbers and counting in everyday activities. For example, staff challenge them to count the number of boys and girls who are present in the group and then to find the corresponding numeral to add to the visual register. Children respond well to the strong sense of responsibility they feel as result of completing everyday tasks. For example, easily accessible resources enable children to use their initiative in helping to sweep the leaves in the garden and to tidy away their cups and plates when they have finished snack. The organisation of the open snack bar is particularly successful in ensuring children are able to choose when they are ready to eat and their play is not disrupted.

The staff are very skilled in using observations and assessments to effectively track children's progress towards the early learning goals. Excellent learning and

development records include meaningful photographic examples of the children participating in a wide range of learning opportunities and detailed observations which are expertly linked to the EYFS areas of learning. Children thrive in this inclusive setting where reasonable adjustments are made to maximise their accessibility and equal participation. The SENCo is genuinely dedicated to her one-to-one work with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. She strikes an excellent balance between assisting children with their specialist equipment and ensuring they are not overwhelmed with her input and can be as independent as possible. All staff are able to support individual children's needs as any specialist training is disseminated across the setting and guidance from the Area SENCo at the local authority is widely available. Support for children who are learning English as an additional language is also highly effective, as the setting clearly values the use of different languages. Children feel very confident in using their home language in the setting as staff draw on their parent's expertise in pronouncing and writing key words in different languages and all children are actively encouraged to use sign language in their everyday communication.

Children have an excellent sense of responsibility for their behaviour and are eager to behave well and to be polite in their interactions. They appreciate the importance of being kind to others, as they play harmoniously together, share resources and step up to help each other. Constant praise and encouragement offered by the staff helps to ensure that all children have high levels of self-esteem. Particularly strong emphasis is placed on inspiring children to lead extremely healthy lifestyles. There are rich opportunities for children to get involved in growing different crops in the garden, which they harvest and use in cooking activities. The staff are committed to encouraging parents to provide healthy lunches for their children to enjoy at the nursery school and they make the most of opportunities to discuss the benefits of a healthy diet with the children. For example, children proudly explain that they are eating their apple to make them "big and strong". Regular practises of the emergency evacuation procedure help children to purposefully learn how to keep themselves safe and they enjoy informative visits from the local fire service.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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	1
--	---

### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## **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
--	-----