

The Old School House Nursery II

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	127702
Inspection date	25/11/2009
Inspector	Liz Margaret Caluori
Setting address	Ashford Road, St. Michaels, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6SR
Telephone number	01233 850239
Email	fashburnham@aol.com
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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 Old School House Nursery II has been registered since 1997 and is privately owned and managed. Children follow the Montessori philosophy and principles whilst also following the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery operates from a self-contained building in the grounds of the owner's home in a rural area of St Michaels, near Tenterden. Children have access to secure, enclosed outside play areas. The nursery has a pet rabbit and the owner keeps horses, pigs, goats and chickens in the nearby paddock.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 60 children may be cared for at any one time, of these no more than 18 may be under two years. There are currently 75 children on roll, of whom 16 are under two years. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 12 staff employed to work with the children, of these 10 hold recognised childcare qualifications. The group receives support from the local authority and is a member of The Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive as they play and learn in the bright, safe and very stimulating environment. The thorough attention given to identifying and addressing their individual personalities and developmental needs ensures that they are making excellent progress in all areas of their learning. Similarly a strong focus on working in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals supports staff to ensure that children's all round care needs are effectively met. Highly effective self-evaluation enables staff to continually improve practices to ensure that they are reflective of the evolving needs of the children attending and their families.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improving the clarity of records showing the risk assessments undertaken throughout the setting

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Highly effective arrangements are in place to ensure that children are safeguarded. Clear child protection policies outline the procedures to be followed should staff have any concerns about children's safety. These are shared with parents and carers and also include details of the process to be followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all staff are suitably qualified and vetted. By effectively identifying and managing risks within the nursery staff successfully create an environment in which children can develop independence whilst being safe and secure. The required records of risk assessments are maintained although these do not fully reflect the excellent practices in place.

Parents and carers express a very high level of satisfaction at the service offered by the nursery. Children gain great benefit from observing the warm, friendly interaction between their parents and carers and the staff. A very good range of written information is provided including policies, newsletters and notices. In addition, contact books are completed daily and provide parents and carers with details of the activities their child has taken part in and the progress they have made. Parents and carers are also encouraged to meet regularly with their child's key person and to look at their developmental records. The manager recognises the importance of working cooperatively with other professionals involved in the care and development of the children. Effective communication with speech therapists and other specialists allows staff to focus their support specifically to meet children's individual needs. In addition, sharing information about children's progress with others who provide the Early Years Foundation Stage helps all adults to offer coordinated and consistent care.

An excellent commitment to continual development drives the manager and staff team to plan a range of ambitious and imaginative improvements to the nursery. Evidence of this can be seen in the outdoor area. Whilst already extremely imaginatively planned, it is being further developed to create an even more impressive learning environment. In addition, rigorous self-evaluation supports them to identify and promptly address any areas of weakness to ensure that the needs of the children and their families are fully met.

The organisation of the nursery is outstanding. Space is extremely well used and staff deployment is highly effective. Strong leadership and the high level of motivation of the staff team create a positive, inspiring and very welcoming atmosphere. In addition, a strong commitment to training ensures that all staff have a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage whilst also obtaining qualifications in Montessori teaching. Each key person uses their high level of knowledge and understanding of each child to plan activities specifically aimed at addressing their very individual needs. This ensures that children engage in activities which they enjoy and which offer them an appropriate level of challenge. As a result, children are making excellent progress all areas of their learning.

Children are given an excellent level of support in their social development. As a result they are developing empathy and respect for others, a skill which will serve them well in the future. They learn about the lifestyles and customs of others in the local community and wider world through a mix of planned activities and spontaneous conversations. They also have access to toys and resources which promote positive images of diversity.

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

Children's happiness is evident through the enthusiastic way in which they approach activities and their ready smiles and laughter. Babies are relaxed and settled in the wonderfully nurturing atmosphere of the under two's area and also enjoy regularly opportunities to mix with the older children. All children demonstrate a great sense of security within the nursery and are confident of their place within the group. They confidently select the resources that they wish to play with and concentrate very well on their chosen activities. The Montessori trays available for the older children support them to develop problem solving skills. Examples of these activities include using small jugs to pour liquids, matching lids to the correct sized jars and using dressing frames to master zips, buttons and other fastenings. In addition to extending their intellectual understanding, such activities promote hand-eye coordination and enable children to master practical skills which will help them in the future.

Children's behaviour is impeccable. They are polite, considerate and caring and can frequently be heard reminding each other to share and be kind. They are clearly learning to manage their own behaviour and sort out their own disputes in a very mature manner which is a direct result of the excellent support and role modelling of staff. The open plan, free flow organisation of the setting promotes children's independence very effectively. This provides them with excellent opportunities to explore, investigate and to make choices and decisions with great confidence. This safe, caring environment allows them to feel comfortable to try new things and to be able to make mistakes and try again without becoming self-conscious.

Whilst children are able to play freely for much of the day, there are also clear routines which are well understood. These provide valuable opportunities for children to function in larger groups as they listen to stories, engage in discussions or work with their friends to learn new songs. There are also planned activities each day which are led by a member of staff. These are presented in such an inviting way that most children choose to take part. However, for most of the day children can be seen engrossed in their freely chosen activities being supported by the highly skilled staff team who are always on hand to extend their enjoyment and their learning.

Children are given extremely good support to learn about the importance of personal hygiene and healthy living. They routinely wash their hands after using the toilet and before sitting down to eat and independently use tissues to blow their nose when necessary. Very regular opportunities exist for all children to take part in physical activities and they are able to access the outdoor area for very

large parts of the day. In addition to playing in the fresh air, younger children benefit from the large area of clear floor space in their group room, which supports them to develop their mobility. They also enjoy playing on the low level climbing apparatus and soft play equipment in their room.

Snack and meal times are wonderfully sociable occasions. Children enjoy nutritious home cooked food, including a good range of fruit and vegetables. They are developing excellent table manners, pouring their own drinks and using cutlery appropriately.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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	2
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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

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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