

The Elms Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY252581

Inspection date

16/03/2010

Inspector

Beryl Witheridge

Setting address

8 Richmond Road, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9QP

Telephone number

01843 852727

Email

elmsnurseryschool@live.co.uk

Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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

T: 0300 123 1231
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*.

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Description of the setting

The Elms Nursery School opened in 2003 and operates from five rooms in a semi-detached building. It is situated in the town of Ramsgate, Kent . A maximum of 42 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Children receive funding for nursery education. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register. Children come from a local catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 11 staff, there is one bank staff and two volunteers; of the staff, including the manager, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications; of these eight staff are working towards a further qualification.

The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. They also receive support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Each key worker understands the uniqueness of each child they are responsible for. Children can explore and learn within safe boundaries and enjoy their time together. The partnerships with parents, other settings and professionals help to support the care and learning needs of the children. The group's capacity to maintain continuous improvement is good. The strengths and weaknesses of the provision are clearly identified and addressed. This helps to ensure that clear priorities and forward planning promotes effective outcomes for the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- use systematic observations and assessments of children's achievements, interests and learning styles to plan challenging and motivating play experiences for each child indoors and out, across all areas of learning and development
- ensure that children's records, such as observations and assessments, are only accessible to those who have a right or professional need to see them and that all staff are aware of the need for confidentiality
- improve the two-way flow of information with parents to promote a shared understanding of children's individual needs and involve parents in practical ways to support their child's learning and development

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively through the policies, strategies and procedures that help to promote their welfare at all times. Staff have all recently attended safeguarding training and have an up-to-date understanding of child protection issues, they know where to access important information and what to do should they have a concern. Practices are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and continue to put children's welfare first. Systems for recruitment and vetting are rigorous and robust and help to ensure that all adults working with the children are suitable to do so. All staff know and understand their individual roles and responsibilities. Ongoing monitoring of staff performance helps to promote children's welfare effectively. Risk assessment is clear, it covers all areas of the nursery and daily checks help to identify and minimise the risk of accidental injury to children.

The nursery has an ongoing commitment towards continuous improvement and uses a range of evaluation measures. The previous recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed, helping to improve practice for the children attending. The provision of toys, resources and experiences are good and enable children to make independent choices as well as learn through effective adult support. Self-evaluation methods are focussed and involve management, staff and parents. The systems in place highlight the setting's strengths and any areas for improvement effectively and several points raised have already been addressed. For example, staff identified the need for sign language training to help children with English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is now in place and staff are using it with all children throughout the nursery. The nursery is committed to staff training. Staff are currently evaluating the play areas within rooms to maximise children's learning and enjoyment. Overall, improvements have had an effective impact on the outcomes for children.

Equality and diversity is embedded into every day practice. Staff know their children well and ensure the needs of all children are supported. Children have plenty of opportunities to learn about diversity in society and the needs and wishes of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and English as an additional language, and their families are fully addressed. Children are very caring about each other; they welcome back a child, who has been away from the nursery through illness, with enthusiasm and warmth; making him feel included and cherished. All experiences are available to all children, helping them to have the same opportunities to learn and develop.

The partnership between the nursery and other agencies and providers is exemplary. The outstanding partnership working supports the needs of individual children and their families. For example, the setting works with local children's centres, specialists and early years professionals to ensure children get the help and support they need. Effective liaison with pre-schools, nurseries and schools helps to offer children continuity of care and learning and enables the staff to

share and improve on best working practices.

Children benefit from the partnership between the nursery and their parents. A good range of information is shared and parents feel their children are well cared for by staff who know them well. Children's progress records and 'Learning Journey' are available for parents to see but they are not fully involved in setting the learning goals for their children. They are able to talk to staff about their child which helps to promote continuity for the children attending.

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

Adults support children's learning well. For example, a child is looking at some toy animals, a member of staff joins her and they talk about the different sounds the animals make. When they find a horse the child tells the staff member that the horse goes 'clip clop'. They then get out the musical instruments to find the instrument which makes a similar sound selecting several before the child is happy that she has found the right one that can replicate the sound.

Children enjoy books and role play; they are easily able to self select and make decisions for themselves. Children are confident, independent and friendly. They learn to problem-solve, for example, during construction they use the soft play blocks to build a house putting the shapes together and balancing them on each other, they extend their imaginative play when the 'house' falls down and they have to call for 'Bob the Builder' to come and fix it.

A good range of toys and resources are available inside and out which help children make good progress across all the areas of learning. A new method of observational assessment has just been introduced and staff are still getting to grips with the new way of working. They are also using children's own interests; staff talk to the children about a subject and complete a 'spider chart' of the children's ideas and thoughts and include these in the planning. Planning includes the next steps but this is not always clearly identified. Observations of the children are pinned on the notice boards which means they can be seen by any parent which compromises their confidentiality.

Children are able to make good use of their surroundings; they have trips to the park, the beach and the library. They are learning about nature and the wider world as well as their own environment.

Children enjoy eating healthy meal options. Menus are rotated for variety and choice and include vegetarian options and some cultural variations. Children eat fresh fruit and vegetables daily and become involved in helping to prepare some snacks, they are able to serve their own vegetables and pour their own water, all of which encourages their independence. Good hygiene routines are encouraged throughout the nursery. Staff help children to follow hand washing and drying procedures properly and any children with infectious conditions do not attend. The environmental health officer commented on the standards of cleanliness in the kitchen. All these measures help to prevent cross infection.

Children are well-behaved and play well together. Staff are good role models and encourage and set realistic boundaries to encourage children's good behaviour. The relationship between the staff and the children is close and caring. All children respond well to plenty of praise and encouragement; this promotes their confidence, well-being and self-esteem. Children feel safe and comfortable with the staff; there is a closeness between them enabling the children to make the most of the opportunities provided for them.

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	1
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	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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