

The Co-OPerative childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	23/03/2010
Inspector	Jenny Read
Setting address	Blackbird Leys Nursery, Cuddesdon Way, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 6JP
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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 Co-operative Childcare Blackbird Leys Nursery is one of six run by The Midcounties Co-operative Society. It opened in 2009 having re-located to new premises which consist of four group rooms, a multi-use communal area and related facilities, including sleep rooms and a staff room. All children over two years share access to a fully enclosed outdoor area with grass, hard standing and impact absorbent surfaces for outdoor play. A separate fully enclosed garden with grass and hard standing surfaces is available for the younger children. The nursery is situated in the Blackbird Leys area of Oxford and children come from the local community.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 72 children under eight years may attend the nursery at any one time, of these, not more than 72 may be in the early years age range. There are currently 150 children on roll in the early years age group, some in part-time places. The nursery provides funded early education for 27 two-year-old children and 30 three and four-year-old children. There are currently 8 children on roll within the later years age group attending the holiday club during school holidays. The nursery is open each day from 7:30am until 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. They maintain close links with the local Children's Centre.

The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 22 staff, 18 of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications to at least level 2 and 3. The manager holds the Diploma in Pre-School Practice and currently working towards NVQ in Childcare and Development at Level 4. Four staff are currently working towards National Vocational Qualifications in Childcare and Education at Level 2 and 3. A qualified teacher from the Children's Centre supports staff on part-time basis.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, resourceful and are making good progress in their learning. They are made to feel special, displaying high levels of confidence and self-esteem because the experienced and dedicated staff team are fully inclusive and continually place children's needs at the heart of everything they do. As a result, staff know their key children's individual needs very well to provide dynamic support and consistently high quality care. Many staff are very knowledgeable of children's next steps to provide a balanced curriculum that engages children's interests and learning. Children benefit from excellent access to a comprehensive range of stimulating toys, games and play materials across all areas of learning that successfully enhance their skills for the future. The highly skilled and enthusiastic management team are very supportive to create a good team spirit. They bring about sustainable improvements for children and service users because self-evaluation is robust and inclusive of all staff and parents.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the assessment records for each child in the toddler rooms to track their on-going progress and ensure they benefit from experiences across all areas of learning outside.
- further increase practise of the escape plan to support and extend children's learning

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children benefit from vibrant, bright and highly stimulating areas to play inside and good access to free-flowing indoor and outdoor play. Child-sized furniture and low-level, open storage units create a welcoming environment and enables children to freely access the abundant range of toys and resources for themselves. This actively promotes the younger children's independence and readily encourages the older children to become autonomous in their learning. Whilst experiences in the dedicated outdoor area for the younger children do not currently reflect the good learning taking place inside, the outdoor area for the older children is well-thought through across all areas of learning. This inspires the children to develop their imagination, knowledge and understanding of the world and large physical skills. Staff are vigilant and skilfully allow children to take risks safely. Extensive risk assessments are regularly reviewed ensuring comprehensive safety and security measures are in place. Staff's generally good awareness of safeguarding issues protects children from harm. Robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures ensure staff are suitable and have sound knowledge of the setting's policies and procedures to promote children's health and safety.

The ambitious and dynamic management team are extremely well supported by the Co-operative company, enabling the highly committed staff team to drive improvements and outcomes for children successfully. As a result, many staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic when engaging with the children to which children respond excitedly. Self evaluation is robust and inclusive leading to thorough evaluation of the quality of practice and good vision for the future. The Echers and Iters evaluation system implemented every six months and completion of the self-evaluation, identify clear targets for each group room, such as developing the garden and children's outdoor learning. The individual action plans are clearly displayed in each room ensuring they are communicated effectively and have had a good, and in some aspects outstanding, impact for children. The setting regularly seeks parents and carers views through parent surveys and ensures these are used to inform important decisions about the provision and their children's care and learning. For instance, addressing parents comments by implementing termly feedback sessions about their child's on-going progress and next steps will enable parents to support their children's learning at home.

The manager readily promotes staff's personal and professional development through very good opportunities to attend training. The key person system works extremely well throughout the nursery, providing excellent support to enhance children's wellbeing. The 'paired and shared' programme, which includes activities and 'Welly walks' with other groups, readily supports transitions through the nursery and further promotes children's emotional wellbeing and sense of security. Exceptional support is given to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language through specialised group work, well planned activities and staff's skilful adaptation with all activities. The recent introduction of sign language throughout the nursery enhances all children's language and communication and provides them with additional skills to communicate with others. Frequent collaboration and sharing of information with other professionals involved with the children ensure partnerships are effective to provide consistently high quality care. Record keeping is thorough and routinely shared with parents to support children's care. The management and well-qualified staff team have a positive relationship with parents and carers and partnerships are well-established ensuring each child's needs are well met. Daily informal discussion, daily diary sheets, pictorial visual routines and notice board articles are helping to forge strong links.

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

Children feel secure, settled and build good relationships as the key person tends to all their personal care needs effectively. Staff are very attentive to children's individual needs and place excellent emphasis on treating each child as unique by undertaking individual planning for their key children. Older children benefit from a comprehensive range of experiences that enable them to thrive in their learning across all areas of learning. Particularly strong areas include knowledge and understanding of the world where the children learn to care for living things by helping to feed and care for the African snails and plant and water seeds and beans to help them grow. Nevertheless, planning outdoors for the younger children does not cover the six areas of learning to give them opportunities to experience a balanced curriculum inside and outside. Also assessments are not complete for each child to show their individual progress across all areas of learning to ensure next steps are purposeful to further enhance the younger children's experiences.

Excellent questioning from staff during play challenges children's learning and actively encourages their problem solving skills. Wearing high visibility jackets children use clip boards to design their house with large building blocks. Staff facilitate and support their play successfully asking, "what else do we need to put on our house to keep us dry?", "what do we need so we can get in and out of the house?", "what do you think you need to do to stop it wobbling?". Children work together co-operatively to build their house, liaising and discussing their plan well with frequent praise and encouragement, 'that's good team work'. Children help to devise the rules and boundaries, giving them ownership. As a result, they are well behaved.

The youngest children develop good early language skills through skilful narration of their play and purposeful interaction. They enjoy looking at books with staff and have fun listening to music and singing familiar songs. Older children practise their mark making and emergent writing skills frequently during play, using white boards, sand and writing their names on their pictures. The younger children readily access the colourful and inviting play areas, with inviting sensory areas, comfortable book corners and interesting treasure baskets that engage children's curiosity and encourage them to explore and investigate their surroundings. Excellent resources enhance the older children's imagination inside and outside. For example, they use the flour from the insects tray and salt dough mixture to make a cake, confidently directing their play, "you need to add flour, as it's a bit sticky", adding "I think this needs a bit more sugar" as they prepare dinner.

Children play a dynamic role in the setting because staff skilfully encourage their independence and understanding of how to promote their healthy well-being and skills for the future. Weekly baby yoga and keep fit for the older children and regular discussion about the importance of regular exercise, fresh air and healthy food, enables children to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. Children learn hand washing routines from a young age and practise brushing their teeth after lunch, developing independence in managing their own personal hygiene. Children enjoy meal times, benefiting from nutritious, home-cooked food in good quantities and cheerful interaction and support from staff. Whilst children show good awareness of safety issues and learn to take risks safely, their understanding of appropriate action to take in an emergency is inconsistent.

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	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	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	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