

The Children's House

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Jacqueline Patricia Walter

Setting address

54 Queens Park Rise, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 9ZF

Telephone number

01273 696373

Email

thechildrenshouse@fsmail.net

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*.

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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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 Children's House Nursery was registered in 2006. It is privately owned and managed and follows the educational philosophy of Montessori. It operates from the ground floor of a residential premises in the Queens Park area of Brighton, East Sussex. All children have access to an enclosed rear outdoor play area. The nursery is open Monday to Thursday from 9.00am to 4.00pm, term time only.

A maximum of twelve children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-olds. There are currently twenty children aged from two to four years on roll, who attend on a part-time basis. All are within the early years age range. The nursery also makes provision for children older than the early years age group and this is registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children attend from surrounding areas. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those with English as an additional language.

There are three members of staff employed. All staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Staff's in-depth knowledge of each child's needs, inspirational interaction and an effectively organised, highly stimulating learning environment ensure that they are extremely successful in promoting all aspects of children's learning and welfare. As a result, children are very safe and secure, enjoy their learning and make very good progress, given their age, abilities and starting points. A rigorous planning and assessment system, which leads to stimulating, rich and varied experiences and acknowledges children's interests and individual learning needs, is used very effectively to guide planning. The partnerships with parents and other agencies that are involved with children are good. A very strong commitment to self-evaluation by the manager and staff team ensures that priorities for future development are promptly identified and acted on. This results in a service that maintains very effective continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing further systems for assessing children's progress, so that information on the next steps in their learning is consistently kept up to date in all learning journals.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded well. There are good procedures in place which help to ensure that children are protected from abuse. For example, existing injuries and concerns are appropriately documented. All the staff are qualified in first aid, and vetting and recruitment procedures are robust. Copies of training certificates and qualifications are held on file and an appropriate induction procedure, which includes staff reading all policies and procedures, is implemented. This ensures they are aware of their responsibilities and in turn children are kept safe and well protected. The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources is outstanding. The limited space available is organised creatively and very effectively to allow children to freely move between rooms and the outside area, and access the resources easily and independently. The staff take well-considered steps to ensure that children develop a keen understanding of the limitations of the planet's resources. For example, children help to bury food to understand decomposition, and recycle their paper and card.

Children with special educational needs and or disabilities are identified and supported extremely well. The staff ensure the children are well integrated and they are effective in working with other agencies involved in the children's care. As a result, they are highly successful in taking steps to close identified gaps in children's achievements. Staff work effectively with parents. A wealth of information on the setting is shared through a parents' notice board and parents are fully aware they can easily access policies and procedures through a website. Good systems are in place to inform the parents of children's progress. Children's profiles are available at all times, reviews of children's progress are shared each term and informal chats take place both before and after sessions. Although staff promote the children's learning very well, some of the records of the children's progress are not kept up to date. The staff develop some solid links with other settings such as the local school. They are currently working on developing stronger links with some of the parents and carers, for example, with new childminders and parents who have missed opportunities to share information on what children are doing at home.

Staff implement excellent methods to improve the quality of the provision. They take part in a local authority quality assurance scheme and have attended additional training such as Managing Behaviour and Food Hygiene, as well as working towards a higher childcare qualification. Leaders successfully communicate ambition and drive, and the processes for managing the staff's professional development are used extremely well. A very strong commitment to self-evaluation has resulted in sustained improvements in identified areas which have in turn very successfully impacted on the outcomes for children. For example, more detailed observation and planning systems have benefited children's progress, and key worker systems and stronger links with schools have enabled children to feel more secure. Better communication with parents has successfully contributed to underpinning children's overall care and learning. As a result, the setting demonstrates an outstanding capacity for continuous improvement.

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

Staff provide a welcoming, child-friendly and calm environment where a wide range of rich, varied and high quality resources and activities effectively challenge children of various ages and abilities. Children are extremely safe and secure. They are able to gain an excellent knowledge and understanding of the world through stimulating first hand experiences such as visiting a farm to observe the animals. They enthusiastically take turns to feed and observe both fish and tadpoles in indoor tanks and talk excitedly about what they see them doing. Children are developing excellent skills in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy through engaging in activities such as counting and sorting the cherries collected from a tree. As a result the older children use mathematical language confidently during their play. Staff are highly skilled at modelling problem solving language to help children find solutions. For example, they help children successfully find resources to direct water away from their play. Children are also able to use language for an increasing range of purposes, which can be seen as they confidently negotiate which part of a resource to hold when carrying it together into a room. They have lots of opportunities to develop choice and decision making skills. They serve their own meals and choose their cutlery and plates.

The staff know the children very well and effectively use information from observation and assessment to ensure that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities. They gather extremely detailed information in 'All about me' booklets, which enables them to carefully ascertain children's starting points. They regularly share information obtained from observations in all areas of learning to plan the next steps in children's learning. Adults interact extremely well with the children and have a very good understanding of how they learn. They extend children's learning by providing additional resources to support their interests. For example, when children show curiosity about insects by bringing in their own toys, staff provide books and small world resources that allow the children to explore the insects' natural habitat. They interact sensitively in children's role play, encouraging the use of imagination and developing their skills in communication, language and literacy by consistently asking open-ended questions. This motivates the children to think and make suggestions. For example, after children instigate a crash scenario with small world resources, the staff invite them to suggest what they need to do, who they may need to contact and how they can do this. As a result, children are very confident and enthusiastic to make suggestions and share their concerns and needs.

Children have very good opportunities to develop an understanding of keeping themselves safe, and demonstrate a highly developed sense of belonging and security within the setting. They show a mature response to taking responsibility for the safety of others by informing them of dangers, and they use a range of tools and equipment safely. They enthusiastically join in with songs about traffic, which gives them opportunities to clearly demonstrate that they know where to cross roads safely and what the different traffic light colours mean. There is a very strong emphasis on healthy living and eating, with children being given opportunities for growing and sampling their own potatoes and cress, as well as

shopping for their own fruit for their snack time. They also engage in specifically planned activities with a nutritionist who visits the setting. As a result, they are confident in knowing that fruit and vegetables such as broccoli are healthy to eat and that too many sweets can make their teeth go bad. The majority of children also eat their savoury food first at lunch time without adult prompting. Staff are extremely good role models and implement highly effective strategies to encourage children to develop habits and behaviour appropriate to good learners. They talk quietly and calmly about expected behaviour and encourage collaborative working such as helping each other to carry equipment. Children know to approach an adult if they are not happy with a situation. As a result, children's behaviour is exemplary and they show a mature response to taking responsibility. For example, they warn their peers about the dangers of eating cherries that have fallen from a tree.

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	2
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	1
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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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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