

# Staffordshire University Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

218497

**Inspection date**

20/05/2010

**Inspector**

Patricia Webb

**Setting address**

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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**

Staffordshire University Nursery has been registered since 1993. It operates from a number of rooms within a converted property sited on the Stafford campus of the University. The provision is laid out on the ground floor and there are a number of fully enclosed outdoor play areas available. The provision is primarily for university students but places are available for staff and for the local community. The nursery is open each weekday, from 8.00am to 6.00pm all year round.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 17 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 27 children on roll aged from birth to five years, some in part-time places. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language and is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are eight members of staff, seven of whom hold early years qualifications from at least Level 3. Two members of staff including the manager have recently achieved Early Years Professional Status.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children flourish and thrive in this setting because the management and staff team hold them in high regard. The unique intrinsic character of each child is identified and used to great effect to personalise learning and development opportunities throughout the fully inclusive routines and activities. There is a collaborative approach to evaluating the provision in order to build on the exceptional strengths and identify further areas for future development. This demonstrates a clear realisation of continuous improvement being essential for enhancing outcomes for each child in line with the Every Child Matters agenda using the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

## **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 the access to the outside areas to further extend the opportunities for free-flow activity indoors and outdoors.

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

All staff, management, parents and children have contributed to the highly reflective self-evaluation process in this exceptional setting. Using questionnaires, a detailed survey collates views and opinions demonstrating strong and open

leadership willing to act positively towards further improvement. A very highly qualified, skilled and experienced team delivers an extremely stimulating and exciting curriculum, using their collective enthusiasm and drive to enable every child to work towards fulfilling their individual potential. As parents' comments indicate, the setting's greatest and most valuable resource is the staff team, sharing a vision of how children achieve and enjoy their time, targeting individualised and sensitive support appropriately. Staff are highly valued by the management as each member takes a lead role on a specific aspect of the provision such as developing the systems for working in partnership with parents or promoting equality and diversity.

The safeguarding of children is a very high priority in the nursery. All staff and the management have a very clear awareness and knowledge of their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection issues. Staff have attended training in the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and the Common Assessment Framework process assuring parents and carers of always acting in the best interests of the child should there be any concerns. Parents are also assured of the suitability of each member of staff as the selection and recruitment procedures are extremely robust and rigorous. All staff undergo the full vetting process and the ongoing appraisals request that staff declare their ongoing suitability. Training opportunities for the staff are a key aspect of the leadership and management of the provision. Staff then evaluate and utilise the knowledge and skills they gain to enhance children's experiences, such as the use of sign language to promote non-verbal communication and planning to raise the achievements of boys. Very detailed risk assessments are carried out in line with both the University's health and safety requirements and the nursery's additional considerations required for the safety and well-being of the children on and off site.

Inclusive practice is ingrained in the provision. Each child and their family contribute to the information for staff in order to identify and address individual needs including cultural and familial backgrounds. The extended family is also respected as grandparents have been invited in to share the children's experiences. The provision makes excellent use of non-verbal prompts and systems for developing communication with all children. Pictorial timelines display the daily routines and other home languages are displayed around the setting such as Chinese symbols and Arabic script. These translations are carefully checked through with the relevant families to ensure they are as accurate as possible. Children access a wide selection of resources including genuine cultural artefacts to gain an awareness of the diversity of their world and consider the differing needs of others in society. The layout of the setting offers easy access to all attending. Each care base offers space for active play and for quieter activities, and in the case of the younger children, space to sleep, rest or enjoy sensory experiences as their routines dictate. The outdoor space is especially well-planned as children engage in all activities outside as they do inside. Staff have identified this as an aspect they are looking to improve with regard to children's direct access to outside thereby facilitating free-flow activity for all.

The strong and highly respectful relationships with parents, carers and other settings contribute to a consistent and cohesive approach to children's development and learning. Reviewing the parent evenings and developing them as

opportunities for parents to engage in the same activities and experiences as their children has proved to be very successful. Parents have become actively involved in their children's progress as they share 'wow moments' that happen at home as well as those observed by staff. For instance, one parent writes about how their child is so proud of now being able to swim without the need for armbands. Firm, professional partnerships have developed with other agencies and settings some children attend, particularly in preparation for older children's transition to full time school, easing the anxieties and sharing children's achievements and attainment.

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

All children are the instigators of their own learning and development as they are very ably and sensitively supported by the staff in their choices. Children pay staff the highest accolade as they seek out and invite the adults to join them in their play and activity, as for instance, one member of staff is directed to be the patient and lie down in preparation for a 'big operation'. As a consequence of the staff's inspired practice and planning, the Early Years Foundation Stage is wholly implemented enabling each child to make exceptional progress in all aspects of their development given their varying starting points. Babies and younger children have clear care routines displayed as their key workers discuss these on a regular basis with parents as and when milestones are achieved or routines change. Every child has an individual folder containing a high level of information about their needs and interests. This also contains the observations and assessments of their progress supported with pertinent photographs and annotation to record how they are attaining and working towards their next steps. Children often sit with staff to look through these records and their comments and own observations are logged in a very child-friendly way valuing their contribution to their own progress.

Children are extremely settled and confident as they develop social skills and work towards becoming responsible citizens of the future. They engage in activities designed to develop awareness of sustainability in their environment, planting and growing fruit and vegetables which they will be harvesting and using to supplement their meals and snacks. Inspired use of found materials for resources include rubber tyres, plastic guttering, bread trays and discarded branches to show children how such items can be used even more effectively than some commercial equipment. Babies and younger children discover how things work as they activate pop-up toys and those that wind up and are musical, developing each of their senses. Such equipment is used to best advantage to encourage a young baby to develop upper body strength and learn to sit unaided, an assessment that is sequentially logged through photographs within the child's learning journey record.

Children engage in mark making activities from an early age, using a variety of media to create patterns extending to emergent hand writing and recognisable letters of first names. Some highly achieving children are then challenged as they learn to write their family names too. They enjoy books, stories and using sign language to develop effective communication. Babies and young toddlers use this freely requesting more milk or indicating that they are tired for example. The environment is rich in print of a number of languages and scripts and various

systems are used such as pictures and the Picture Exchange Communication system (PECS) to enable all children to contribute. Children's views are also carefully considered as for instance, older children realise that the staff do not have their pictures and names on the self-registration board and suggest this. The adults agree and offer praise to the children for their observations, planning to implement this suggestion shortly.

Children's behaviour and attitudes to each other are exemplary. Older children show empathy and a strong sense of caring as they assist another child to refer to the picture timetable so that the time for mum arriving to collect is made clear. This helps to reassure the child and shows how the staff's behaviour and approach is picked up by the children in an innate and organic way. Another child asks a visitor if they will be joining them for lunch as he sets up the table in preparation. Having 'written and designed' their invitations, children welcomed their grandparents into the nursery recently and showed them around the rooms. The adults then enjoyed sandwiches and cakes prepared and cooked by the children and then listened to a short concert of songs and activities again produced by the children. Such activities help children to make positive contributions and enjoy their learning.

Staff are excellent role models for the children particularly with regard to encouraging good personal health routines and developing a healthy lifestyle. Meals are very well-prepared by university catering services with strict adherence to dietary and cultural requirements. The adults sit and eat with the children in order to encourage good manners, socialisation and instigate discussions about healthy eating. Gentle reminders are offered with regard to safety and children know that some equipment requires careful handling such as scissors and gardening equipment. They are developing an awareness of risk taking for themselves, accessing the wonderful outdoor space with gusto as they clamber over the climbing frames and wander round the den area created by the innovative use of milk crates and discarded branches.

Children gain exceptional learning and development opportunities in this setting because staff are highly professional and deeply caring. They thoroughly enjoy the time they spend with the children, mindful of how their practice impacts upon developing achievement for each child and improving outcomes because every child does matter to 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

<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

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### 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

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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