

Schoolgate Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Gillian Walley

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Schoolgate Nursery opened in 2001 and operates from a demountable building in the grounds of Potter Street Primary School. It is situated in Harlow, Essex. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.30am to 3.30pm, term time only. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 46 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some of whom receive funding for nursery education. Children come from both the local and wider catchment area. The nursery currently supports a child with special educational needs and a child who speaks English as an additional language.

The nursery employs four staff, all of whom, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. An additional member of staff is employed on an occasional basis.

The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register, and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Registers. The setting has established good links with the adjoining primary school and the local children's centre.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

All children who attend Schoolgate Nursery make good progress because it is inclusive and able to meet the needs of each child well, including those who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. The manager and her team are very experienced, and they attend training courses so that they can acquire new skills which will help them to improve the learning opportunities they provide for the children further. The manager and her team evaluate the provision constantly to identify steps they can take to improve it further. As a result, the setting's capacity to improve is excellent.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- evaluate the progress of different groups of children so that the manager can be sure that all children are making consistently good progress in all areas of their learning
- provide the children with more opportunities to develop their independent skills in number and problem solving.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager reviews all policies and procedures frequently, and these are shared with parents. The manager and her staff have rigorous procedures in place to ensure that the children are always safe. All staff are vetted appropriately and visitors sign in. Doors are kept closed. The premises are checked before each session and more thorough risk assessments are carried out regularly so that any hazard which could cause an accident is identified. If children need to be given medicine there are good procedures for obtaining parents' permission and if a child has an accident the manager provides parents with details in writing so that they know what has happened. The staff have first aid qualifications and understand hygienic food handling. The staff can refer easily to information about children who have allergies.

The manager and her staff team meet regularly to review their practice and to plan improvements. They are a strong team, and have an excellent understanding of driving improvement. The staff team have attended a wide range of training courses to develop more expertise, for example in outdoor play, helping children to develop good relationships and health and safety. They look very closely at the progress individual children are making, although they do not use this information to ensure that all children are making consistently good progress in all areas of learning. The nursery has improved greatly since the last inspection, for example the staff now plan a wider range of activities for the children to choose from. They assess their skills when they start attending the nursery more accurately so that they know what their next steps should be. Each member of staff has responsibility for cleaning and tidying an area of the premises after sessions.

The nursery works extremely closely with parents who feel that their children are always safe and well cared for, and that they make good progress, particularly in gaining confidence and in their speaking. Parents can see plenty of useful information, both about what is going on and about the activities the children enjoy in the lobby area. They can see the observations and photos of their children's learning and development so that they know the level of progress their children are making. Parents also receive monthly newsletters and information about other local services they may find helpful. This includes guidance on a range of items, including ideas for healthy choices for children's lunch boxes. The manager welcomes parents' views and suggestions, for example in questionnaires, and is particularly concerned to help them, by adapting the starting times of sessions. Parents can easily talk to the staff informally at collection time and they find the staff very helpful and approachable. Parents tell the staff what their children have achieved at home so that the staff can provide activities which build on those interests. The manager helps parents to know how they can support their children at home, for example the children take 'Passport Ted' on holiday with them. They then tell their friends of his adventures. Parents enjoy being involved, for example by taking part in sports day. The manager also works very closely with the local authority when she needs specific guidance about a child's needs so that these children are supported well and make very good progress.

The nursery has excellent links with the adjoining primary school, for example they use the school field and the children make visits. This helps the children to settle easily when they move on. The nursery also works closely with the local community, for example when the children take their harvest gifts to elderly residents.

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

The children are extremely well behaved because the adults have high expectations of them and are good role models. The staff talk to the children about their behaviour so that they understand how to make the right choices. Staff encourage the children to develop new skills and they praise them for their good manners. They ask them questions so that the children solve problems and can explain what they understand. The children play well together and share toys with one another. They are confident and feel that the adults look after them well. They concentrate on an activity for a long time. They choose what they want to do, and have a very wide selection of toys, including books, dolls, construction and puzzles. They develop their imagination by using the excellent resources, for example by dressing up, using the puppet theatre, building dens and through role play. Children extend their vocabulary through very exciting experiences, such as seeing a police officer and a nurse, and they also begin to develop their early writing skills. They enjoy looking at books and listening to favourite stories, and for World Book Day they dressed up as book characters. They learn to count and to understand shapes and measuring, although they do not have many opportunities for independent problem solving activities. Outdoors the children learn about what plants need to grow well by planting different flowers and they have been learning about mini beasts. The children develop good creative skills, for example by painting or making collages, and they are proud to have these displayed in their 'gallery'. There are good opportunities for children to develop good physical skills, for example by using their mini gym. The children begin to understand concepts such as how water flows and how magnets work.

When children start attending the nursery the manager asks parents for detailed information so that the staff begin to know each child well and can provide the activities children will enjoy most. This helps the children to settle easily and is reassuring for parents. The staff plan the activities which match the children's interests very well so that they will be motivated to learn. They observe them closely and they assess the children's progress accurately. However, the staff do not compare the progress of different groups of children so that they can be sure they all make consistently good progress in each area of learning. The older and more able children are challenged well, for example through learning their letters and sounds and by recognising some words. The children learn to become independent, for example by choosing when to have their snacks, putting toys away and hanging their coats on their pegs.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted excellently at the setting. The children learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle because they discuss their healthy snacks and talk about the display of fruit and vegetables which they have made for the wall. They understand how to avoid infection because they can explain when and why they wash their hands. They know that they must wear sun hats and sun cream if they are playing outside on a sunny day. Children begin to understanding about people from different cultures because they learn about celebrations and customs, for example at Chinese New Year they tasted Chinese food. The children also play with multicultural toys and musical instruments, listen to stories in different languages and have multicultural dressing up clothes. They play with cars and a road mat, which helps them begin to understand about the importance of road safety. Their attitudes, personal skills and knowledge they acquire will help them in the next stage of their education.

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?	2
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	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	1

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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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