



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 204074

DfES Number: 516157

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 27/02/2004  
Inspector Name Anita Bartram

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name The Stables Nursery  
Setting Address 1 & 2 Glenridge Cottages  
Margaretting Road, Galleywood  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM2 8TS

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Avis Richardson and Susan Mann  
Address Margaretting Road  
Galleywood  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM2 8TS

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

### Information about the setting

The Stables Day Nursery opened in 1993. It operates from ten rooms in converted stables on the outskirts of Chelmsford. The nursery serves both the local and wider area.

There are currently 160 children from 3 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 35 funded 3 year olds and 16 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who have special needs or who have English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08.00 until 13.00 and 13.00 until 18.00 or 08.00 until 18.00.

There are 10 part-time and 22 full-time staff who work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Eight staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

### How good is the Day Care?

The Stables Nursery provide good care for children.

Staff organise the space effectively, although some rooms have limited space. Staff are deployed well to work directly with the children. Staff provide a warm and welcoming environment through posters, notices and displays of the children's work. There is a wide and stimulating range of resources that are planned well to cover the six areas of children's learning. Outdoor play is used more frequently during warmer weather although children generally get the opportunity to play outside daily. Most documentation is in place and kept confidentially.

Staff provide a secure environment for the children. All staff are aware of the children's safety and daily measures are generally in place to minimise hazards to children. There are adequate procedures in place on outings. Most staff have current

first aid certificates. Children are able to try a variety of healthy foods at snack time. Staff use snack and meal times to extend the children's language skills although children are not always able to extend their independence skills. All staff are appropriately aware of their child protection responsibilities.

Staff provide a caring environment where children's individual needs are considered well. Staff follow effective working practices to meet the specific needs of children with special educational needs. There is a valuable range of resources to promote positive images of diversity to children. Staff plan children's activities around the six early learning goals. Children play purposefully and co-operatively. Children's behaviour is generally very good, they appreciate right from wrong and staff have a good understanding of reasons behind children's unwanted behaviour.

Both senior management and room staff are available to speak with parents at either end of the day. Parents are welcomed into the nursery at any time and invited to special days in the group's calendar such as Christmas celebrations.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to: implement a written no smoking policy; devise a written outings policy; keep a record of significant incidents; reduce hazards to children; produce action plans for the care/activities of babies and for ensuring that staff ratios and registration numbers are maintained and to attend Child Protection training.

Policies and procedures for non-smoking, outings and significant events have now been drawn up and implemented appropriately.

There is now a good programme of imaginative and sensory activities for babies under one year. Effective working practices have been introduced to allow sleeping children to rest more comfortably and nappy changing facilities provide privacy for toddlers.

The designated person for child protection has an appropriate understanding of child protection issues and other staff are aware that she is the point of contact as well as both principals.

Senior staff have taken action to improve visible security measures at all entrances, although the gates are not securely locked to prevent unwanted visitors accessing the site.

Senior staff now take daily responsibility for checking staff ratios and numbers of children in each room. All staff have been made aware that Ofsted must be notified of significant events.

#### **What is being done well?**

- Effective recruitment and induction procedures are in place. New staff are observed with children and undergo a probationary period. They receive a

comprehensive package of policies, procedures and guidelines to inform them of their working practices.

- The care, learning and play opportunities provided for babies are good. Staff have taken advice from the EYDCP and have developed their working practices to enhance the provision and now work to the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework. The staff provide a broad range of stimulating activities and babies experience sensory stimulation through gloop, sand, mirrors and musical instruments. Staff interact sensitively and positively with the babies, recognising the need to talk reassuringly as they are fed or settled to sleep.
- Effective hygiene procedures are in place. Staff actively encourage all children to wash before and after snack and mealtimes. Staff wear gloves to serve food and wipe tables down before and after meals. Children help themselves to tissues to wipe their own noses and staff isolate sick children sensitively from others, until they can be collected early.
- The staff provide positive images of diversity to the children. There are many good quality posters displayed at child height, and many resources are available for children to play with that allow them to discover and value similarities and differences between themselves and others. The nursery have developed links with a local special school and welcome students on placement. Resources are adapted effectively to suit individual children's needs.
- Meaningful and effective channels of communication between parents and staff are being developed. Staff give parents of babies daily records of feeds, sleeps and progress. Toddlers have daily diaries that staff and parents fill in as appropriate, to provide consistent and purposeful two way communication. Written reports are given to older children's parents on a monthly basis.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the children's purposeful use of outdoor play
- the accessibility of all fire exits at all times.

#### **Outcome of the inspection**

Good

#### **CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION**

*All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.*

*As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.*

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
3	Develop the children's use of the outdoor area.
6	Meet any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer (in this case, correctly site fire blankets and keep fire exits clear at all times).

## INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at The Stables Day Nursery is good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff and children have warm and trusting relationships and staff know children well. They use some opportunities to challenge children according to their age or ability, although this is mostly incidental and as a result, staff sometimes miss children. Staff manage children's behaviour positively and consistently, re-directing younger children and reasoning with older or more able children.

Staff are developing their understanding of the Foundation Stage and are keen to extend their working practice. However, they are not yet fully aware of the principles underpinning this stage of child development, and so are not sufficiently recognising and using purposeful play to extend children's knowledge and skills. The range of core activities such as sand, water, play-dough and construction are not always sufficiently available for children to learn through exploration and investigation.

Leadership and management is generally good. Senior staff are committed to improving the nursery and seek advice from the EYDCP. All staff are encouraged to gain qualifications although staff working with funded children have not yet attended any training specific to the Foundation Stage.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are provided with regular and meaningful information about their child. This is done both verbally and through written reports either daily or monthly according to the child's age. Parents are actively encouraged to write in their child's daily diary to promote consistency for their child's care. Parents are welcomed into the rooms to settle their child at the start of the day.

### What is being done well?

- Staff have given good thought as to how they manage the children's behaviour. They use positive strategies to distract and re-direct younger children's attention and reason gently with older children about why their behaviour is not acceptable. Children are generally well behaved and are aware of the boundaries and rules.
- Children's abilities to recognise and write their names are progressing appropriately. Younger children willingly attempt to write their names, drawing circles and vertical lines on paper, whilst older or more able children write their initial letter and sometimes write their name fully. Staff make valuable use of appropriate opportunities to encourage the children to practice these

skills.

- Staff are nurturing effective relationships with the children. Staff in the funded rooms are calm and effective in their interaction with the children and as a result, children are responsive and collaborative in their learning. Children sit attentively to listen to the story or sit at the table, keen to find out what they are going to do. They tidy up co-operatively when asked and relate well to each other.
- Senior management are developing effective links with outside professionals to help both individual children and the setting as a whole. They have sought advice from the EYDCP and implemented measures that have made valuable improvements to the group. They work co-operatively with professionals such as speech and language therapists or special educational needs advisors to provide focused support to suit children's specific needs.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the staff's understanding of the principles underpinning the Foundation Stage
- the identification of support and/or challenge for different children's learning, according to their age or ability.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Generally good progress has been made in implementing the action plan drawn up to address the four key issues identified at the previous inspection, resulting in some improvements being made to the educational programme.

Staff now provide parents with information about the Foundation Stage through posters displayed on walls. The prospectus gives some information about the early learning goals and the curriculum children follow. Planning is displayed on walls. Valuable information is supplied to parents about their child's achievements and progress on a regular and frequent basis. A large 'soft-play' room has been developed to allow more opportunities for children to practice their climbing and balancing skills on a larger scale.

Staff have not yet fully incorporated the early learning goals into the children's assessment records. Stepping-stones do not thoroughly form the basis of the information staff record on the children, which results in repetition of some information and limited focus on the children's achievements that are relevant to the Foundation Stage. There is evidence displayed on walls that staff use practical activities to help children understand mathematical concepts such as pattern, shape and size, and children refer to the patterns and shapes around them. Staff do not always seize opportunities to develop the children's mathematical language or skills in calculating.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have a good attitude to learning. They are keen and willing to find out; they delight in topic information about their bodies. Relationships are good between staff and children and between the children themselves. Older children are starting to form special friendships. Many children have an appropriate sense of community. They talk freely about their home lives and appreciate the differences and similarities between their home and nursery experiences.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Many children have a very good understanding of the sounds of letters. They recognise familiar letters and confidently relate them to the Letterland scheme that the group follow. They have valuable handwriting skills and most children use pencils and pens correctly to write their name. Older children's vocabulary is widening, which is a result of effective staff emphasis on extending children's knowledge through books. Older children know that information can be gained through non-fiction books.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Older children recognise some shapes as flat and some as solid. They say spheres are 'balls' not circles and correctly name cubes. More able children enjoy recognising number patterns and numerals around them. They know two groups of two make a total of four, and see the round and rectangular biscuit on their plate looks like the number ten. Although children's counting skills are appropriate they do not confidently calculate in everyday situations or during play activities.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have a keen sense of time. They talk freely about yesterday, a long time ago and going on holiday. Some older children appreciate that their own culture and identity is both similar and different to others, they talk openly about their culture and celebrate this through drawings and imaginative play. Children have few opportunities to design and make things incidentally. There is not a ready supply of scissors, pens, paper and other materials for children to use purposefully in play.



**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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All children enjoy movement. They hear changes in rhythm of background music and move their bodies appropriately. They hop, skip and jump confidently. Children are developing a good awareness of their bodies through topic-based work. They tell staff keenly about parts of their bodies and know they need gloves to keep their hands warm and wellies to keep their feet dry. Due to the limited opportunities to design and make things children are not sufficiently developing their skills to use tools.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Older children enjoy imaginative play. They organise each other efficiently to act out roles and introduce simple storylines into play. They confidently use both speech and movement to express ideas. They jump with pleasure and talk about their feelings expressively. Children make good use of the available props in role-play. Although children have adult-led music activities weekly, storage of instruments lessens children's chances to express themselves through music during their play.

**Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.**

### **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

### **WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES**

- improve the staff's understanding of the principles underpinning the Foundation Stage so that they can increase the children's learning opportunities through valuable and purposeful play experiences
- develop the short-term planning to more rigorously identify support and/or challenge for different children's learning, according to their age or ability.

*The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.*

## **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON**

*Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.*

### **STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION**

*The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.*

### **STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY**

*The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.*

### **STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

*The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.*

### **STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT**

*Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.*

### **STANDARD 6 - SAFETY**

*The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.*

### **STANDARD 7 - HEALTH**

*The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.*

### **STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK**

*Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.*

### **STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.*

### **STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)**

*The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is*

*proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.*

#### **STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR**

*Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.*

#### **STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

*The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.*

#### **STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION**

*The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.*

#### **STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION**

*Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.*