

Ashleigh Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Sally Smith
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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

Ashleigh Nursery School is a long established provision that opened in 1990. It operates from six rooms in a single-storey building in Atherstone. There are no issues regarding access to the premises. There are three fully enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery opens each week day from 7.30am to 6pm, all-year-round.

A maximum of 47 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 77 children from birth to under five years on roll. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 19 members of staff, all of whom hold a recognised early years qualification. The Head of the nursery is a qualified teacher and holds the Early Years Professional Status. One member of staff is working towards a Foundation Degree. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The nursery provides a very warm, welcoming and exceptionally stimulating environment where children make excellent progress in their learning and development. The partnership with parents and other agencies is a key strength. This is significant in ensuring that all children are nurtured and fully supported enabling them to develop to their full potential. The manager shares her vision for continual improvement most passionately and effectively.

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 opportunities for recognising and valuing the strengths, skills and knowledge of all staff in the setting.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

There is a strong emphasis on safeguarding, using the robust policies and procedures in place that are clearly understood by all staff and parents. Rigorous vetting procedures ensure that all staff working with the children are suitable to do so, and effective steps are taken to ensure that their ongoing suitability is assessed at each appraisal. Staff are sound in their knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse and their responsibility to report any concerns to the relevant agencies so that children are protected from harm. Documentation for the safe and effective

management of the setting is very well organised, regularly reviewed and stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

High staff morale and exceedingly ambitious, challenging and determined leadership indicate an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. There is a clear sense of purpose from the manager about what she wants to achieve and where improvements can enhance the outcomes for children in line with the Every Child Matters principles. Self-evaluation and reflective practice is used extremely well to maintain ongoing improvement. One of the main reasons for the nursery's exceptional success in all areas is that the manager's inspirational leadership encourages others to have the highest possible aspiration for themselves and the children. As a result, all staff are highly motivated and skilled in providing a stimulating and challenging environment in which children flourish. Staff regularly attend training to update their knowledge and skills, although the manager does not consistently delegate tasks. Therefore, at times, responsibilities rest on too few shoulders despite staff demonstrating a high level of competence.

The partnership with parents and carers is a strength of the provision. Parents speak with confidence and pleasure about their child's personal development and how staff take time to share information in a variety of formats. A special interest sheet is sent home on a monthly basis which records children's milestones and personal achievements. Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to this process in order to fully support their child's learning and development. Home languages and cultural backgrounds are highly valued and respected, with some parents becoming involved actively in this. Parents' forums and information evenings impart a wealth of information regarding many of the initiatives used by staff to support children, for example, 'Letters and Sounds' and 'Baby Signing'. Excellent links with a wide range of outside agencies ensure the best possible support to further enhance all children's learning and personal well-being.

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

Children are provided with a calm, bright and stimulating environment. Rooms are filled with high quality displays conveying the excellent achievements and learning undertaken by all children. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is used very effectively in planning a stimulating, challenging and varied range of activities across all six areas of learning with an excellent balance of adult and child-initiated activities. Staff encourage children to be involved in their own learning and pursue their own interests and lines of enquiry. Fantastic opportunities are made of the outdoor area as a natural extension of the learning environment. Often activities develop spontaneously, for example, children dig in the garden and say they are digging for 'dinosaur bones'. Staff build on the children's interest and enthusiasm, purchasing and burying some bones overnight. The following day, children gasp in amazement and squeal excitedly as they unearth these, frantically digging for more. Opportunities abound for exploration, investigation and observation. Children use binoculars to see at close hand the wealth of wildlife in the garden. They sit in the garden house to access reference books and pictures to confirm the

various types of birds, butterflies and insects they see. Children grow an abundance of fruit and vegetables, learning about compost and the benefits this has for the soil. Plants are watered using rain water collected from the water butt. This helps children to learn about the benefits of recycling. A maze provides a wealth of fun, whilst also encouraging children to develop their small motor skills, spatial awareness and hone their problem-solving skills as they work out how to get in, out and find the centre. This proves to be very popular with the children.

Resources, displays and photographs reflect people's differences and children develop an awareness of words, phrases and numbers to reflect the cultural diversity of children attending the nursery. Staff regularly use various forms of non-verbal communication to assist children who may require additional support, such as a pictorial time-line, sign language, symbols and pictures. Various festivals and celebrations are integrated into the routine and children experience great fun celebrating their own 'Notting Hill' carnival wearing colourful clothes and tasting authentic sweet and savoury Caribbean food. Children take great pleasure in looking at books and listening to stories. They join in with familiar phrases during well-known tales and eagerly predict what happens next. They learn about rhyming words and are adept at picking these out, such as 'road', 'load' and 'toad'. Children re-visit the story of Rama and Sita during Diwali celebrations and one child remembers the nasty man 'with 10 heads'. Children and staff discuss diva lamps and how these were lit to guide Rama and Sita safely home. This leads nicely into a discussion about fire safety and concludes with a Diwali song as children say 'Salmubarak' - Happy New Year.

Children demonstrate a clear recognition of following good personal hygiene through the established and well-practised routines. They wash hands and attend to their own care needs, with sensitive support when necessary from staff. For example, a child says 'my nose is runny' and is gently reminded by a member of staff that he knows what to do. He promptly helps himself to a tissue and then disposes of it in the bin provided. Mealtimes are social occasions where staff and children sit together. Meals are freshly prepared with a colourful range of fruit and vegetables to promote the healthy eating ethos within the nursery. Children happily try a range of different foods and menus from around the world. Food tasting further develops their tastebuds and helps to promote a positive attitude to new food experiences. Learning to be aware of their own safety is inherent in the day-to-day practice. For example, children in the pre-school room take turns to undertake a safety check of the outdoor area before all children play outside. A child observes that part of the fence has blown down after strong winds and that the lid has blown off the bin. She also checks the sandpit and identifies some broken plastic with sharp edges. Carefully, with the support of a member of staff, she disposes of this appropriately.

Relationships and children's behaviour are exemplary and consequently children are extremely well motivated and learn exceptionally well. The nursery's harmonious community promotes aspiration, celebrating success and achievement. Feedback, views and opinions are sought from staff, parents and the children in order to inform future planning. Recent consultation has resulted in additional activities being explored and implemented, such as initiatives to recognise

individual children's achievements both in the nursery and at home. A 'Tree of Celebration' is displayed in the entrance for all to see.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

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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