

Elm Cottage Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 307135
Inspection date 06/01/2011
Inspector Helen Blackburn

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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

Elm Cottage Day Nursery is one of six provisions, including three nurseries and three out of school clubs run by Elm Cottage Limited. It opened in 1989 and operates from a large converted house, situated in Heaton Norris, a residential area of Stockport. The nursery is close to schools, shops, parks and public transport links. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm, 51 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 100 children in this age range on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language.

There are 21 members of nursery staff employed at the nursery. All staff hold early years qualifications to at least level 2. Of these, 19 hold early years qualifications to level 3 and two are qualified to degree level. One member of staff has recently achieved Early Years Professional Status. In addition, three members of staff are working towards level 3 qualifications or above.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Relationships with the children and parents are excellent. Children are cared for in an environment where their safety and protection is paramount. Practitioners effectively promote equality of opportunity, diversity, positive behaviour and children's independence. The children are very happy and settled, they are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners who make significant progress in their learning. The nursery maintains a comprehensive range of policies and procedures, which effectively promote children's learning and the safe and efficient management of the setting. The nursery sets high standards across all areas of practice and robust monitoring and self-evaluation processes enable them to sustain improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- explore ways to overcome the barriers encountered when working with other settings where children receive education and care to promote continuity and coherence in children's learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The arrangements for safeguarding children are excellent. All practitioners regularly access safeguarding training. Therefore, they have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring children's welfare is paramount at all times. For example, they adhere to up-to-date legislation and work collaboratively with other agencies when dealing with any concerns. The nursery recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are robust and ensure all adults are suitable to work with children. Through appraisals, meetings and discussions, management effectively monitor and support practitioners ongoing suitability and professional development. The nursery maintains an extensive range of comprehensive documentation, policies and procedures. These contribute to the safe and efficient management of the setting and practitioners consistently implement them in their day-to-day practice. Highly effective systematic risk assessments, safety checks and practitioner's vigilance ensure children are cared for in a safe and clean environment. Practitioners manage the learning environment extremely well; resources are of high quality and the deployment of staff is very effective. Children benefit from this because they thrive and develop extremely well.

The nursery's commitment to providing a high quality service for children is excellent. Practitioners are skilled, well qualified, enthusiastic and motivated. They fully understand that processes, such as self-evaluation, research and reflective practice, contribute to bringing about effective ongoing internal review. For example, they introduced home visits after reading research articles about the benefits this would have on children's attachments and transitions. Self-evaluation is inclusive because all practitioners, parents, children and other professionals contribute to the process. For example, individual action plans for each room set clear, focused targets of development to meet the needs of all children. This self-challenge, alongside other monitoring systems, enables the nursery to devise exceptionally well-targeted plans. Practitioner's ongoing professional development is highly valued and, because of this, the majority of them are qualified to level 3 and beyond. In addition, the nursery contributes to a number of projects led by the local authority. This provides excellent opportunities for them to share their knowledge, experience and good practice ideas with other practitioners.

Relationships with parents are excellent and very positive. Parents and practitioners effectively exchange and share information, which contributes to meeting children's individual needs. Information boards, comprehensive policies and procedures provide parents with good quality information about the service provided. Practitioners ensure they keep parents very well informed about their child's achievements, well-being and development. For example, they hold parent evenings, invite parents to share their observations through home observation sheets and ensure children's developmental records are readily accessible. In addition, through home visits, parents have excellent opportunities to ensure practitioners have a secure understanding of their child's needs and interests. Parent's comments are very positive. For instance, they remark on the memorable experiences they and their children gain by attending the nursery. They speak

highly of the practitioners saying they are friendly and caring and provide children with interesting activities that support their learning and development. Practitioners understand the importance of working with other providers involved in the children's learning, such as schools and other settings. They are proactive in initiating contact with others. However, in some cases they have come across barriers when other settings have provided little or no information about the experiences children receive elsewhere. Practitioners work well with other professionals and external agencies to provide the best learning opportunities for children who need additional support or help.

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

There are extremely positive relationships between the practitioners and the children. Practitioners are very motivated, enthusiastic and highly involved in children's play. Through promoting sustained, shared thinking and asking open-ended questions, they effectively support and challenge children's learning. Through observation, knowing the children very well and understanding their individual backgrounds and needs, practitioners support children in making significant progress in their learning. This includes providing ongoing challenges for children recognised as gifted and talented. The children are central to the nursery planning arrangements because practitioners effectively incorporate their ideas, interests and individual learning priorities. This means children embrace the wide range of activities and challenges with great enthusiasm. In addition, through practitioners engaging in programmes, such as 'Every Child a Talker', they explore new ways to promote children's learning. As a result of this programme, alongside other activities, children's communication, language and literacy development is exceptional. Children's independence is encouraged very well for all age groups. For example, babies' self-care skills are encouraged as they begin to feed themselves and older children serve their own lunches. All children make their own choices in play, resulting in them being curious and inquisitive learners. For instance, babies explore their environment with great interest. Children learn about simple number concepts as they count everyday objects and they use their problem solving skills as they solve simple puzzles, such as jigsaws. The children are very creative and imaginative learners, they engage in a wide range of role play activities and they express their creativity through arts and crafts. This includes all children exploring different textures, media and natural resources. In addition, the newly developed and stimulating outdoor environment is fully utilised to promote all aspects of children's learning.

Through everyday practices, children show an exceptionally understanding of good personal hygiene routines. The nursery meals and snacks are well balanced and nutritious and support children in developing an excellent understanding of healthy eating. The children have excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills, such as balance and coordination. For example, they climb with skill and confidence when using the slide and they skillfully negotiate their bikes around obstacles. Children are extremely content and settled because their individual health, physical and dietary needs are met to high standards. In addition, through having secure and trusting relationships with the practitioners, children feel safe.

For example, practitioners organise their time very well to meet children's individual needs and to promote continuity for children. The children have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they explain with confidence the dangers of not using the slide correctly, through play they talk about road safety and they take part in regular evacuation practices.

The children's behaviour is very good. This is because through play, consistent boundaries and positive role models they are learning about the importance of sharing, taking turns and respecting others. The children are very confident and have high levels of self-esteem because practitioners effectively praise and value their contributions. Through talking about differences, celebrating different festivals and traditions and having an extensive selection of resources that promote positive images of all people in society, the children are learning about diversity and the world in which they live. Through activities, such as growing some of their own foods and purchasing food from the local area, the nursery is contributing to promoting a sustainable environment.

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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

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