

The Athelstan Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Athelstan Nursery opened in 1978 and is run by a committee, made up of parents. It operates from a large church hall in the Clive Vale area of Hastings. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area to the front of the building. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 9.15am to 3.30pm during term time. The group serves the local and surrounding area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time.

There are currently 78 children aged from two to five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery provides funded early education for some children aged two, and for three and four year olds. They support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two hold degrees and one member of staff is on degree training. Several staff are updating their qualifications and they benefit from the support of an administrator. Staff receive support from the nursery committee and the local authority's early years advisor.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are making good progress in their learning and development due to the good support of a dedicated team of qualified and experienced staff. They have safeguarding, children's health and their welfare high on their agenda. Children's individual needs are very well met and the excellent links with other providers and professionals ensures support for all children. Evaluation, self-reflection and a high commitment to change, enables the manager and the staff to identify areas for continued improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider the further labelling of resources and areas
- develop systems for sharing written information with parents and for them to contribute to their child's next steps.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The committee confidently delegate the day-to-day running of the nursery to the manager. The manager benefits from the support of an administrator enabling her to spend most of her time working with the children and alongside her staff. All staff have attended child protection training and regularly engage in in-house sessions. They have an excellent awareness of their roles, all know the procedures for raising a concern and in addition, the effective key person system helps safeguard children because their parents feel happy discussing issues with their child's special person. The safeguarding policy is clear and shared with parents so they fully understand the group's responsibilities. Risk assessment is carried out on a daily basis to make sure all areas and equipment used by the children is safe and hazard free. Staff working with the children are well qualified and recruitment and vetting systems are robust. They benefit from weekly staff meetings, thorough induction, regular supervision sessions and appraisals.

The recently redecorated premises provide an environment which is bright, welcoming and conducive to children's learning. The staff make good use of the available space to encourage children to move about freely. The wide range of toys and equipment are readily available and some are labelled, helping children to recognise familiar words. However other areas and labelling in other home languages are limited. Staffing ratios high and this benefits all children including those with additional needs. Equality and diversity are high on staff agenda and they demonstrate a keen commitment to inclusion. Partnership with other providers and professionals are a main strength. The manager is proactive in working with teachers, childminders and a range of support workers. This high level of liaison and communication ensures very good support for children's development and benefits their transition into school.

Relationships with parents and carers are positive and well-established. They share information when their children first start, enjoy good settling-in sessions and this continues each day when on arrival parents stay for the first ten minutes chatting to other parents, interacting with the children and talking to their key persons. Written information for parents is clear, informative, regularly updated and reviewed. Policies and procedures are readily available and shared with parents. There is a parent's area in the small lobby with lots of useful information, including leaflets and displays about the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parental views are keenly sought by the staff. This is achieved through good daily discussions, termly consultations, a suggestion book and questionnaires.

The staff team work very well together. The manager has clear aims and motivates her staff very well. Although staff have a good mix of qualifications and experiences, they enthusiastically support new initiatives and challenges. They willingly put themselves forward for training and workshops, showing a high commitment to their personal development. Staff are using self-evaluation, reflective practice and peer observations to look at any weaknesses and areas for improvement. Since the last inspection all previous recommendations have all been addressed and extended. Staff have been proactive in making several positive

changes, which have raised the outcomes for children and demonstrates their good capacity for continuous improvement.

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

Children enjoy positive relationships with staff who have a very good understanding of each child's capabilities and strive to make learning fun. Consequently children are progressing well towards the early learning goals. Staff share responsibility for the planning and provide a good range of activities to support children's learning and development. Staff are aware of children's starting points because they work with the parent to find out what their child can do. They use this information to monitor achievements and progress for each child. The observations, which they carry out regularly are noted and transferred into the children's individual learning journeys. These are shared with parents at termly consultations and hold lots of useful information, although the next steps section is not always shared with them regularly. The use of contact books to share written information on a daily basis is not available for all children. However, parents are involved in supporting their children's learning and development through the very good verbal communication which occurs on a daily basis. Parents are very happy with the service provided and when asked for feedback, make highly positive comments. They feel that staff are friendly, listen to their views, work well together, know who their key person is and like the flexibility of the service.

Children's social skills are developing well and they demonstrate a good understanding of their peers and their feelings. They have high levels of independence, for example putting on their coats to go outside, deciding who and what they will play with. Children are included in decision-making and the planning of activities. Consequently they are fully engaged in what they do and this has impact on their behaviour which is very good. Children are clear communicators; they confidently approach staff and clearly make their needs known. They enjoy looking at books and use the book area well. They are celebrating National Book Week by making their own little books with some using detailed mark making and attempts at writing. Children proudly show their creations with one child explaining he has looked at a book about a lion and has drawn his own lion. A new scheme 'Every child a talker' is being piloted in the nursery and staff are enthusiastic in developing this to improve children's language and communication skills. There are many opportunities to use mathematics during play, for example in the garden and at snack time. Children join in readily with various action songs at large group time. They sing and act using Maketon signs to 'Miss Polly had a dolly' and other favourites. A small group of children take part in a relaxation session lying on the floor and listening to classical music. They imagine they are on a magic carpet travelling over a rain forest. With the use of rain sticks and very quiet instruments they think about the sound of the rain and the various animals they encounter.

Children have very good opportunities to be active on a daily basis both indoors and in the garden. Given the choice, even in cold weather, children elect to go outside and have a lovely time in the fresh air. This helps children's understanding

that exercise and physical activity is needed for a healthy lifestyle. Although small, the garden is a great asset and the various areas encourage climbing and risk taking. Children have helped to plant herbs and vegetables in the planters; they enjoy playing in and moving about the soil in the digging area and are learning about recycling. In the garden a group of children have fun blowing bubbles while other run about with ribbon sticks. Because the wind is strong the ribbons keep getting tangled up together and children work together to work out how to untangle them. Children also enjoy a walk in the local community when they go to the shops, visit the school and join in events.

Children demonstrate a high understanding of good personal hygiene practices and making healthy choices in regard to food. There is a free choice snack time where children enjoy very healthy snacks and are able to be very independent. Children automatically go and wash their hands, fetch their crockery, choose from the selection of foods and then help to clear away when they have finished. Some children help mix the porridge stirring in their own ingredients adding raisins, banana and pineapple. Water is freely available during the session and children pour drinks for selves when they are thirsty.

Children gain an understanding of the wider world through a good range of celebrations, activities and festivals, often involving parents in these. Equality and diversity are promoted extremely well and staff work to ensure every one feels included and valued. Staff have an excellent awareness of inclusion and this is an area which they are passionate about. They provide very good levels of support to children who have additional needs and act swiftly to obtain the support of other professionals when this is identified. Staff know the children very well, are committed to working in partnership and meet children's individual needs very well.

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	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
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	2

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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