

West Cambridge Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY396219
Inspection date 25/02/2011
Inspector Veronica Sharpe

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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

West Cambridge Day Nursery is part of Childbase Ltd, which is a national nursery chain. The nursery opened in 2009 and offers care to the staff and students of Cambridge University. The nursery operates from purpose-built premises close to Cambridge city centre. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play space. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm all year round.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register to care for up to 100 children aged between birth and under eight years. There are currently 120 children on roll in the early years age group, and 35 of these receive early years funding. The nursery supports a significant number of children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 37 staff including an administrator, cleaners and a nursery cook. Over half of the staff working directly with the children have appropriate early years qualifications. Several staff are working towards improving their qualifications. One member of staff holds Early Years Professional Status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children benefit from a free-flow play environment and make good progress in their learning and development. Each room is cheerfully decorated and displays of children's artwork and photographs throughout the nursery make children and families feel welcome. Staff develop good two-way partnerships with parents to ensure the individual needs of children are met well. Managers and staff work together to monitor and evaluate the provision to ensure areas for development are identified and prioritised. As a result, the outcomes for children show steady improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further develop the outdoor areas, particularly for younger children to enable them to have stimulating and varied experiences
- ensure room registers are kept up-to-date, so that children's safety is not compromised in the case of an emergency
- review the way food is provided to enable children who have allergies to safely develop their independence at mealtimes and learn to make healthy choices.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and know what action to take in the event of child protection issues. They attend training to increase their knowledge of child protection and review the policies and procedures regularly. Robust recruitment arrangements are in place to ensure staff who work with children are suitable to do so, and induction procedures ensure new staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Written risk assessments for all areas, equipment and activities ensure that hazards to children are identified and minimised. Staff conduct daily checks of the premises and ensure children are appropriately supervised to keep them safe as they play. There are clear procedures for emergency evacuation, which are regularly practised by the children. Managers keep a daily log of children's attendance to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, but on the day of inspection not all the individual room registers had been updated to show how many children and staff were present in each area, which could potentially affect children's safety in an emergency.

Parents receive daily feedback from staff, along with regular newsletters. Whiteboards outside the rooms are updated weekly so parents know about events and activities taking place. Settling-in procedures include times for staff to collect information from parents about children's individual routines, interests and abilities to ensure their needs are known and met. Parents are positive about the setting and say they have a good understanding of the provision. Several parents say they have seen clear improvements over the last year, and believe their children are safe and well cared for. The setting works with other agencies to support children's individual needs, such as the local authority advisors, the university childcare team and specialist teachers. Appropriate systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The nursery is well organised and suitably equipped with good quality furniture, equipment and toys. Rooms are beautifully decorated with cheerful pictures, posters and examples of children's original work. All areas of the nursery include photographic displays of the children and families who attend, which promotes children's self-esteem and sense of belonging. Outdoor play areas give children space to run about and enjoy fresh air and exercise. Changes to the larger play area mean children have their own designated play spaces, therefore ensuring equipment is safe for their age and stage of development. This has enabled the setting to introduce free-flow play both indoors and out, enhancing children's ability to make independent choices and direct their own learning. Outdoor space for the younger children has not yet been developed enough to ensure they access the full range of activities in a rich and stimulating environment.

Since the last inspection a new senior staff team has been appointed. They have established a good team spirit and involve each member of staff as part of the decision making process. Staff are enthused by the changes and feel empowered to implement their own ideas and make improvements. For example, rooms have been reorganised to increase children's ability to make independent choices.

Mentoring and a comprehensive training programme enable staff to increase their knowledge and implement changes with confidence. Systems to monitor and evaluate the provision take into account input from staff, children and parents. Regular audits ensure improvements are well targeted, such as recent new fencing in the larger garden. Action plans have been implemented to ensure the recommendations from the last inspection have been mostly met and the setting continues to make steady progress.

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

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and work together to plan and provide activities based on children's interests. As a result children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Recent implementation of free-flow play enables children to extend their own learning and make good decisions about their play. Staff proactively support children as they join in their games or sit with them to read a story. Children enjoy good relationships with staff, for example younger children hold up their arms to ask for a cuddles, confident of a positive response. Children's behaviour is good, they show they can share and take turns and clearly enjoy the company of others.

Children in all areas have good access to books; babies enjoy picking up board books to look at pictures and handle the pages. Children sit enthralled as staff lead lively story sessions, for instance reading along to a musical version of 'The Bear Hunt'. A word-rich environment means children develop their understanding of letters and words, reinforced by staff making good use of initial sounds and early phonics. Children make good use of mark making materials, which are usefully deployed throughout the setting, for example they use whiteboards and felt tips outside or help themselves to pencils and crayons indoors. All children have opportunities to take part in creative activities, such as painting or model making. They use a good range of media including play dough, sand and water on a daily basis.

Older children have daily access to a computer to extend their understanding of technology. Younger children play with a variety of electronic toys and games, push-along and pop-up toys. This provides firm foundations for their future learning. Children play imaginatively as they bring in wet sand from the garden to make mud cakes, or create scenarios with dinosaurs. Interesting resources, such as the tepee, add to their experiences. In the garden, children develop problem solving skills as they build with large building blocks or walk along the balance beams. Children love music; they sing along to 'wind the bobbin' with much enthusiasm and enjoyment. Support for children learning English as an additional language is developing well. Staff collect key words and phrases from parents, and some of these are displayed in each room. Songs and stories reflect children's home backgrounds, whilst photographs of their families enable them to feel settled and at home. Staff working with younger children use baby signing, so children learn to communicate more effectively with adults and each other.

Children benefit from a healthy and varied diet. Food is prepared and cooked on

site and is made from good quality ingredients. At lunch times, children sit together to enjoy a social and relaxed experience. Menus reflect children's diverse cultures, helping them to appreciate a wide range of foods. Snacks include fresh fruits and vegetables, and older children can make some choices about when to eat. Staff are aware of children's individual dietary requirements and there are stringent procedures in place to ensure children eat safe and suitable food. At times these procedures impact adversely on children's ability to make healthy choices and learn about food. For example, whilst other children serve themselves and make choices about what to eat for snack, children who have an allergy always have their food given to them on a labelled plate, even if the food being served is not harmful to them. Photographs remind older children about good hand washing routines and in all areas staff act as good role models, making sure they wash their own hands before helping with meals or after nappy changing. Children enjoy ample opportunities to play actively outdoors on a daily basis. Babies and younger children follow bubbles with delight, whilst older children run about and use wheeled toys. Resources for the outdoor environment are well planned, enabling children to have good learning experiences in all the areas of learning. Staff teach children about keeping safe and they regularly practise the fire drill so that they know what to do in an emergency.

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

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| 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

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| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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

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

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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