

# The Aunties Old School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

133499

**Inspection date**

22/03/2011

**Inspector**

Gill Little

**Setting address**

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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

The Aunties Old School Nursery is a family run setting which opened in 1989, and is one of two nurseries run by The Aunties Limited. It operates from an old school building in a village to the north-east of Oxford. The building comprises of a large playroom with an integral area for younger children, a kitchen, cot room and toilets; there is also a large additional room for sleeping, and an office. The nursery has its own enclosed outdoor play area and a vegetable garden, and staff make frequent use of the woods and village recreational field which are located close by. Access to the provision includes several steps but there is also ramp access for wheelchair users.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 38 children under eight at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. It currently cares for 45 children in the early years age range. It is registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for children over five years. A small number of children in this age group who previously attended the nursery, or who are siblings of current children, attend during school holidays. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children attend from the local and wider communities.

The nursery is open on weekdays all year round from 8am until 6pm, except for bank holidays, one week at Christmas and two weeks during the summer holidays. The nursery works in partnership with the adjacent pre-school and other local pre-schools and schools.

The nursery employs 21 staff across its two settings, of whom 19 hold relevant qualifications. Of these, 17 staff are working towards further professional qualifications.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are able to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in this highly inclusive, safe and stimulating environment. Daily routines generally work very well and enable children to spend long periods of time outdoors exploring the local woods where opportunities for learning are excellent. Exemplary partnerships with parents, together with a high commitment to working in partnership with other professionals, contribute significantly to the nursery's effectiveness in meeting children's individual needs to a very high standard. Self-evaluation procedures are extremely robust and processes for further professional development are exceptional. The nursery's approach to continuous improvement is exemplary.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- reducing the time taken to help children get ready to access the outdoor environment.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Procedures for safeguarding children are extremely robust. Senior staff carry out thorough identity checks on any visitors to the premises and all staff hold appropriate background checks which are updated every three years. Extensive recruitment and induction procedures ensure that all staff are highly suitable to care for children. Staff have excellent opportunities to maintain a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding children procedures through routine training together with regular reviews of procedures which include considering their responses to various scenarios. Rigorous safety procedures are in place and staff are extremely effective in instilling in children an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

The nursery environment is very welcoming with a wide range of high quality resources and activities which are easily accessible to children. Staff make exceptional use of a private wooded area close to the nursery on a daily basis, in all weathers and all year round. This contributes significantly to the children's sense of well-being and provides excellent opportunities to develop a passion for nature and to really challenge their physical skills.

Equality is at the heart of the setting and staff are highly effective in ensuring that children are well integrated. Staff fully include babies and young toddlers in the daily life of the nursery and there is a very strong focus on celebrating and learning about different cultural backgrounds and languages on an ongoing basis.

Excellent partnerships with parents contribute to the staff's exceptional knowledge of children's individual needs. Senior staff take responsibility as the main link with parents so that all information between key persons and parents is channelled through them verbally on a daily basis. This approach ensures that senior staff, as well as key persons, are extremely aware of the needs of individual children and their families. An open door policy encourages parents to visit the nursery at any time and there is a very welcoming atmosphere. Parents are extremely complimentary stating that staff are highly effective in supporting them with issues such as children's behavioural problems, that they really value the daily feedback they receive and that children have 'blossomed' in this 'truly special' nursery. The nursery has a very effective agreement in place with parents to provide all-weather suits to enable outdoor play throughout the year, although it can take staff quite a while to get all children ready. The nursery also demonstrates a high commitment

to working in partnership with other settings which children attend. For example, they provide a very comprehensive report of children's progress when they transfer to school and they remain readily available to families and schools to discuss and provide advice regarding children's individual needs long after they have left the nursery.

The registered provider is exceptionally successful in inspiring staff to work towards ambitious targets. Morale is very high and almost all staff are working towards further professional qualifications. Self-evaluation procedures illustrate rigorous monitoring, and extensive action plans show that high expectations are embedded across all areas of practice.

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

Children of all ages have excellent opportunities to experience first-hand contact with the weather, seasons and the natural world as they spend much of their time in a wooded area close to the nursery. They show an exceptional understanding of safety issues related to this outing. For example, a corner of the playground is also used as a car park (although driving is strictly prohibited between 9.30am and 6.00pm). They know while crossing the playground to check for running engines and reversing lights and they are fully aware not to go beyond the boundaries in the woods as explained by staff. Once safely in the woods they have complete freedom to explore, to be physically active and exuberant. They run and climb up the steep sides of the wood and fully understand their own limitations, finding safe ways back down depending on their own abilities by shuffling on their bottoms, rolling or running steadily down on their feet. They become fascinated exploring the wood's natural resources. For example, a group of boys use some sticks to 'drill' holes in a tree trunk along with realistic sound effects, and a group of girls become absorbed finding tiny bugs, ladybirds, slugs and feathers. Children are extremely well supported by staff who stand back to let them explore and also join in with their play to help their imaginations and interest in nature blossom. Even the youngest children are free to explore what they can find on the ground, such as plants, insects and the soil; they are also able to sleep in buggies outdoors on most days under direct supervision of staff and this provides excellent opportunities for fresh air.

Back at the nursery children of different ages join in with a cooking activity. Older children help to measure, bind the mixture together and talk about the ingredients, while younger children explore the texture of the flour and spring onions. Although the younger children have their own separate area within the main nursery room, this daily integration with the older children's activities provides excellent opportunities for them to explore a wide range of sensory experiences and to develop very strong relationships with their older siblings and other children. This also benefits the older children greatly as they learn very positive attitudes towards little people who are more vulnerable than themselves. Children also benefit from a wide range of experiences helping them to value diversity as staff draw on their own very varied cultural backgrounds and those of the children to sing songs in

different languages and focus weekly on different cultures. This is particularly helpful for children who speak English as an additional language.

The progress of some children is exceptional. For example, a group of older children demonstrate high levels of achievement in their literacy and mathematical skills during a small group activity as they are able to recognise numerals and number patterns up to 30 and read a range of common words, such as the months of the year.

Children spend their whole nursery life within one group and therefore staff are able to observe their progress on a continuous basis and become very knowledgeable about their individual needs and levels of development. Staff use this knowledge to identify children's next steps in learning which are clearly displayed on a board in the main room together with ideas for resources and activities. Planning is very flexible and adapts to children's individual needs, interests, the weather and other opportunities on any given day. Very detailed summative assessments at the end of children's time in the nursery demonstrate that they often make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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