

ACE Day 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*.

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

ACE Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by a committee-led parents' cooperative. It opened in 2004 and operates from converted community premises in the centre of Cambridge city, Cambridgeshire. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.30am to 5.30pm for 48 weeks of the year. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register and can accept up to 17 children under eight years at any one time. Of these, not more than nine can be under two years at any one time. The nursery accepts children aged between one and three years, once they reach three years of age they can be admitted to the nearby Ace Nursery School. There are currently 40 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and some children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of staff. Seven of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery also employs a nursery cook who has suitable qualifications for her role. One member of staff is working towards a relevant qualification. 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's independent learning is well developed and they show high levels of confidence and self-esteem given their age and stage of development. Generally good systems enable staff to plan and provide a stimulating range of age-appropriate activities that effectively cover all the areas of learning. Good two-way partnerships with parents are well established, ensuring each child has their individual needs met well. Managers and staff show a clear understanding of the priorities for development, ensuring the setting has a strong capacity to sustain the quality of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the use of observations in order to identify next steps more effectively and plan challenging and motivating experiences for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Rigorous recruitment procedures help keep children safe, with all necessary checks completed before staff have unsupervised access to the children. All staff attend regular training in safeguarding issues so they have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed at team meetings and all the necessary referral information is displayed on the staff noticeboard, enabling staff to protect children from harm. Robust risk assessments and daily check lists ensure hazards are minimised. Clear explanations and good role-modelling from staff help children develop their understanding of safety issues. For instance, children understand how to navigate the balance beams safely. The nursery environment is very well organised, with a broad range of resources effectively deployed in all areas. Low-level shelving and clearly-labelled boxes enable children to make excellent choices about their activities. The free-flow environment enables children to access the outdoor area at all times, where they benefit from a full range of activities all year round. Routines enable children to have times to sleep and rest; their warm relationships with staff mean they are happy to snuggle into a lap, or have a reassuring cuddle.

Parents take an active part in the running of the setting through the committee and each family contributes some of their time, such as cleaning, gardening or coming in to sing to the children. They share in their children's learning by contributing to the telling tree and having daily conversations with their key person. Most parents say their children enjoy attending the setting and are settled and happy. Parents feel the nursery is a great place and find staff reassuring if they have concerns, for example, if a child is a difficult eater. Strategies to help parents and children who have English as an additional language are well established, for example, there are posters and pictures showing other cultures, countries and languages to help families feel at home. The nursery has good systems to share information with other providers. Transition records enable staff to pass on information to other pre-schools or nursery classes in the area. Staff have training in supporting children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In addition there are good links with other professionals, such as specialist teachers. Inclusive practice is embedded into everyday practice to ensure all children are included in the life of the setting.

Staff work well together and carry out their roles and responsibilities with enthusiasm and good humour. They show a good commitment to ongoing professional development, and as a result are capable and well trained. There are well-developed systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision. Managers and staff work together to identify areas for development and ensure there are effective plans in place to secure change. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been well met, showing the setting has a strong capacity to improve the outcomes for children. All documentation is regularly reviewed so information is up-to-date. Other important information, such as contact details and medical records are updated and easily accessible, promoting children's health and safety very well.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Activities are well planned and are responsive to children's interests, for example some children visited the local fire station due to their fascination with vehicles. Observations are collected on each child to identify what children enjoy and can do, but sometimes next steps are not clearly linked into the observations and assessments, which means that, potentially, some opportunities to extend children's learning could be missed. However, staff know the children well and offer them strong support as they play, which means all children make good progress in their learning. The free-flow play environment encourages children positively to make choices about their learning experiences; they move confidently between the indoor and outdoor areas and show good levels of independence and self-esteem. Staff allow children to solve their own problems, for example a two-year-old works out that the doll's buggy must be pulled backwards over the step to the garden. As a result they are developing their ideas on risk and are keen to attempt new activities, which supports their future wellbeing.

Staff take good advantage of spontaneous learning opportunities, for example, the sound of a helicopter going overhead leads to lively discussion about other forms of transport, such as aeroplanes and spaceships. Children have everyday opportunities to dig in the large sand tray, or use their own garden implements to explore compost. Children enjoy books and have a comfortable book area where they can sit and choose their favourites. Staff have provided laminated newspapers and magazines so children can include these in their imaginative play. Children await with eagerness a regular visitor who comes in to play a guitar and sing with them. They cluster round and have fun with 'The wheels on the bus' and 'Old Macdonald'. They end with the hand-washing song, as it is time for lunch.

The outdoor play area is well equipped with resources that bring the indoor learning environment into the fresh air, such as paints, construction toys and small world toys. Children develop an awareness of risk as they build up crates, or use balance beams. Sensory equipment, such as wind chimes and ribbons, make the environment cheerful and stimulating. A new growing area has herbs to touch and smell as well as some food plants. The nursery rabbit helps children learn to care for others. Children make regular visits into their local community. They go to the library for group activities, go to feed the ducks, or visit the shops to buy food for the cooking activities. Children learn about other cultures and countries through topics and activities, such as sharing foods from other lands. They celebrate personal festivals, such as Hanukah and Divali or learn about other events, such as Chinese New Year. Resources around the nursery reflect other cultures and lifestyles, such as play food and dressing-up clothes.

Children benefit from an excellent range of vegetarian home-cooked meals that are healthy and nutritious. The nursery cook is well informed about childhood nutrition and ensures meals have all the essential ingredients to support children's healthy

growth and development. Children sit in social family groups with staff to enjoy their meal, which helps them to develop good table manners and a relaxed attitude to food. Healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit are served on a rolling basis during the session. Staff sit with them and encourage them to make choices and explore different fruits, such as pineapple. Children develop their independence well as even the youngest is encouraged to take an active part in preparing their snacks or helping themselves to water. Children have a well-developed understanding of personal hygiene, for example, they use tissues and wash their hands before meals. Staff follow stringent nappy-changing procedures to minimise the risk of infection.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
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

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	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

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

Met