

The Alphabet Train Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	ISP Inspection
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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

The Alphabet Train Nursery School is privately owned and run. It opened in 2001 and operates from the first floor of a building in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday, term time only. On Monday and Friday session times are from 08.30 until 12.15, Tuesdays and Thursdays the sessions are from 08.30 until 12.15 and 13:00 until 15:00 and on Wednesdays the nursery is open from 08.30 until 15.00.

There are currently 38 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is due to commence training in September.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Practitioners competently promote the unique needs of every child and effectively meet their learning and welfare needs. Children play in a stimulating, inviting and secure environment, with some minor areas for improvement regarding outings procedures. Staff's knowledge of how each child learns is reflected well in the quality of the provision throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure outcomes for children are promoted the majority of the time. The extremely strong engagement with parents ensure continuity of care and development for children is given high priority. The setting have developed successful liaisons with other settings and other agencies too. The pro-active self evaluation system identifies weaknesses and celebrates successes. Action is immediately taken and carefully monitored to promote continuous improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend existing risk assessment records to ensure regular outings are always recorded and gain written consent from parents for outings
- provide a consistent assessment system to enable clear tracking of children's development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded well through the effective policies, procedures and safety practices implemented by staff. Children are kept safe and secure within the provision. All staff are very aware of child protection issues and how to refer to any concerns. Fire drills are successfully implemented, recorded and evaluated to ensure all children have a good understanding of what to do in an emergency. Thorough risk assessments are in place for every day use of the setting with documented action plans to demonstrate the staff's commitment to the children's safety. However risk assessments for regular trips to the park for outside play are not always recorded to show the action in place to ensure children's safety at all times. The setting does not have written consent at present to take children off site.

All required documentation is in place to promote children's well-being and good health; such as accident records and existing injuries. Robust procedures are implemented to ensure staff have checks and appropriate clearances to allow unsupervised access to the children. A safe arrivals and departure procedure ensures children are collected by authorised people known to the staff. All staff have a very professional and pro-active attitude towards the ongoing improvement of the setting to ensure outcomes for children are continuously promoted.

A very thorough evaluation process occurs for all aspects of the children's welfare and learning through a self- evaluation document which is regularly monitored, actioned and updated to show how improvements have a positive impact on the children. The staff work closely together to enhance their practices and to identify weaknesses either through their past inspections, support visits from the local authority or through new experiences gained at training courses. The setting has an ambitious drive towards their continuous development.

Children have access to a wealth of resources, either pre-selected or within accessible reach for children. The resources available promote all areas of learning and ensures inclusive practices encouraging all children to participate in the setting's activities. Staff actively use information gained from training courses as a resource to implement new practices throughout the session. All staff are positively recognised for either their experiences and their qualification, using their knowledge, skills and expertise as a resource to improve outcomes for children. The setting promotes inclusive practice throughout the session. Children's background information is used well to ensure their individual learning and care needs are provided for at all times. Staff are aware of children's home languages and encourages the positive reflection of this by asking children to answer their names at circle time by using different languages. Children have access to a good range of resources that reflect positive images of today's diverse society; such as books, posters, art equipment, dolls, dressing up and musical instruments. Children celebrate a range of festivals and cultures to help them to understand the importance of celebrating differences.

The setting make links with other settings and other professional agencies. Some children are in shared care with two different settings. The setting has some communication links with other nurseries to ensure consistent approaches are used towards the care and learning for these children. A diary is used to share practices, topics and particular interest about a child. Staff have a good understanding of the systems in place to liaise with other professionals, particularly speech therapists and Area Special Educational Needs Coordinators. They work closely with these professionals and the parents to ensure continuous practices are used to reflect that individual child's particular needs. The setting has excellent procedures and practices in place to engage all parents in their child's day. Daily events and photos taken by the children are shared via a screen in the entrance hall, showing their achievements and experiences from that day. Parents have access to a resourceful and informative website that includes all aspects of what their child experiences at the setting as well as staffing information. All parents are given a thorough information pack when they start at the setting including information about policies and procedures, daily events and who is looking after their children. Parents are well informed about their children's development and have regular opportunities to discuss their next steps with their key person. When children leave the setting and move onto school, parents are asked to complete a questionnaire to inform the setting of what has gone well and what they would like to see improve. However, parents feel very confident and happy to talk to staff at any time about any concerns or to celebrate in their children's success and achievements.

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

Children are very settled and happy in their environment. They are familiar with the routine and the layout of the setting due to the continuous practices and the long term familiar staff. Children are confident to make choices from the pre-selected resources and move freely around the room from one activity to another. Children participate in making further choices by voting whether to go to the park or to carry out large group activities within the setting. They also vote for additional resources such as which story puppets to get out of the cupboard to use in their role play. Staff have a clear respect for the children and they make learning and development for the individual their main focus. Children are inquisitive thinkers, constantly asking staff and visitors questions and eager to show their achievements to all. They enjoy participating in all activities, particularly when they lead the play, such as role play and small world imagination. Children become engrossed in group discussions lead by staff, actively participating in comments and asking additional question to quench their thirst for knowledge. Staff cleverly use children's experiences to recall past events, think about future events and to extend their learning, particularly about the world around them. For example, in one group session the children talk about living and natural materials such as shells, starfish, stones and plants. They relate these objects to visiting the seaside and television programmes, using their communication skills to gesture, use

expressions and vocally describe using some complex language. Staff ensure children learn to take turns, to question other children's comments and to critically think about the information they receive about the objects.

Children thoroughly enjoy using the creative workshop where they decide what they want to make, plan the creation themselves and slowly build their 2d and 3D works of art. Children are enthralled with their end products and share their achievements with members of staff who are eager to inform other staff about the individuals achievements and progress. Children are eager to demonstrate their problem solving skills by asking for the sand times and discussing how to make a flower out of wooden block and shapes by following pictorial instructions. They work together well, negotiating and discussing each other's roles in their play.

Children constantly use mathematical terminology throughout their play showing an understanding for shape, measure, contrast and comparison. For example two boys explain the differences between the two shades of green on the wooden blocks and explain that the triangle will not go in the same hole as the square as it is a different shape. Children explore malleable materials and are intrigued by its composition. They use good dexterity skills to manipulate its form into "pancakes" and "sausages" , describing how they made pancakes at the setting as well as at home for pancake day. Children have daily use of technology, either through the regular photographs that they take with the camera of staff and activities taking place or the regular use of the computer. They understand that the camera needs to focus and to press the button to make the image appear on the screen. All these activities helps to extend children's skills and promotes their learning for the future. Staff support children's learning well through the very effective questioning and interaction to ensure all children are engaged and busy in their world of play.

The staff plan for individual children's learning through a flexible planning systems which links closely to the children's profiles showing observations of achievements and references to the areas of learning and the stages of development. However, not all children's observations are easily tracked within the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure evidence relates to their continual development. All staff have input into the planning to ensure individual children's next steps are identified and linked to the learning intentions of the activities provided. Therefore there is a high priority given to promoting children's individual learning patterns, interests and particular favourite activities.

Children's understanding of hygiene practices is promoted well. They know the reason for washing hands before eating, preparing food and after toileting and all children have access to hand wipes after their snack time and cleaning wipes to wipe the table after eating. They confidently use the bathrooms independently, with staff on hand to assist younger children with toileting. Staff have access to and implement effective procedures for changing children's nappies and clothes when needed. Private facilities are available to respect children's dignity. Children have a good understanding of how to promote their own safety. They are aware of areas that they can access including the toilets in the entrance hall. Children are eager to tidy up when asked to do so and inform visitors that they need to look after their toys. Children pick up resources that have fallen on the floor and show their responsibility for resources by putting them away in the correct place so that

others can use them. For example, a child picks up the plastic Easter eggs wrapped in coloured foil, puts them in the bucket and places them back in the home corner on a shelf without an adult asking her to do so. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are kind to each other, giving other's opportunities to talk and answer questions. They listen to instructions and carefully carry these out successfully. When disputes occur, staff intervene quickly due to their vigilance, talking through the disagreement and explaining the impact that one child's actions have on another. For example, a child playing with the foam did not want the other colour mixed with her foam, staff explained to the other child that they had spent a long time playing, making a pancake and that she could make her own pancake beside her friend.

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	1

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	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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	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	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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