

# Old Station Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY218342  
**Inspection date** 24/05/2011  
**Inspector** Rosemary Davies

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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

Old Station Nursery is privately owned and was established in 2002. It is one of 15 nurseries owned by the same proprietor. It operates from two buildings on the site of the converted former railway station in Farringdon, Oxfordshire. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Children are accommodated across three different areas, according to age. They have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. Children come from the local urban community and surrounding rural area. The nursery provides free early education for children aged two, three and four years. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time in the early years age range, of whom 28 may be under the age of two years. Currently, there are 116 children on roll in this age range. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm throughout the year, with the exception of a week at Christmas. Children attend for a variety of sessions, including part time. Additionally, the nursery offers both before and after school care for school age children up to eight years. The nursery offers an after school club from Monday to Thursday from 3.15pm until 6pm, term time only. Play schemes run during school holidays, dependent on demand.

The children are cared for by 13 staff, all of whom hold relevant qualifications to at least level 2; three staff members are aiming for Early Years Professional Status.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery supports children well overall in making good progress in their learning and development. It has several areas of significant strength, which include exceptionally strong wider partnerships with outside professionals that contribute strongly to children's individual needs being met effectively and to their being safeguarded exceedingly well. Children make especially strong progress in learning about safety and healthy lifestyles. Care for the youngest children is provided in an excellent environment that offers some innovative touches; however, room organisation for older ones requires further attention. All children thoroughly enjoy playing in a most stimulating outdoor play area. Senior management and staff evaluate the nursery provision well overall, having addressed all issues arising from the previous inspection and showing a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

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

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

- improve opportunities for children to become independent in their learning,

- including making decisions about when to play outside, by reconsidering the layout and use of the rooms for children aged three to five years
- improve children's opportunities to develop their literacy skills by reconsidering the presentation of books, provision of early writing materials and general labelling in the rooms for children aged three to five years.

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

Safeguarding children is paramount. Highly effective systems, including liaison with relevant outside professionals from a Children's Centre, result in children's welfare being protected exceedingly well. Robust systems are in place to appoint staff, that include thorough induction systems for bank staff. On-going training and review of policies result in all adults working with the children knowing their roles thoroughly and what to do if they have concerns. Children use safe, secure premises with coded entry systems. They receive comprehensive teaching about how to keep themselves safe; for example, through using the Oxfordshire road safety 'Footsteps' scheme. Staff understand their responsibilities for preventing the spread of infection, notifying the regulator, Ofsted when necessary. Children's meals are cooked on the premises in a kitchen with a five star Environmental Health rating.

Wider partnerships impact too on meeting children's individual needs, such as during transition to school. Children move on to several schools locally and the nursery works effectively with them all to ease the move through giving first class support. Key workers have a comprehensive knowledge of their charges, their likes and dislikes and what they need to learn next. The 'buddy' key worker system provides backup when a child's special person is absent. Children's families are well known to staff and their diverse backgrounds are celebrated and reflected extremely well across the nursery. Staff engage well with parents. They speak highly of the nursery and are appreciative of the two-way communications that provide them with useful information about the nursery itself and the progress their children make. The nursery's admissions policy provides equality of opportunity for the many older children moving into the area from armed forces families.

Across the nursery, resources are of high quality and conducive to learning. The under twos room has some innovative touches to provide a 'bedroom' rather than a sleep room, together with a 'sitting room' area that offers an arm chair and mock fireplace complete with ornaments. Producing such a homely feel does not in itself improve outcomes for the babies, but demonstrates and instils a sense of pride in staff, which in turn lifts practice to improve outcomes. Rooms for the under twos have an excellent range of resources that are used to provide a stimulating environment full of interesting sensory experiences. All nursery rooms are well kept and inviting. Some resources in rooms for the over twos are not used so effectively. The outdoor area is excellent for all, although children cannot make decisions about when to play outside for themselves, which has the potential to disadvantage those who learn better when outside.

The senior management team provides clear leadership to staff, leading a team that reflects on practice well and evaluates effectively overall. Staff seek and act on the advice of outside professionals, such as advisory people from the local authority. The staff team receives good support from the proprietor in finding best practice, seeking capital funding and are rewarded for new ideas, so the nursery is always forward looking. Staff and parents' views are sought and acted on. The manager is energetic, shows strong commitment to improving outcomes for children and builds a sense of staff pride in the nursery and its work. Targets for improvement are viable and good monitoring picks up most areas of weakness.

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

Overall, staff provide welcoming, safe and well-resourced areas that support children's learning effectively. Children are eager to play outside. They participate in a wealth of highly worthwhile experiences across all required areas of learning. These allow them to test and re-test their skills, try new ideas and use their imaginations. Children that are more athletic use a suitable climbing wall enthusiastically, challenging themselves safely to get all the way across without falling off, or trying their skills at throwing and cheering when they achieve success. Such activities, whilst being enjoyable for all, are particularly relished by some older boys. The under twos are kept safe away from the bustling activity of the main play area. They explore a wonderfully diverse range of resources from wooden curtain rings to real household implements. They experience a range of natural and manufactured materials that stimulate their senses and encourage them to move and to find their voices. Inside, their individual care needs are met extremely well, as key workers accommodate their individual sleep and feeding patterns until they can fit in with nursery routines.

Routines are extremely well established across the nursery, so all children gain an exceptionally strong sense of security. Babies become confident in exploring their surroundings; older children name the person they go to if they are upset and need comfort. Staff deploy themselves well across the nursery to support children in both their learning and development. They know who is responsible for reading stories or overseeing snack time. Children enjoy very healthy lifestyles whilst in the nursery. Many children follow good hygiene routines without prompting; they recognise when they are thirsty and help themselves from the water dispenser. They contribute to making their afternoon "tea" and grow some vegetables outside. Everyone learns the importance of brushing teeth after lunch.

Staff plan effectively across all areas of learning. They make careful, meaningful observations of children's play, recording this accurately in a variety of forms to build a clear picture of children's progress from their starting points. Some parents contribute what they know of their children's learning at home to these records, which helps broaden the picture. Staff incorporate children's interests into topics well. For example, the current one on 'Jobs' in the pre-school room results from children being interested in the various roles the staff undertake, such as the manager becoming the cook for a day. Outside visitors, such as a police officer,

widen children's experiences; stretches vocabularies and stimulates their creative and imaginative play. Key workers know what individual children need to learn next and provide one-to-one time in which individual skills are worked on. The layout of the rooms for older children lacks systems and resources to promote independent learning fully. There are few pictorial prompts, for example, to help those who cannot read their names find where to hang their coats. Encouragement for early writing is not fully promoted in the pre-school area and books are not presented invitingly in either area. Despite these shortfalls, children gain many useful skills for their future lives, such as working out the number of mugs needed at snack time, and listening carefully to adults and other children talking at group times.

Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff make clear their expectations, such as helping to tidy up and putting paper towels in a bin. They treat children respectfully, talking to them clearly, pleasantly and praising their achievements. Children respond extremely well, eagerly taking on small responsibilities and being far too busily engaged in purposeful play to become bored. Relationships across the nursery are exceptionally warm. Older children are exceptionally considerate towards younger ones, knowing they must not make a noise near the 'bedroom' when babies are asleep.

## 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>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### 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>	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

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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	1
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