

The Stables Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Patricia Champion

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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 Stables Nursery is privately owned by an informal partnership. It opened in 1993 and operates from 10 playrooms within converted stable buildings. The nursery is located in Galleywood on the outskirts of Chelmsford, Essex. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 110 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Operating times are from 7.30am until 6pm.

There are currently 216 children aged from six months to nine years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions, full day care or holiday care. The nursery serves the local community and wider areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery employs 32 staff, of whom 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are three staff members currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. A qualified teacher, dance tutor, music teacher and a French tutor are also employed to work with small groups of children each week. The nursery also employs a chef and catering staff. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children demonstrate high levels of confidence and are happy and settled in the nursery. Staff know and value the children's individual needs and plan a wide range of activities. The environment and available resources are generally well used to achieve planned goals in learning and development. Positive partnerships with parents and external agencies ensure that information is shared to promote children's well-being. Consequently, children of all ages make good progress. There are appropriate systems in place to monitor the provision and the committed staff team work well together to continually improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review routines, resources and deployment of staff to enhance the opportunities for the children to make choices in their learning and develop their independence skills
- review and revise the policies, procedures and prospectus to reflect current practice and meet the guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- develop further the links with other early years settings that the children attend to enhance continuity in their learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff and management of the nursery put a strong emphasis on promoting children's safety and well-being. Staff carry out risk assessments for all areas children access and for each specific outing. This ensures that all potential hazards are identified and minimised, allowing children to play and learn in a safe environment. Effective security procedures are in place to protect children. All visitors to the premises are closely monitored and CCTV systems are in place. Appropriate recruitment procedures are followed. Staff are fully aware that any new staff or students who have not yet been checked and cleared as suitable through the Criminal Records Bureau do not have unsupervised contact with the children. Staff also have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know the relevant procedures to report any concerns, which supports them in safeguarding children. All the essential documentation that supports children's welfare and learning is in place. However, there is potential for misunderstanding as some of the policies, procedures and parts of the prospectus have not been updated to reflect current practice or to meet all the guidelines of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Each child is valued and their individual needs are known and met. Children with special educational needs or those who speak English as an additional language receive a good level of support to help them settle and progress. The nursery works sensitively with parents and liaises with external agencies for additional support and guidance. Children learn about the wider world in meaningful ways which fosters their understanding. A planned range of activities and festivals are organised to promote children's understanding of diversity and awareness of other languages.

Appropriate systems are in place to evaluate many aspects of the nursery. A formal self-evaluation has been completed and staff reflect on the activities and their practice each week. The management are starting to update their self-evaluation to include more recent developments. Since the last inspection the garden has been improved with an all weather play surface for the youngest children and new carpets have been fitted in many of the playrooms. Opportunities for staff development and training ensure that all keep up-to-date with changes and are continually improving their skills for the benefit of the children. On the whole, staff deploy themselves well and the required staffing levels are met. However, in some rooms the staff are fully stretched, particularly at the beginning of the day when organising domestic duties and greeting children as they arrive.

Parents are kept well-informed about the nursery through the website, notice boards, daily white board and regular newsletters. They receive details about their children's progress and development through daily discussions, interviews with key persons and access to their children's development records and diary sheets. Parents become involved in their children's learning through participating in the

gardening events or attending open days. The views of parents and children are sought. This feedback is used to inform the ongoing plans. Good links have been developed with local schools to ensure that there are smooth transitions when children enter full-time education. However, the partnerships with all the other early years settings that children currently attend have not yet been fully established to enhance continuity in their learning.

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

Children are engrossed in their play and have great fun in the nursery. They arrive full of enthusiasm and staff present learning experiences in interesting ways so that children are motivated to learn as much as they can. Throughout the nursery children demonstrate high levels of confidence and there is a good level of interaction between staff and children. Staff participate in children's play, taking a genuine interest in what they have to say. They are good at extending children's learning by asking pertinent questions that stimulate children's thinking. Babies and toddlers are well cared for as staff are caring and affectionate. They interact with babies and toddlers using language, facial expressions and gestures; clapping when a baby achieves and always using plenty of praise and encouragement.

Children access a positive balance of adult-led and child-initiated play. There is a super outdoor play area which is used extremely well to inspire children to take part in experiences on a larger scale, in exciting spaces. Indoor resources are plentiful and children select play materials from low-level storage. Babies particularly enjoy sensory play and exploring materials, such as, breakfast cereals or treasure baskets at floor level. However, the staff have not yet reviewed the routines to maximise the opportunities for older children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make choices in their learning, such as, making decisions about whether they play indoors or outside. Also mealtime routines have not yet been adapted to allow the older children to develop their independence skills further by serving their own freshly cooked food at lunchtime.

Staff ensure that children develop effective problem solving, numeracy, technology and literacy skills to enhance their future economic wellbeing. A wide variety of art and craft materials and role play resources are provided so that children can extend their creative ideas and use their imagination. The many displays throughout the nursery show children that their efforts are really valued and celebrated. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is assessed through regular observations which are used to plan their next steps in individual 'All about me' folders. These contain observations and reports supported by photographs and samples of work which demonstrate children's achievements. Staff know their key children really well and ensure their needs are included in each day's activities.

Children effectively learn how to keep themselves safe. They practise fire evacuation procedures and wear high visibility jackets on outings. On hot sunny days children know to wear sun hats and sun lotion or play in the shade. Children learn to promote their health well because the nursery has good systems in place

to support this. There are visual reminders about hand washing and hygienic toilet use and nappy changing is sensitively undertaken. Wholesome freshly cooked meals and healthy snacks are provided and all individual dietary needs are catered for. Children are now growing vegetables in the garden so that they can help care for, harvest and taste fresh healthy food. Children develop very good relationships with each other. They play cooperatively and show care and consideration towards each other as the staff are caring role models for children to follow. Each child is wholly valued and nurtured by the staff team which helps them develop their self-esteem and positive dispositions towards learning.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
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	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

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