

Elm Cottage Nursery at Thorngrove Primary School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY300705
Inspection date	04/07/2011
Inspector	Tara Street
Setting address	Thorn Grove Primary School, Woodstock Avenue, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, Cheshire, SK8 7LD
Telephone number	0161 485 7681 * 0161 786 9007
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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

Elm Cottage Nursery at Thorngrove Primary School is one of six provisions, including three nurseries and three out of school clubs run by Elm Cottage Limited. It was registered in 2005 and operates from a mobile unit within the grounds of Thorn Grove Primary School in Cheadle Hulme in Cheshire. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 41 children aged under eight years may attend the nursery at any one time. Of these, not more than 17 may be under three years, and of these, not more than 12 may be under two years. The nursery currently takes children from three months to five years of age. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery is closed on bank holidays and for one week over the Christmas period. The nursery serves the local and wider community and children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 75 children on roll who are within the early years age range. Of these, 30 are in receipt of funding for early education. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are 16 members of staff, including the manager, who work directly with the children. Of these, one holds Early Years Professional Status, 14 hold a qualification at level 3 in early years, of which four are currently working towards a Foundation Degree. One holds a qualification at level 2 in early years and is currently working towards a qualification at level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children's welfare needs are rigorously safeguarded because staff are extremely professional and endeavour to maintain the highest possible standards of care and education. Children make outstanding progress and overall enjoy an extensive range of highly enjoyable activities. They are valued as unique individuals and inclusive practice is a key strength within the nursery. Children's progress is imaginatively shared through excellent partnerships. The nursery demonstrates an excellent capacity to maintain continuous improvement, having implemented a significant number of positive changes. The management team, in consultation with staff, parents, carers and children are constantly reflecting upon their practice and identifying further areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person

should consider:

- maximising opportunities for children to learn about the food chain and planting, growing, gathering, preparing and using different foods.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and there are comprehensive policies and procedures. Highly effective recruitment, employment and induction procedures are in place to protect children. The organisation and management of the nursery is superb with the focus always on helping children to make outstanding progress and promoting their welfare. For example, staff use extensive daily risk assessments and safety checklists, to ensure that the environment is always safe, clean and fit for use. The whole staff team is enthusiastic and highly motivated towards providing excellent quality care and education for children. Staff have great enthusiasm and show an outstanding commitment towards their involvement in the self-evaluation process in order to bring about continuous improvement. They work highly effectively as a team because they feel valued, supported and exceptionally well involved with the nursery. A comprehensive equality and diversity policy outlines an excellent commitment to promoting inclusive practice. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of individual children and as a result their needs are extremely well met. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are extremely well supported. Staff liaise exceptional well with other professionals, parents and carers. Deployment of resources, including staff, is excellent. Staff keep extensive daily records of children's progress and make detailed activity plans. These ensure the six areas of learning are covered well providing a stimulating and dynamic environment both inside and outside. Excellent systems are in place to work alongside reception class teachers, other settings, agencies and carers to ensure progression, continuity of learning and smooth transition of children.

Partnership with parents and carers is superb as staff discuss every aspect of their child's learning and development with them. They share extensive information through daily discussions, highly informative notice boards, newsletters, questionnaires and parents and carers events. In addition parents and carers are encouraged to add comments and views on their child's progress in their individual learning journey files as well as completing 'Special Moment' sheets to share events and achievements from home. Staff use these opportunities to offer excellent support and guidance to parents and carers to enable them to effectively be involved in their child's learning and achievements. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to share their knowledge and skills in the nursery. For example, they have led activities where children looked at bugs through magnifying glasses as well as reading stories in Italian, Arabic and Chinese.

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

The learning environment provided by the staff and their skilled interaction with children to support their learning and enjoyment, is inspirational. As a result children make significant gains in their learning and development and their levels of achievement are excellent in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Staff organise the space and resources within the indoor and outdoor areas with great skill offering an extremely wide choice of experiences and interests. This ensures that children receive an extremely rich and stimulating play experience, with a well balanced mix of adult-led and child-initiated play.

Staff make excellent use of praise and confidence building strategies to successfully teach children to behave well, respond enthusiastically and play cooperatively. For example, children enthusiastically work together to clean the play cars with buckets of water and sponges. Staff provide excellent resources to enhance children's development of communication, language and literacy skills. They demonstrate excellent listening and concentration skills. For example, children listen intently to musical sounds and instructional prompts, such as 'stretch to the side' and 'touch your toes' during a ballet lesson. They eagerly count to ten, play musical instruments and add the corresponding actions to the music and words. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's technology, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills, through counting in many everyday situations and using the computer. Children's creativity is supported through very good access to an excellent range of role play equipment, construction toys and an extensive range of art and collage materials. For instance, they enthusiastically use sand and glue to make textured pictures, whilst babies enjoy exploring a tray of green rice.

Children's welfare is promoted by the staff to a consistently high level. For example, children are taught how to be safe through themes, discussions and taking part in evacuations of the building. The nursery focuses upon emotional and physical health, and cultural diversity, as they embrace and welcome everyone into a wholly inclusive environment. Children celebrate a wide variety of different festivals and have an excellent understanding of helping others as they fundraise to support various charities. All children enjoy and have great fun in the superb outdoors where they can choose activities to develop their creative and physical skills. However, some opportunities for children to learn about the food chain and planting, growing, gathering, preparing and using different foods is less well developed. The promotion of healthy eating is outstanding. Staff provide children with an extensive understanding of which foods and drinks are good for them, through the healthy and freshly prepared cooked snacks and meals provided. Children know how to act safely outdoors and adopt good personal hygiene. Staff blend daily routines and activities expertly together so that children acquire competency, confidence and independence in all areas. As a result, children exhibit excellent skills for the future.

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?	1
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	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

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	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