

The Old School House Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	21/06/2011
Inspector	Sarah Rhodes
Setting address	73 School Lane, Hartford, NORTHWICH, Cheshire, CW8 1PF
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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 Old School House Day Nursery opened in 2006 and operates from five main rooms known as the 'red room', 'blue room', 'green room' 'baby room' and 'sleep room', in a professionally converted single storey building in Hartford. There is a separate building for the pre-school children and a large secure outdoor play area. The nursery serves the surrounding area and is one of two nurseries owned by the private provider. It opens five days a week for 51 weeks per year excluding bank holidays. The nursery is open from 8am until 6pm Monday to Friday. The nursery is registered for a maximum of 100 children on the Early Years Register. It is also registered under the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to take older children. There are currently 122 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The group supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language. There is a manager and 32 staff which include clerical and cooking staff, cleaners and a handyman; 26 staff work directly with the children, and of these, 21 staff hold a National Vocational Qualification to level 3 and five staff are working towards a qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery has a very stable staff team which is supported by a clear management structure and systems, such as staff meetings and annual appraisals. Staff members fully engage in planning improvements for the setting's future, they review their practice to ensure children get a well balanced learning experience whilst still using individual children's interests as a starting point. The buildings have been made warm and cosy through decoration and the careful display of children's art work. Staff carefully chronicle the children's development and are developing ways to measure their progress towards all aspects of the early learning goals. Links are made with a range of professionals to support children's progress and the nursery is aware of the need to develop links with other Early Years Foundation Stage providers.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consolidate the use of records that efficiently measure all children's progress towards all aspects of the early learning goals
- exchange information with other Early Years Foundation Stage providers who provide care for children attending the nursery, to enhance staff's knowledge of the child's interests and development to assist planning
- enhance the annual staff appraisals by adding the expectation that staff declare all issues that may affect their suitability to work with children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded through a clear management structure which ensures staff understand their responsibilities. A written safeguarding procedure is in place and staff are helped to understand the importance of them and they are concerned about children's safety. Appropriate recruitment procedures and induction processes ensure staff's suitability is established when they are employed. Ongoing appraisals are undertaken to support the manager in establishing that staff have good knowledge of the policies and identify any training requirements, they are not always reminded of the expectation to declare any issues that may affect their suitability at these sessions. Observations of staff's practice when working with the children is undertaken by the deputy manager. The building and grounds are safe and secure and staff manage the entry of parents and visitors. Staff have a clear understanding of risks within and outside of the building, for example, they have processes they follow when the wooden play equipment is wet which ensures it is not slippery when the children use it. Written risk assessments for the building, grounds and any outings are completed and reviewed regularly.

Required policies and procedures are in place to help with the safe and smooth management of the setting. The senior management team have successfully encouraged the staff to become involved in the self-evaluation process and they are enthusiastic about their role in driving improvement in all aspects of the provision. They feel their ideas are valued and acted upon.

Parents are made very welcome as parent partnerships are seen as crucial to the staff team. A range of communication methods are used with parents, for example, all children regardless of age, have a daily diary book, which gives parents information about their child's day and parents have an opportunity to write in the book to update staff on issues or children's activities at home. Further links are established as pre-school children can also take home a book to share with their parents or the nursery's teddy, they are encouraged to draw a picture or write a few words about their book or teddy's time with them. Newsletters and parent boards keep parents up-to-date with the latest news. Policies are shared with parents and parents are confident about how to access their child's development files. Partnerships in the wider context are used to develop the quality of education and care, links with other professionals are used to gain ideas about best practice and information on how best to help children with additional needs. Staff are in place to help parents and children with English as an additional language or other communication difficulties. The nursery is aware of the need to develop links with the other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage to the children who attend the nursery to provide continuity of care and gain a full picture of the child's development. They have so far developed strategies to support the smooth transition to primary school for children and encourage visits from reception class teachers.

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

The nursery promotes children's learning, development and welfare well. The staff are committed to enriching the learning environment and take time to assess how they can improve the provision to promote children's learning. For example, the pre-school group sessions have been reorganised into three small group sessions to allow each child to contribute their ideas and access adult support to develop their understanding of the concepts being explored. In the baby room, staff have displayed children's work at a height that can be enjoyed by the children. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of their planning and assessment processes. Observations are documented, sometimes accompanied by photographs and are linked to the areas of learning before being placed in children's development files. These observations are categorised under the six areas of learning and next steps in children's learning are identified and planned for on a monthly basis. They are aware of the need to make clear assessments of whether children are making adequate age appropriate progress towards all aspects of the early learning goals and are in the process of introducing a system to support the recording of these assessments. Parents are informed about the observation files and are confident about asking to see them. Some staff ask parents to make a written comment about their child's interests at home on 'learning leaves' this adds to staff's knowledge of the types of activities that would be appropriate.

Children are supported by a key worker when they attend the nursery and this gives them the confidence to explore the environment and join in with activities. They grow in independence as they are encouraged to put their own coats on or learn to use the toilet. Staff take advantage of the deciduous tree shade and all weather outside surface to use the outside area as a learning environment during timetabled sessions each day. The children enjoy typical outdoor physical activities, such as riding tri-cycles and climbing, as well as sand, water and role play. They are making good progress in their communication language and literacy skills with all children developing into confident communicators and they develop an understanding of reading for a purpose. For example, they enjoy reading postcards to find out information or discuss a book about disability or a cultural festival and how the story relates to their lives. The pre-school children develop their skills through targeted sessions supporting their phonic knowledge and letter formation. Numbers, shape and size are introduced as part of daily activities as children, for example, count the soft bricks blocks they are building with. Children are introduced to other cultures through activities based around cultural festivals and a range of meals with influences from around the world. Children of all ages have ready access to computers or other programmable and push button toys. Their imagination is supported both inside and outside as staff do not impose restrictive rules, children can, for example, use the water table in their home corner play and to clean the chair or bake the sand into a pie.

Children benefit from a dedicated cook employed to provide a healthy range of appealing snacks and meals which are prepared from fresh ingredients. Staff are confident in their ability to provide a tailored service for all children including those with additional needs. They speak to parents or other professionals when required

for advice on any adaptations to the building or their care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure each child has appropriate care and activities. Translation is used on labels or pictures to support understanding, for example, in a pictorial daily timetable, where this will support communication with parents and children. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of children with food allergies and the precautions they need to take to keep all children safe. Good hygiene practices are introduced to children, through everyday routines and children confidently wash their hands in the accessible bathroom areas. Children are shown how to keep themselves safe through clear rules which are carefully explained. Staff manage the children's behaviour in a very positive way often using explanation and distraction, the atmosphere is busy and cooperative. By being grouped in a pre-school room prior to their transition to school older children are able to make good progress in developing skills for the future and the move to school when the time comes.

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