

Ascot Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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 Ascot Nursery School opened in 1972. It is a privately owned setting and operates from a house, within the grounds of Ascot racecourse in Berkshire. The children have access to five playrooms and a conservatory on both floors of the property. Cloakroom facilities are available on both floors. There is a fully enclosed all-weather garden for outside play. The nursery opens five days a week during term-time, apart from Ascot race days. Sessions are from 9.00am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday and 1.00pm to 4.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A lunch club operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A holiday club is held from 9.00am to 4.00pm on a Tuesday and Thursday during some school holidays. The nursery school serves the local area and children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 32 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 47 children aged from two to four years on roll. The nursery school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and/or children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 10 members of staff, eight of whom hold early years qualifications to at least level 2.

The nursery school makes use of the surrounding fields, as an extension to its outdoor play provision.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

All outcomes for children at Ascot Nursery School are positive, with a key strength lying in the way it supports children's ability to make a positive contribution. Children are cared for by kind, caring adults who provide them with good levels of pastoral care, and support them in making good overall progress in their learning. Arrangements for working in partnerships with parents, and other providers who offer care and education to the children, are mostly very successful. The nursery school demonstrates 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:

- encourage children to explore real-life problems through practical

experiences, for example 'how many cups do we need for everyone' and to further experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, personal writing symbols and conventional script

- develop further arrangements for sharing information with other providers, such as nurseries and pre-schools, about the children's progress and development and investigate ways of encouraging parents to contribute to their child's development record, in order to strengthen further shared links for supporting children's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

There are effective systems to ensure the safety and care of children. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities, should they have any concerns about a child's welfare. There is a clear safeguarding policy in place. Work experience students are fully aware of what they are whilst working at the nursery school. Written risk assessments cover all aspects of the provision. Staff undertake daily checks of the premises and supervise children carefully. Sound systems are in place in respect of recruitment and vetting.

Children are cared for by a consistent staff team, many of whom have been in post for several years. Qualification requirements are exceeded and staff take advantage of ongoing training opportunities. This demonstrates a positive attitude to ongoing professional development. Nursery sessions flow smoothly as good team work is evident, with everyone fully aware of, and undertaking, their allocated roles and responsibilities. The nursery environment is very stimulating visually. There is excellent use of labelling, which helps children understand that print carries meaning, coupled with well presented interest tables, displays of educational posters, photographs and many examples of children's creative work. Some of these do, however, show a fair amount of adult input; for example, in respect of the use of pre-cut shapes. The nursery school is a well resourced setting in which children can help themselves to a good range of items overall, and make choices from the different activities on offer. However, staff generally decide which table-top activities and construction toys to get out.

The nursery school is fully committed to the ongoing development of practice and improving outcomes for children. There is a collective approach to self-evaluation, which takes account of the views of staff and parents. For instance, it has responded positively to suggestions made by parents, which have resulted in more frequent meetings with children's key persons, the development of a nursery school website, and the introduction of a holiday club. All recommendations made at the nursery school's last inspection have been addressed successfully. The outcome of these mean that staff are now tracking the achievements and progress of younger children in a more formal manner, and that parents have easy access to accurate contact information for the regulator.

Parents are positive in their praise of the nursery school. In discussions with the inspector, parents comment that 'staff are very pleasant,' that they 'like the location and the environment' of the nursery school, and note that 'staff teach

children morals and very good manners'. Parents are kept well informed about the organisation of the setting and what their children are doing, via information displayed on notice boards, the nursery website, comprehensive newsletters and discussions with staff. They are invited to meet with their child's key person on a termly basis, but are not encouraged to contribute to their child's development record, to strengthen further existing shared links for supporting children's learning.

The nursery school welcomes all children and strives to meet their individual needs. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language. It works closely with other professionals and agencies as necessary, to ensure a cohesive approach to their care, learning and any extended support. Similar arrangements are in place in respect of some other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although, these are not so well developed in the case of other nursery schools or pre-schools that children may attend.

Staff plan many different activities and experiences relating to different traditions, beliefs and celebrations. These help children begin to learn about and value others, as well as building on their knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

Children are happy, settled, and secure in their surroundings. Most children separate very easily from their parents on arrival, whilst those who are a little unsure receive constant reassurance from staff, who are very kind and caring. Children are familiar with the daily routine and move freely and confidently between the indoor and outdoor environments. They become involved in the different activities and resources that interest them. They are supported in making good progress towards the early learning goals, as they engage in a balance of child-initiated play and adult-planned activities, which cover all areas of learning. Opportunities are also provided throughout the week, for children to work individually and in small groups with staff. These sessions focus on literacy and number work, music and French. Staff join in with children's play. They ask questions, encourage children to express their ideas and they model appropriate language for particular situations. For example, children enjoy imaginative play in the well resourced home corner, and wholeheartedly act out real-life situations that they may have encountered, such as the need to stay in bed because of illness. A member of staff is given the responsibility of telephoning 'the doctor' and is able to demonstrate a polite and positive telephone manner.

Children problem solve and reason, as they design and build with the wooden blocks and complete sorting and matching activities. They display sound awareness of numbers, as they help themselves to specified quantities of different food items at snack time. They also spontaneously incorporate their awareness of numeracy into their play. Children explore mark-making indoors and outside. However, staff do not adopt a consistent approach in encouraging children to

'write' their names on their work, and they do not always exploit opportunities that arise, as part of everyday routines to encourage children to calculate. For instance, by challenging them to work out how many cups they need for their table at snack time, so there are enough for everyone. Children are supported in becoming confident communicators, as they take part in whole group activities. At the start of the session, children discuss the day of the week and the weather. They are invited to talk about the objects they have brought in for 'show and tell.' The nursery school introduces different topics to children, which broaden their knowledge and understanding of a range of subjects; for instance their current theme of the 'environment', has enabled children to learn about recycling. They have had a visit from an employee from the local authority, to talk to them about this and everyone has been invited to take part in a small project at home, to identify the things their families recycle. Children explore pattern making, as they create butterfly pictures using different paint techniques, such as splattering and stamping. Each child is supported by a key person, who takes the lead on monitoring their achievements and progress, and identifying the next steps in their learning through observation and assessment.

A key strength lies in the nursery school's development of children's personal, social and emotional skills and enabling them to make a positive contribution. They have a clear sense of pride in respect of their traditional values, and the importance of respect for everyone and by everyone. This is touched on daily at the start of each session. Children are almost bursting in their eagerness to share their thoughts about the importance of 'kind hands', and how they should behave. For example, saying 'sorry' and 'please may I have' and not 'I want.' Older children put this into practice in their dealings with their friends, as they ask nicely if they can have a turn on a particular toy and say 'thank you' afterwards. Thus, children act as positive role-models for the younger children present. Staff are genuine in their praise of children, which fosters their self-esteem very effectively.

They recognise that some younger children, do not yet have the concentration span to remain seated for whole group times, and they allow them to go into another room and play. Children gain an extremely strong sense of community and the need to respect others, who may be less fortunate than themselves. They take part in sponsored activities to raise funds for good causes. They welcome visitors to the nursery school to talk to them about their jobs, and they learn about their immediate environment. Children who have English as an additional language, receive appropriate support to help them improve their communication skills. Staff are learning key words in their home languages, and they use these when communicating with children. There is some use of labelling in children's home languages, within the setting. This is an area which staff are intending to develop further, so that children and their families feel fully included, and that other children's awareness of linguistic diversity is broadened.

Older children demonstrate awareness of when and why they need to wash their hands. They independently go off to the bathroom to do this. Staff provide support for younger children as necessary. Children enjoy being outdoors in the refurbished outside play area, where they have ample space to move around. They play on the different wheeled toys provided with enthusiasm. They display good control and coordination as they manoeuvre these around, whilst carefully avoiding

collisions with other children. Children have planted a variety of different fruit and vegetables. They have watched the growth of these from seeds, and are now harvesting produce to eat at snack-time. Such activities as these, help children learn about growth and where food comes from. It also encourages a positive attitude to healthy eating, and perhaps a willingness to try something new. Children and staff sit together for a shared snack-time. This is a lovely sociable time, with good opportunities for speaking and listening. Children serve themselves and pour out their own drinks, which encourages their independence.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe with the support of staff, as they intervene promptly to guide them away from potentially unsafe practices. For instance, staff explain to younger children about the importance of being careful on the stairs, and the need to sit on chairs properly. Children participate in regular fire drills and are introduced to specific safety topics, which are pertinent at particular times of the year; for example, the importance of sun safety during the summer months.

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