

Phoenix Day Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	403445
Inspection date	07/09/2011
Inspector	Angela Jackson

Setting address	Merrymeade Coach House, Merrymeade Chase, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 9BG
Telephone number	01277 260 893
Email	info@phoenix-daynursery.co.uk
Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Phoenix Day Nursery Ltd was registered in 2001. It operates from a converted coach house situated on the edge of Merrymeade Country Park in a residential area of Brentwood. The nursery serves the local and wider community and has strong links with local schools. The nursery operates from rooms on the ground and first floors of the listed building. There are four fully enclosed areas available for outdoor play.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.45am until 5.45pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 81 children may attend the nursery at any one time, all of whom may be on the Early Years Register. There are currently 124 children on roll. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 35 members of childcare staff and a full-time chef. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff has a BA (honours) in Early Childhood Studies and another has recently gained a Foundation degree in Early Childhood Education. The nursery receives support from Essex County Council.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Each member of staff throughout the nursery has a strong commitment to providing the best start in life for all children in their care. They are motivated by the strong leadership team who have high aspirations for the nursery, children and families. Children are extremely happy, safe and secure and flourish in an atmosphere of trust and good feeling. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress. Each child is supported by staff who have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their individual needs and interests.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- incorporating technology resources that children recognise into their play, including greater access to computers.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded and well protected by a staff team that puts all children's safety and well-being at the heart of everything they do. Leaders have exceptional management skills and provide inspiration and motivation to the highly qualified staff team. A rigorous recruitment process and a secure building and site, effectively protect children from unsuitable adults. Children make excellent progress in learning new skills as a result of stimulating and exciting experiences being provided for them. Staff are encouraged and supported to attend a wide and diverse range of training courses. For example, the innovative and imaginative Forest Schools approach to learning. This has transformed and extended children's learning outdoors for all age groups. The management's ambition and drive for improvement, impacts on children's well-being throughout the nursery. Recent changes include children having a more substantial tea and there are plans to make all outdoor areas more inspiring. Staff meetings are used to gather the teams' views and to discuss ways forward. This forms part of the robust and ongoing, self-evaluation process.

All staff have excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Resources, rooms and outdoor areas are regularly risk assessed and checked before use each day so that children are able to move freely, independently and safely around the building and site. The areas used by children are extremely well organised. Children are able to access an extensive range of developmentally appropriate toys and equipment. This means they are confident and enthusiastic learners, managing risks and trying out new experiences for themselves. Staff ratios exceed the minimum requirements and staff are deployed effectively to fully support and meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Strong relationships are formed with parents from the outset. The system for settling in children is designed to meet the needs of new children and their parents. It is flexible and takes into account individual difficulties or concerns. Children are warmly welcomed and there is an effective key person system with a second key person to stand in during absences. This provides a high level of continuity and establishes a strong sense of security for all the family as well as the children. Children are happy and confident. Parents praise all aspects of the nursery provision but in particular their relationships with staff. Parents state that staff are always ready to 'go above and beyond' in order to support them and their children.

Partnerships with other agencies are well established and provide a strong network of support. Specialists provide staff with training to meet the needs of families and children, such as providing strategies that enhance provision for children with special educational needs and/or difficulties. In this way, children are supported in ways best suited to their individual needs. The nursery is fully inclusive and proud of the achievements of all babies and children. Staff consider themselves and the children they care for so well, as 'one big family'.

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

Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. There is a clear observation, assessment and planning process that is used consistently by all staff across the nursery. Each child's memory book is a unique point of reference and an interesting record of their learning journey. Children and parents regularly contribute photographs and other items from home. The memory books are stored within easy reach of children who are free to look at them at any time. In this way, children and parents are fully involved in the learning process and can look back at progress over time. Staff use observations effectively to plan activities and resources that extend learning and understanding for individual children.

There is an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children are confident and independent learners. They self-select what they want to do and engage in discussions about how to overcome difficulties, with staff and other children. Children make very good use of the outdoor space for meaningful learning activities that help develop physical skills. They practise balancing and climbing on different wooden structures and negotiate space and the safety of others by cycling within painted lines. Children use a great variety of natural materials in the larger garden area. They are offered problems to solve creatively and critically. For example, they work out how a large tarpaulin can be spread over the tall bamboo poles. They learn to think quickly and resourcefully as they find a range of objects, such as crates and logs, to climb on in order to reach the high structure.

Children learn to manage taking risks while being closely supervised at a safe distance. Children test out situations for themselves as they put their large spanner across two crates and assess its strength before stepping onto it. Children use a wide range of vocabulary and are encouraged to discuss what they are doing rather than to answer a series of questions. The 'Every Child a Talker' programme is now established and strategies are used to support children with speech delay or difficulties. All children make higher than average progress in communication skills. Use of new technology is encouraged through a wide range of musical and moving toys and there are some computers for the older children.

Children learn about the world around them and develop skills for the future, through planned activities outdoors and inside. There are a multitude of opportunities in the outdoor play areas to discover bugs and natural habitats. Magnifying glasses and telescopes help children to look in detail at living creatures. Pictures and a large range of reading books enhance and extend this learning. Children treat each other with respect and practise good manners throughout the day, especially at mealtimes. These are social occasions when staff sit and eat with the children. Children are extremely well behaved. They treat each other kindly, help others who are less able than themselves and share without question.

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