

Hobby Horse Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 133593
Inspection date 04/04/2012
Inspector Sue Bennett

Setting address Oxford and Cherwell College, (Banbury Campus), Mewburn Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 9PA
Telephone number 01295 250687 or 01865 551662
Email hcollins@ocvc.ac.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

Hobby Horse Children's Centre registered in 1992 and is owned and managed by Oxford and Cherwell Valley College. It operates from five rooms for different age groups, in a terrapin building within the grounds of the college, located near the town centre, in Banbury, Oxfordshire. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The provision serves students and staff from the college and also takes children from the wider community, including neighbouring counties.

The nursery is on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 62 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 74 children aged from three months to under eight years on roll. The nursery is funded to provide free early education for three- and four-year-olds and also cares for children over eight in its after school and holiday facility. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open each weekday all year round, except Christmas, from 8am until 5.30pm. During term time a pre-school group operates from 9am until 12 noon and an after school club from 3pm until 5.30pm. A play scheme operates in the school holidays from 8am until 5.30pm. The nursery employs 15 staff, including the manager, and all hold appropriate qualifications. The manager, deputy manager and assistant deputy manager hold level 4 early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards an Early Childhood Studies degree.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery provides a stimulating and welcoming environment where children are happy and thrive. Dedicated staff have good procedures in place to ensure that children are safe and their individual needs are met. Effective systems of observation and assessment enable all children to make good progress in their learning through a good variety of activities overall. The nursery has valuable partnerships with the local community and childcare services. Parents are well informed about their child's time in the nursery and have good opportunities to contribute their views on the setting's provision. The management and staff work well as a team and have effectively addressed all recommendations from the previous inspection, demonstrating a strong capacity towards continuous improvement for the benefit of the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide a wider variety of writing tools for older children to develop independent writing skills during role-play and other activities to extend their learning
- improve the provision for younger children to use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning
- develop staff knowledge of further promoting children's awareness of linking letters and sounds

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust, regularly reviewed and carefully managed. Staff have a good knowledge of their responsibilities with regard to child protection and receive regular training updates. They implement all policies and procedures well and keep efficient records, including checks on recruiting new staff. A daily risk assessment of the premises ensures that children are safe and secure within the nursery. The consistent record keeping of accidents, administering of medication and attendance, further protects children. All external doors have sturdy locks fitted and the outdoor area is fenced securely.

The nursery has a clear focus for continuous development. The management regularly reviews the good operational plan and meets with staff to evaluate the provision. They are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and gain feedback from parents through questionnaires. Consequently, this strong approach to improvement ensures that outcomes for children remain good. The management also identifies future training needs for staff through regular meetings. Recent training on promoting positive behaviour has proved to be beneficial, deepening staff knowledge. Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. However, they are less secure in teaching letters and sounds.

Staff create an inclusive learning environment, ensuring that all children are treated equally and enjoy the same range of experiences. Children learn about other cultures and disabilities through a good selection of resources and discussion activities. This is stimulated through stories and small world and role-play toys. Areas, both indoors and outdoors, are exciting, well organised and spacious. Staff have designed the learning environment well, it is vibrant and enhanced by displays of children's work. Resources, overall, are plentiful and of good quality, matching the developmental needs of the children within each age related base room. Staff are suitably deployed, ensuring children receive good levels of interaction and supervision.

Partnerships with the local community are strong. Good links with the local primary school are established and the nursery benefits from good quality support provided by local childcare services. Parents value the wealth of opportunities that enable them to be involved in the nursery's life. Regular parents' evenings enable

discussions to take place with staff about their child's learning and development. Staff regularly send home summaries of children's progress and observational records, encouraging parents to contribute their feedback. Notice boards display staff photographs, nursery events, activity information and the setting's procedures.

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

Children are happy and have fun, while making good progress in their learning and development. Effective use of the 'key person' system supports children well and means they are able to form appropriate attachments. Staff record children's achievements and use their observations well to plan a wide range of activities for children's individual learning needs. As a result, overall children have enjoyable and challenging experiences across all the areas of learning.

Children enjoy participating in the focused activities. For example, the youngest children make chocolate nests and older children decorate Easter shapes. Staff support children well through encouraging conversation and questioning, which effectively helps to develop children's confidence and ability to be reflective. There is also good provision for children to choose and initiate their own play ideas. For example, in role-play children prepare imaginary meals for dolls and build vehicles from constructional apparatus.

Children develop and use good skills for the future. They make confident progress in communication, language and literacy. This is because staff in each room read stories and encourage children to join in with rhymes and ask questions. The youngest children are encouraged to repeat phrases to develop language, whilst older children begin to write their names under adult direction. However, staff make little provision for them to independently explore and develop their early writing skills. Mathematical development is widely promoted through counting cups for snack time, comparing the size of fish in the water tray and sorting by shape and colour. Older children enjoy using information and communication technology, such as the computer and programmable toys. However, access is limited for the younger children.

Good use is made of the outdoor area, which enables children to be physically active and develop knowledge of the wider world. This includes well-planned focused areas, such as digging and planting, number lines, sound exploration and a range of large moveable toys. Children are highly enthusiastic about spending time outside and enjoying the company of others. They put on coats and boots with a high degree of independence, explaining the importance of keeping their feet dry and bodies warm. Staff place strong emphasis on promoting positive behaviour within all rooms. Consequently, children respond well and interact successfully with their friends and adults alike. They enjoy responsibility, such as pouring drinks at snack time and finding a particular book in the story area for

staff. They help each other to tidy the toys; they take turns and show concern for friends who are upset.

Children have a good awareness of developing a healthy lifestyle. They adopt good personal hygiene routines, such as washing hands and using tissues for noses, which minimises the spread of infection. Children understand the importance of healthy eating and enjoy fruit and crackers for snacks. Posters around the setting and information for parents, ensure that the contents of children's lunch boxes are balanced and nutritious. Children have a good understanding of the importance of routines, such as registration and keeping gates and doors closed. Consequently, they feel very secure and safe within the nursery environment.

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

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