

Animal Crackers

Sandy Hill Farm, Fradley Junction, Alrewas, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, DE13 7DW

Inspection date	19/02/2013
Previous inspection date	11/05/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Children's safety is not assured because there are a minority of staff who do not have sufficient knowledge and experience to keep children safe and promote their welfare.
- Children's safety and well-being is put at risk because not all staff aged 16 and over have been vetted to check their suitability to work with children.
- The arrival and departure of children is not well managed and leads to the staff being engaged in activities which are not solely focused on the children. As a result, their needs are not fully met at this time.
- Children's progress in the pre-school room is inconsistently monitored. As a result, children do not make better than satisfactory progress.
- Self-evaluation is poor, and does not sufficiently identify areas of weakness. This means that the drive towards improvement is not secure.

It has the following strengths

- Most children are well behaved and form secure attachments, which supports their emotional well-being.
- Children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in the baby and toddler rooms.
- Children are provided with appropriate support to prepare them for their transitions into different care groups within the nursery and as they move onto other settings.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities, practice and care routines within the four main playrooms.
- The inspector spoke with children and observed their play.
- The inspector sampled records and documentation relating to children's progress and development, staff suitability, safeguarding and welfare.
- The inspector discussed leadership with the registered provider and senior staff.

Inspector

Scott Oliver Thomas

Full Report

Information about the setting

Animal Crackers nursery was registered in 1999 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in converted farm buildings in the Fradley area of Burton-Upon-Trent and is managed by the registered person. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four rooms and there are fully enclosed areas available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 20 members of childcare staff. Of these, 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, and one at level 2.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 120 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure children are cared for by people who are suitable to do so by implementing effective systems of checks, including obtaining a Disclosure and Barring Service check in respect of every person aged 16 and over who works directly with children and ensuring no person whose suitability has not been checked has unsupervised contact with children
- ensure all staff included in ratios are aged 17 and over, and those aged under 17 working with children are supervised at all times
- foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement by using reflective practice and self-evaluation, which includes input from staff, parents and children, to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will continuously improve the quality of provision for all children
- improve the organisation of arrival and departure times by deploying staff effectively to meet the needs of children and their families
- ensure the consistent implementation of assessment to support children's learning and development, and to identify interventions needed, by monitoring the progress children make from their starting points in the pre-school room.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff generally meet the needs of the range of the children who attend. They are learning a satisfactory range of skills to ensure their readiness for school when the time comes. Children in the baby and toddler rooms generally make good progress in their learning. This is as a result of staff's suitable knowledge of the learning and development

requirements. Observation records of children's achievements are suitably maintained. Staff track the majority of children's progress appropriately and identify acceptable next steps in their learning. Staff identify most children's starting points and give a generally good account of each child's stage of learning. Each child's key person has a generally sound understanding of next steps for children's learning and as a result, planning is effective. Written plans are linked to children's assessments and mostly identify what children are expected to learn. There is developmentally appropriate differentiation for younger or older children to ensure that adequate learning takes place. However, the generally good practice of tracking children's progress in the baby and toddler room is not reflected in the pre-school room. This results in staff not being able to consistently identify the progress children make during their time in pre-school, according to their starting points. This does not fully ensure that gaps in their learning are accurately identified and appropriate intervention is able to be sought. Therefore, children in pre-school make no better than satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff, guide and facilitate learning suitably for all children. Children who speak English as an additional language are provided with appropriate individual support to enable them to make progress in English and use their home language in their play. This allows children to engage in activities and form friendships. Staff demonstrate how they support children's achievements in the prime areas of learning for those whose development is below expected levels. This is particularly around aspects of language and communication, social skills and physical development. For example, staff use speech and language tracking tools to ensure children are making steady progress.

Staff make satisfactory use of daily routines, activities and free play to extend older or more able children's learning. Adequate use of effective questioning techniques gives children opportunities to develop their skills in expressing themselves and encourages them to think critically. For example, as children wash their cars outside, staff ask developmentally appropriate questions about how children will transport their water.

Parents are given generally appropriate support to become involved in their children's learning. For example, they are provided with ideas of activities to do at home with their child. Staff talk to parents regularly regarding children's progress and children's achievements at home. In the after school club, children develop a broad range of physical skills through sessions with staff, employed to support the development of these skills. Despite some of these young staff being un-vetted, they support children's development well in this area, under the close supervision of staff.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that children are kept safe. Staff whose checks have not yet been completed and are under the age of 17 are allowed to be counted in ratios. This means that children are cared for by some staff with insufficient knowledge and experience due to their age. Arrival and departure times are staffed appropriately. However, these times can become chaotic, and sometimes result in staff becoming occupied with other duties that do not focus on maintaining the well-being of children and their families. Consequently, all children's needs are not met at this time.

Overall, children generally behave well and show increasing confidence and self-esteem, which is evident across the setting. Staff praise and encourage children, and for the most part, adapt their approach to suit the different ages of the children. Children are developing an understanding of acceptable behaviour through reinforcement of positive rules and regular praise and encouragement from staff. Children show respect for others, including their key person, whom they form strong attachments with. The environment is welcoming to children. Resources are stored at a low level and children have access to generally good activities and experiences. This further supports their independence and self-esteem.

Meal times promote children's social development, as they sit with their friends and staff. Children eat a healthy diet at nursery, and learn about healthy and unhealthy food choices through discussion with staff. Children take regular exercise outside and, for example, learn new skills, such as throwing, catching and kicking with balls.

Arrangements for ensuring that children settle well when they begin at the nursery are adequate as staff obtain information about children's needs from parents. There are clear arrangements to introduce children to different rooms within the nursery as they are given opportunities to visit before moving permanently. This helps them to make a smooth transition. There are general links with the local primary school to support children to settle when they move from the nursery.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager has an adequate knowledge of the learning and development requirements. This results in children making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in the baby and toddler rooms and satisfactory progress in the pre-school room. However the manager's knowledge of the safeguarding and welfare requirements is inadequate. As a result, there are breaches of requirements, which have a significant impact on children's safety and well-being. Some of these breaches also relate to the Childcare Register requirements.

The safety of children is not sufficiently assured. This is because safeguarding procedures are not effective and do not ensure that all staff have completed a Disclosure and Barring Service check to ensure their suitability to work with children. The majority of staff are appropriately qualified. However there are a minority of staff who have insufficient experience and knowledge to protect children's welfare and keep children safe. This is because there are a small number of staff working with the children, and counted in ratios, who are under the age of 17 years.

There is basic monitoring of the educational programmes and children's progress. The majority of children are sufficiently challenged to make steady progress given their age, ability and starting points. Staff generally share relevant information about children's learning and development with parents. However, not all staff use assessment rigorously to alert them to early signs of the need for intervention, specifically within the pre-school

room. As a result, children are not supported to make the best possible progress in their learning and development.

The management team offer an adequate support network to staff throughout the day. They are available throughout the time the nursery is open. As a result, there is a clear reporting structure in place for all staff. Supervision, continual assessment and monitoring of staff performance is basic and is focussed on the manager's views. It does not take into account the views of other senior staff in the nursery to identify weaknesses and improve the quality of care and education.

Self-evaluation is not based on robust monitoring and analysis of the provision and does not take into account the views of parents, staff and children. Since the last inspection, some improvements have been made. For example, staff are making regular observations of children to identify learning priorities.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- ensure there are effective systems to ensure that any person caring for or in regular contact with children is: suitable to work with children which must include obtaining a Disclosure and Barring Service check and has skills and experience suitable for the work (Suitability to care for children or have regular contact with children) (also applies to the voluntary part of the Childcare Register).
- take action as specified in the compulsory part of the Childcare Register section of the report (Suitability to care for children, or have regular contact with children).

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets

		the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	218403
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	901495
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	86
Number of children on roll	150
Name of provider	Animal Crackers Children's Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	11/05/2011

Telephone number

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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