

Active Learning Finchley Nursery

Moss Hall Hotel, 10-11 Moss Hall Crescent, LONDON, N12 8NY

Inspection date	20/03/2013
Previous inspection date	23/02/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- The leadership and management of the setting is excellent. The principal is highly motivated. She has very effective systems and procedures in place for monitoring of the childcare provision.
- The nursery staff have a highly effective working partnership with parents. As a result, children's needs are met exceptionally well.
- There are high quality, interesting and stimulating play environments. Staff have innovative ideas for new learning experiences which are hugely successful in engaging children's interest.
- Staff show an excellent understanding of the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make the most of opportunities to challenge and extend children in their learning.
- The educational programme is rich and varied, offering wide-ranging opportunities for extra learning in different subject areas.
- Staff pay particular attention to the safeguarding of children, making sure that children's health and safety are promoted effectively throughout the nursery.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled 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 children taking part in a range of activities.
- The inspector interviewed the principal.
- The inspector talked with staff and parents.
- The inspector sampled the nursery's documentation.
- The inspector took part in a joint observation with the principal.

Inspector

Jill Nugent

Full Report

Information about the setting

Active Learning Finchley Nursery registered in 2008. Active Learning Childcare (Guernsey) Ltd is owned by a team of childcare professionals. The nursery is one of a group of seven nurseries. It operates from a two-storey building in Finchley in the London Borough of Barnet. The nursery is open every weekday from 7.30am until 6.30pm for 51 weeks of the year. Children have the use of seven base play rooms and a large outdoor garden. The play rooms are situated on the ground and first floors of the building. In addition to free-choice play children take part in focused activities that are led by specialist teachers. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 152 children on roll. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years. The nursery employs 28 staff, and of these, two hold Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery supports children who have special education needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- review the organisation of group times for older children to ensure groups are small enough for children to benefit fully from the learning experience.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff meet the needs of all children exceedingly well. Children are highly motivated to explore through the provision of a wide range of interesting, good quality resources. Staff are adept at setting out sufficient resources to encourage children's exploration without confusing children with too many choices. Staff are exemplary in their active engagement with children. They are sensitive in their interaction, taking care to approach children thoughtfully and openly. For example, they recognise when to merely support children in their own exploration and when to demonstrate different ways of using resources to offer a new learning experience. Staff follow up children's own interests, helping them to learn through trial and error in a supportive environment. They calmly engage children in conversation, making comments and suggestions. They carefully pick the right time to introduce questions to encourage children to investigate further. Specialist staff plan a rich and varied programme of extra activities for children aged over two years. For example, children find out about different artists and then experiment with art techniques in hands-on explorative activities. Children learn different forms of dance and languages. They

participate in organised games and sports. The provision is carefully timetabled so that all children benefit from these special learning experiences.

Children are eager to explore and make the most of the free play sessions to move around and try what is on offer. For instance, younger children have fun exploring toy vehicles and tubes while older children concentrate hard on drawing pictures and tessellating shapes. Children become absorbed in their self-chosen tasks, for example, when constructing intricate models using small coloured bricks. They develop excellent levels of concentration as they work. Older children develop this ability further as they take control of their own learning, finding the resources they need for a task and talking with others to share ideas.

Staff are highly effective in using talk to encourage children to communicate. Adults model speech and introduce new words to younger children, including language that increases children's awareness of mathematical concepts. Older children are noticeably articulate in their use of language, for example, when using complex sentences to explain and describe. They are especially interested in drawing and colouring and staff make the most of this to encourage them to talk about their pictures and then to express their talk in written words. Children explore letters and numbers, shape and capacity. A particular strength of the educational programme is staff's ability to follow children's lead from a given starting point. For example, starting with one concept, groups of children have got involved in all sorts of exciting activities, such as creating a dinosaur land, building a volcano and making a delivery van. This is an excellent way to help children explore their own ideas and develop useful skills for the future.

Staff use a highly effective system of observational assessment to chart children's progress towards the early learning goals. Children's files contain numerous written observations, photographs and summary reports, which provide a visual picture of children's learning over time. Staff ensure that their observations are relevant and focused so they can follow these up with activities to move children on in their learning. Consequently, all children make good progress in their learning and some make significant progress. Older children show a high level of readiness for school, particularly in the key areas of literacy and mathematics. They have access to a computer suite and especially enjoy the interactive whiteboard where they experiment with early writing or play games.

There is excellent support for children learning English as an additional language. Staff liaise closely with parents, for example, by requesting recorded phrases in children's home languages. Children find out about each other's cultural backgrounds through celebrating numerous festivals, with the help of staff and parents. Children have wide-ranging opportunities to boost their learning indoors by participating in outdoor play in a large well-equipped garden. They learn to travel in different ways as they attempt an obstacle course. They increase their control and coordination as they run and aim balls, climb and balance.

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

Children feel very much at home in the nursery. They delight in the different learning opportunities presented throughout the day. They often have fun, for instance when exploring water beads or squeezing and mixing paints. They approach every opportunity with enthusiasm and develop an excellent attitude towards learning. All children enjoy the involvement of staff in their play as they explore together. Children benefit from the many opportunities to play outdoors in the garden. This helps them to keep alert and enjoy activities to the full. Young children quickly gain confidence as they search around for resources to explore. Older children are very confident in making choices and approaching adults. They develop firm friendships within their groups and feel valued as individuals.

Children behave extremely well. They show much respect for others and consequently enjoy secure personal space in which to explore. They are fully aware of what is expected of them. This contributes to an atmosphere of harmonious play. Children respond attentively to staff, who often seek their views, for example, when purchasing new resources. Staff pay much attention to organising the environment so that children can move freely and make independent choices. Similarly at snack and meal times children are actively encouraged to be independent. Older children happily help younger children when tidying away. Staff are vigilant concerning children's dietary needs and have these displayed on plates and dishes. The menu is exciting, nutritious and healthy. Children enjoy their meals and this encourages them to adopt healthy eating habits.

The premises are very clean, tidy and well maintained. There are various safety measures in place around the nursery, which help children to feel secure. Children are always well supervised, for instance, when using the staircases to access the garden. Babies feel emotionally secure because staff are caring and maintain a calm atmosphere. They make good use of music to help young children relax. Staff share detailed information about daily routines with parents and request information about children's routines so that they cater for children's care needs appropriately. Staff carry out tasks, such as nappy changing, discretely and with close attention to good hygiene. There is an excellent system of care with allergy plans in place and these are regularly reviewed to ensure children keep healthy.

Children are actively encouraged to talk about personal safety. They assess risks for themselves when playing outdoors, for example, as they ride wheeled vehicles around the roadway or move crates to make obstacle courses. They learn about fire safety when learning about the great fire of London. Staff take the opportunity to follow up these spontaneous learning experiences, for example, by asking firefighters to visit the nursery.

Children are extremely well supported when they move on to their next room. Staff work with parents and other key persons to allow children to experience their new groups as part of a gradual transition. In this way children are able to take such moves in their stride. Children enjoy story, music and singing groups, although staff do not always give sufficient thought to the size of these groups, leading to children occasionally being distracted when in big groups.

provision

The nursery principal is totally committed to high quality care and education for all children. She takes the lead in ensuring that safeguarding is promoted effectively throughout the nursery. There are rigorous checks in place to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff carry out detailed risk assessments of the premises, and play activities, putting clear actions in place to minimise potential risks. New risks are assessed as they arise and staff are regularly updated about safety issues. They take great care to supervise children adequately around the premises, particularly when using the staircases. All records relating to health and safety are well maintained. There are well-established procedures in place for dealing with concerns relating to child protection. Senior staff keep up to date in their training and liaise with other professionals as necessary. Every member of staff carries an information card with details of what to do, and who to contact, if they have any concerns.

Staff are extremely well deployed around the nursery and this contributes to the calm and relaxed atmosphere. Staff are adept at recognising the differing needs of children and responding to these. For example, a member of staff may quietly join a lone child in play or offer a reassuring lap for a child that feels unsettled. Staff's practice is closely monitored by the principal. She encourages staff to think about how they can improve their practice and to access training events. She motivates staff through her enthusiastic approach and keenness to try new ideas. As a result, staff willingly embrace new ideas, for instance, taking on board an innovative way of planning to improve children's learning experiences. They now recognise the importance of using focused observations to enable more effective interaction. In addition they are getting to know children very well and are able to talk knowledgeably about their targets for each child. This has proved very beneficial for children as the learning experiences are now tailored to their needs, and linked to their interests, resulting in exciting opportunities for new learning.

The nursery staff have an excellent working partnership with parents. The principal and vice principal have an open door policy and parents feel very welcome. There is a particularly helpful settling in process with a focus on building relationships with children and parents so that they feel at home in the nursery. Parents receive detailed information about the provision in an extremely attractive and reader-friendly format. There is extra information around the building about the nursery's key policies and the role of key persons, known as mentors. Newsletters contain very useful information about the forthcoming planned activities for each group so that parents are able to support children at home in their learning. Parents meet regularly with their children's mentors to discuss progress and share targets. They also enjoy coming into the nursery to contribute to children's learning, for example, to share a skill, such as cake making. Staff work very closely with parents and professionals to support children who have special educational needs. They also have rapidly developing links with schools, which is helping them to prepare children more specifically for their future learning. Parents are enthusiastic in their praise of the nursery and especially staff's attention to detail. They comment on how well their children are progressing and their readiness for school.

The principal's key strength is her ability to reflect purposefully on the overall practice in

the nursery and to put in place action plans to further improve the outcomes for children, thus maintaining an excellent capacity to improve. For example, she has explored ways of improving staff's interaction with children through more effective planning. She has engendered much enthusiasm for the new system, which is proving to have much potential, and is now looking at incorporating other ideas to develop this even further. She has worked with staff to improve the support for children who are learning English as an additional language. Recently she has introduced a system for tracking children's progress through the nursery and this will enable staff to spot more quickly children who need extra support and those who would benefit from extended learning opportunities. She has impressive plans for the future, including the imminent redevelopment of the outdoor area to provide a stimulating new learning environment.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

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 action. 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	EY381536
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	908562
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	96
Number of children on roll	152
Name of provider	Active Learning Childcare (Guernsey) Ltd
Date of previous inspection	23/02/2009
Telephone number	02030 314700

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
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M1 2WD

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