

Agar Children Centre

Agar Children's Centre, Agar Grove Estate, Wrotham Road, Camden, London, NW1 0RJ

Inspection date	11/06/2013
Previous inspection date	11/06/2009

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		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- All children enjoy playing in an exceptionally well-resourced environment that supports their progress across all areas of learning.
- Children move freely between the indoor and outside areas. The forest schools project has provided children with wonderful outdoor learning experiences.
- The staff support children's learning extremely well through exceedingly enjoyable, fun and challenging experiences across all areas of learning.
- Partnerships with parents and other agencies are highly valued and support children's individual needs very well. Systems for early intervention are rigorous. Parents are very positive about the care their children receive.

It is not yet good because

- The provider has failed to inform Ofsted about significant events as required by the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Register.

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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the play rooms, corridor and the outside areas.
- The inspector talked with some staff and children within the nursery and held discussions with the nursery manager during the inspection.
- The inspector and manager undertook a joint observation of an activity in the garden.
- The inspector looked at a sample of available documentation such as observations, activity plans, safeguarding policy, complaints record and information on staff suitability.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through sampling available documentation and discussion with them on the day of the inspection.

Inspector

Helen Steven

Full Report

Information about the setting

The childcare setting registered in December 2008 and is part of Agar Children's Centre. The setting operates from a purpose-built building in Agar Grove Estate in the London Borough of Camden. The parts of the premises used by children are on one level and are fully accessible to all users. The accommodation comprises three base areas, with additional play space along the main corridor, including a dedicated music area, computer/technology area and a sensory room. All children have access to a secure outdoor environment.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It accepts a maximum of 66 children at any one time and currently has 62 children on roll in the early years age range. The setting opens from 8am until 6pm Monday to Friday, for 48 weeks a year. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language. The setting receives funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Thirty-three members of staff are employed to work with the children. This includes the manager and deputy. All staff hold early years qualifications, the majority at level three. There is one member of staff who has Qualified Teacher Status and three staff with qualifications at level six. There are two staff members working towards Early Years Practitioner status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve the safeguarding policy and procedure to cover the notification to Ofsted of allegations of events that may affect the suitability of staff.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make rapid progress in their learning as staff work well to provide a highly stimulating and exceptionally well-resourced environment. Children are very happy at the nursery and there is a friendly atmosphere throughout. The staff team have an excellent knowledge of each child's individual needs and interests. Staff use this information to plan and deliver a fun and challenging range of learning opportunities, which they adapt exceptionally well to children's individual interests and needs.

Staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn, and demonstrate a thorough

understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's progress during their time at the nursery is recorded through clear observations, beautiful photographs and selected examples of their work. Regular summaries and assessments of children's learning are clear and focused. These include the required progress check for children aged two years. There are rigorous systems in place for early intervention if children are not progressing as expected. Development records are freely accessible to parents and regular meetings keeps them well informed and fully involved in their children's learning.

Home-made books and outings to local schools contribute to the children being very well prepared for their move to school. Staff share children's learning journals with their new teachers and children make visits to the school. Close links with outside specialists mean that any child identified with special needs quickly receives additional support. This clearly promotes their learning and development needs. The successful deployment of staff means they are able to spend considerable time playing and talking with children on a one-to-one or small-group basis.

Children thoroughly enjoy choosing activities as they move between the indoor and outdoor environments, which are extremely conducive to learning. All playrooms are rich in print and photographic displays, which support children's learning. A book-lending scheme is very popular with children and parents. This enables all children to develop an enjoyment of books and underpins their early reading skills. In addition, it helps parents support their children's learning at home. Babies listen and join in with a favourite story; their interest is maintained through the use of props and staff asking them questions.

Staff place a high emphasis on developing children's communication and language skills. They have been involved with projects such as Every child a talker, which help staff and parents create a developmentally appropriate, supportive and stimulating environment in which children can enjoy experimenting with and learning language. Older children are learning about rhyming words. They eagerly helped a staff member make 'silly soup'. They learned a song as they took turns to add items to a huge metal pot, for example bats, hats and rats. They all gave it a stir with a large wooden spoon and had a 'taste' of the creative concoction! They discussed the different meanings of the words 'chilly' and 'chilli'. Babies demonstrated their skills in simple sign language. They pointed to animal pictures on the wall and practised the signs they are learning. Toddlers used wooden spatulas to make marks and patterns in a large tray of corn flour. They experimented by rolling vehicles over the mixture.

Throughout the nursery, children are encouraged to develop an understanding of mathematics. In the garden, older children were collecting numbered cones; the staff member asked them if they could swap her cone for a bigger number, which they did willingly. Routines such as snack-times are used effectively to help children look at sizes. Children hold up two slices of fruit and ask their friends which is bigger or smaller. Babies explore toys of different weights and help staff lift 'heavy' toys as they put items away. Toddlers learn about measures as they fill containers with sand and water.

Young children enjoy role play based on their real life experiences. They put their teddies in buggies and take them for energetic walks around the garden. Babies comb the hair of staff, who are willing customers in their role-play hairdressers, and decorate their own hair

with clips. They busily wash their dollies in the water tray and take the opportunity to wash their own hair with the soapy bubbles and a brush! Toddlers enthusiastically use rollers to paint on both paper and the table covers. They explore the feel of the paint with their hands. Older children engage their friends in their imaginative play and share ideas. Staff record children's imaginative stories in children's special books. Children enjoy using resources, such as real domestic items, which enhance their role-play experiences. This encourages children to be very imaginative in their play. When they are busy ironing the dressing-up clothes, they ask why the electrical lead has been removed, which gives staff the opportunity to talk about safety.

Babies confidently explore technology. For example, they press the buttons on cameras to take pictures of their friends. Toddlers carefully fill up containers and water the plants in the large grow-boxes. They open the doors of the box, which enables them to spot worms deep in the soil. The setting has been involved in the forest schools initiative. This has given children the opportunity to learn about the natural environment as well as solve problems and cooperate with others. The large white board is used to display beautiful images of the children's activities at the nursery, which everyone enjoys looking at. Throughout the nursery, there are pictures of children's families, which give them a sense of belonging. Each room has a special bear that goes home with the children; they record their adventures through diaries, photographs and discussion. This helps children learn about similarities and differences between their lives and those of others. In addition, they learn about the world because the bears are taken by the families on holidays and outings. Staff celebrate diversity with all children and support those learning English as an additional language exceptionally well. They use laminated picture and word cards displayed on the wall, for example showing the routine of the day. Some staff speak community languages, which helps children settle. Furthermore, initiatives such as links with overseas schools help children communicate through the internet, where they share stories with other children.

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

Children's individual needs are exceptionally well met. The key person system is very effective and the settling-in process includes home visits. These enable children to feel comfortable in their familiar surroundings because they begin to develop a bond with their special worker. Staff record essential information about the children, which ensures there is a comprehensive and thorough understanding of each child's needs and abilities right from the start. Babies are extremely secure as caring staff follow their individual home routines. The children are able to move around the nursery and visit their siblings in other rooms. Toddlers come to visit the baby room garden and are warmly welcomed by the staff. Older children are extremely confident and happily chat to visitors. They explain that they like to play with microphones and demonstrate how they can change the sound of their voice. Throughout the nursery there are small areas that children use to chat and spend time with their friends.

Resources are easily accessible to children, and staff give them the time and encouragement to pursue their own interests and be active in their learning. Children are

eager and willing to take responsibility for tasks; for example, children enjoy cleaning the large activity trays. They energetically scrub the trays with brushes and clothes. Babies are encouraged and supported in putting away toys with staff.

Children behave very well. Staff are very enthusiastic, friendly and are positive role models. For example, when baby-room staff ask their colleagues for help, this is given willingly and they model good manners. Staff are quick to notice and acknowledge good behaviour, giving praise and encouragement. Staff throughout the nursery intervene appropriately and remind children to use their voices to express their needs. They provide clear, kindly explanations when behaviour is not acceptable, so babies and children learn to care and respect their friends and the environment. Children use sand timers routinely to support effective turn-taking, confidently collecting one and bringing it to their chosen activity. This illustrates that children understand how to behave well and show consideration for others.

All children, including young babies, can move freely between the indoors and outdoors to play whatever the weather. They move extremely confidently around all areas of the nursery. They all have access to their own well-resourced play areas, and doors are opened wide throughout the day. This enables babies and children to get fresh air, run around and use play equipment outside to develop their healthy bodies and lifestyles. Children climb, rock and balance on large soft-play equipment. They stack tyres to help them reach hand-bars and skilfully swing on them.

Children thoroughly enjoy appetising meals that are freshly cooked in the nursery kitchen. They eat plenty, and menus are healthy and well balanced and change regularly. The staff place menu information on a notice board for parents, and this includes lists of ingredients in each dish. A rolling snack-time helps children develop an awareness of their bodily needs while letting them play uninterrupted. Fresh water is always available so children can help themselves whenever they feel thirsty. Older children have chopping boards and knives, and they are able to independently chop and peel their chosen fruit. Staff use this activity effectively to talk to children about mathematics as well as healthy eating. Cooking activities and the making of soup from nursery-grown vegetables help the children develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Snack-time gives children the opportunity to learn about and taste a range of nutritious and healthy food. Children from an early age understand good hygiene routines and know why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating.

Staff fully promote children's awareness of their personal safety in all possible ways. For example, children are enrolled in a traffic club in partnership with parents to ensure they are aware of road safety in order to keep themselves safe. Visitors are informed what children need to do if the fire alarms are sounded. In addition, they are aware of the responsibility of the adults to ensure all children are out of the building.

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

The inspection found that, on one occasion, the provider had not notified Ofsted at the soonest possible opportunity of a significant event that might affect the suitability of a staff member. This is a breach of a regulation of both the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register. Nevertheless, the manager demonstrates that there are secure procedures in place to ensure that these significant events do not impact on the well-being of children in their care.

The enthusiastic management and staff team are highly committed to providing high-quality care and learning for the children. There are robust recruitment procedures in place, which help ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. There are induction, supervision and appraisal systems in place, which ensure that staff have ongoing monitoring and support for their practice. The provider has systems in place to monitor and investigate any incidents to ensure the ongoing suitability of staff. Security of the building is monitored by a receptionist and access to nursery is via an electronic fob system in order to prevent unwanted visitors.

Regular meetings and access to a range of training opportunities ensure that high standards of practice are maintained within the rooms. The staff are keen to further their knowledge and the provider supports ongoing training to raise the level of skills. Furthermore, regular inset days are facilitated to ensure staff are able to train as a team. Staff and managers confidently display an excellent knowledge of safeguarding issues in order to protect the welfare of children. The management team have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities to meet the learning and development requirements. They monitor the systems in place to ensure children make excellent progress and they are able to close any achievement gaps in learning. As part of a children's centre, they have superb links with other agencies, which ensure children's needs are met very well.

Partnerships with parents and carers are very positive. They are provided with a wealth of information throughout the nursery, for example on notice boards and photo slide-shows. There are activities and events to encourage fathers and siblings to play an active part in the nursery. For example, fathers and their children have been involved in a wonderful den-building activity and they have plans for kite-flying to mark Fathers' Day. These initiatives are welcomed by the parents and they also report that having male as well as female workers is positive for their children. These ideas contribute to the way the staff support parents in finding ways of helping children learn at home. Parents are kept very well informed about the life of the nursery via the notice boards, parent forums and through daily chats to staff. They state they have seen their children make excellent progress while at the setting. They are very positive about the nursery and love the fact that their children have free access to the 'good outdoor space'. They feel the activities are 'amazing', love the forest schools initiative, and feel there is a 'real sense of fun' in the nursery.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with**

actions)

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

- notify Ofsted about any significant events that are likely to affect the suitability of any person caring for children on the premises (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)

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	EY384715
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	919042
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	66
Number of children on roll	62
Name of provider	London Borough of Camden
Date of previous inspection	11/06/2009
Telephone number	02079744677

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

