

The University Day Nursery

University of Hertfordshire, College Lane, HATFIELD, Hertfordshire, AL10 9AB

Inspection date	04/09/2013
Previous inspection date	24/02/2009

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

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Staff provide an enabling environment for all children to engage in purposeful play. This means children are able to make good progress across the seven areas of learning.
- Children appreciate the security of well-established routines and there are warm, caring relationships between staff and children. This enables children to be confident in their play as they feel secure and happy.
- Staff act as positive role models, helping children demonstrate kind and considerate behaviour towards each other.
- A committed staff team effectively implement the setting's policies and procedures to ensure children are safe and their welfare is fully protected.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Ways of gathering information from parents, through extending opportunities for them to share children's achievements at home, are not developed to the very optimum to enable staff to enhance children's learning at the setting.
- Self-evaluation arrangements do not routinely take into account the views of parents.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's activities in all rooms and the outside learning environments.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and staff.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, the self-evaluation form and a range of other documentation including a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Jane Mount

Full Report

Information about the setting

The University Day Nursery has been operating for many years and in 2008 re-registered when it moved to new purpose built premises. It is run by the University of Hertfordshire and is situated on the campus of Hatfield University on the outskirts of Hatfield, Hertfordshire. The nursery primarily serves staff and students on the university campus. The accommodation is all on one level and the nursery is divided up into four age groups. All children have access to enclosed outside areas for outdoor play.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. It opens Monday to Friday all year round, except for bank holidays and one week at Christmas. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. There are currently 109 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The University Day Nursery employs 23 members of childcare staff including the manager. Of these, the majority hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above including two with Early Years Professional Status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- maximise opportunities further for parents to share information about their children's achievements at home to enhance children's learning at the setting

- build on self-evaluation by extending how the views of parents are incorporated, to further assist in identifying areas for further enhancement.

Inspection judgements

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

Children's communication and language skills are promoted well as staff support children in their play, asking questions and engaging them in conversation. Staff encourage babies to explore and imitate sounds, such as when playing with interactive, musical toys. Older children are encouraged to express themselves, such as when they get involved in making a puppet theatre from a large cardboard box. Staff extend their thinking while encouraging them to have fun as they confidently share ideas and thoughts with their peers.

Children regularly experience music. They enjoy using percussion instruments to make sounds and group participation is encouraged by staff which develops children's confidence and promotes their self-expression. Children enjoy participating in singing familiar songs. For example, while preparing for lunch they eagerly join in with the actions as they sing a variety of favourite songs and rhymes. Even the youngest children listen and respond with great excitement when looking at books and listening to stories. Writing and drawing materials are easily accessible and children have regular opportunities to become familiar with the written word. For example, on arrival older children 'self-register' confidently looking for their name and picture label to display to show they are present. Children get regular opportunities to see their names on place mats, on their drawers and coat pegs and are encouraged and supported by staff to write their names on pieces of artwork. Consequently, children are acquiring useful skills in early literacy.

Staff have high expectations for the children in their care. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play experiences which enables children to be confident in their play as they are encouraged to express themselves by staff. Babies use their senses as they explore textured materials and the defined coloured areas in the baby room, such as, bold, geometric black and white wall displays, hold babies interests and promotes their visual development. Toddlers display natural inquisitiveness as they use their senses when playing with foam. They excitedly look for hidden items in the foam and talk about the consistency of the foam between their fingers and on their hands. Older children's mathematical development is successfully promoted in their play, such as when they use lengths of string to measure different pieces of equipment and toys in the nursery. They quickly become engrossed in their play as they compare the different lengths, discussing which is the longest and shortest. They enjoy making a wall display to share their discoveries with parents, visitors and other children. They happily work together sharing their thoughts and ideas and are developing the skills required to prepare them for their future learning, such as when they move on to school.

Both indoor and outdoor environments are used well to promote children's learning and development. The activities are planned to take account of children's interests and their capabilities with staff who are clear what children should learn from these experiences. Consequently, children have fun and enjoy their surroundings, showing a keen interest in what they do. For example, a group of children show a keen interest in dinosaurs and staff organise interesting play opportunities around the topic. They work together to convert an area of the garden into a 'dinosaur world' and children delight in using their imaginations to track dinosaurs in the undergrowth. This means children are motivated and engaged in their play and are becoming active learners.

Staff have a secure knowledge of how children learn through play and the quality of teaching is good. An effective key person system is used and staff work together to provide a conducive learning environment for children. They ensure the educational programme provides many worthwhile and stimulating experiences to enable all children to make good progress in their learning. For example, the key person closely monitors children's progress to ensure there are no gaps in their learning through carrying out regular observations. Each child has their own development record which shows their progress and achievements. The information gathered from children's observations is then used to plan developmentally appropriate activities for individual children. Consequently,

all children, including those with English as an additional language, have their learning needs supported well to ensure they make good progress in their learning.

Children's learning needs are supported well as relationships between staff and parents are purposeful. For example, parents know they can look at their child's development book at any time. They also have opportunities to take them home on a regular basis so they can look at them in more detail and in the comfort of their own home. Through the key person system, initial information is gathered from parents about their child on entry which staff can then use to ensure children's individual care and learning needs can be supported well. Parents are actively encouraged to support and share information about their children's learning, such as sharing what achievements their child has made at home. However, these are not yet fully embedded to fully promote their child's learning in partnership with the nursery.

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

Staff form secure attachments with their key children, building a solid foundation for fostering children's personal, social and emotional development. The effective key person system, by staff who are friendly and approachable, helps to ensure that close relationships are established between staff, children and their families to promote children's individual needs. From a young age children display a strong sense of belonging and are confident and self-assured in the nursery environment. Effective settling-in arrangements help children to quickly settle and feel secure in their surroundings. The key person system also supports children and their parents well as children grow older and move groups within the nursery. This is because they receive continuity in their care and learning. For example, babies and toddlers enjoy frequent visits to their next group prior to moving and effective systems are in place for older children to ensure they are confident and well-prepared when moving on to school.

Children relate well to each other, enjoy playing together and are also confident to play alone. For example, while some children are asleep, accompanied by soothing music, others enjoy helping themselves to different games or going in the garden to play. Children's independence is encouraged with rooms organised to achieve maximum child independence. Older children are confident making choices, such as deciding if they want to play outside or stay inside for a story. Younger children's self-help skills are fully promoted with staff encouraging them to try things for themselves and supporting them while they try to succeed. Children experience plenty of activities where they gain a good awareness of potential dangers and learning about safety. For example, they enjoy visits from people in the local community who help to keep us safe, such as, the fire and police service. When out walking, children learn about road safety and practise crossing the road at the zebra crossing which is situated very near to the nursery on the university campus.

Children's awareness of developing a healthy lifestyle is promoted well. They experience plenty of fresh air and regular exercise helps keep children fit. Staff teach children the positive benefits of engaging in regular exercise, such as when they discuss how exercise and eating a nutritious diet gives them strong muscles. Children are provided with healthy food choices at meal and snack times and they participate in a variety of activities where

they learn about what constitutes a healthy diet. For example, they enjoy making fruit salad, using a variety of their favourite fruits, which they delight in cutting into segments before putting in small bowls to take home to eat. They have also grown some produce in the nursery garden, such as potatoes, which they enjoyed caring for before digging them up when ready and then tasting them when cooked. Children learn about the significance of healthy eating, such as discussing which types of food are good for their teeth. They have enjoyed visits from a dentist and hygienist, learning about how their diet plays an important role in maintaining healthy teeth. Children learn about the importance of personal care routines to keep healthy. For example, they are familiar with the routine of brushing their teeth during their nursery day as well as hand washing before eating and after visiting the toilet. Hand wash and toilet facilities are easily accessible to the children, encouraging their independent participation in good hygiene routines.

Children are very sociable and their behaviour is good as staff focus on positive behaviour to develop and promote children's self-esteem. This results in an environment where children quickly learn what is expected and cooperate with each other. They enjoy being helpful and are keen to take an active role in the setting. For example, they eagerly help to put resources away and older children are keen to be chosen for jobs of responsibility, such as being the 'drawer monitor'. Children are learning to listen, share and be kind to others and staff are good role models, teaching children how they can play together harmoniously. For example, younger children are learning how to share and take turns when playing with a favourite toy, while older children are learning how to negotiate and cooperate with their peers.

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

Leadership and management of the nursery is strong with a clear commitment to provide good quality childcare. The manager works hard to ensure all of her staff team have a good understanding of their responsibilities to meet the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is reflected in their practice as the staff team work together well. They receive good levels of support and this helps to create a secure, working environment where they value each other's skills and abilities and are fully focused on the needs of the children.

Arrangements for safeguarding children are secure and their welfare is protected. For example, staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues as they undertake regular safeguarding training. This means they are able to implement appropriate procedures to protect children from harm. Children's safety is given high priority with staff who closely supervise children and are vigilant and responsive at all times. The premises are safe and secure and the maintenance of the facilities and the management of safety systems are good. Risk assessments, including daily checks, ensures the environment remains safe at all times with any potential hazards identified and minimised immediately. Also, excellent security systems, including full closed circuit television monitoring and coded locks ensure maximum safety for all staff and children.

Effective recruitment and vetting systems help ensure all staff working with children are

qualified, experienced and suitable to do so. Induction arrangements ensure new staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. Annual appraisals and regular supervisions are used as ways to closely monitor ongoing staff performance. Also, peer to peer observations are in the process of being introduced so staff can take an active role in closely examining and developing their own and each other's practice. The close monitoring of staff practice ensures consistency in children's care and learning and is a beneficial way of identifying any training needs or areas for staff development. Continual professional development is positively encouraged with training and development opportunities actively sought. This good level of support means that staff have a secure knowledge and awareness of how to meet the learning and welfare needs of all children.

Arrangements are in place to monitor the quality of the provision with a staff team who can identify their strengths as well as areas for further enhancement. All staff are committed to driving improvement with the continuous evaluation and improvement of their practice and effective systems in place to closely monitor and assess the quality of the provision. For example, they use staff meetings to evaluate practice and the educational programme is also closely monitored, to ensure staff have an accurate understanding of all children abilities and the progress they are making. The settings strengths and weaknesses are effectively identified through the use of action plans and self-evaluation and these accurately reflect key strengths and the areas they wish to develop further. For example, all policies and procedures are currently under review to ensure they are fully effective and the arrangements for tracking children's progress are also being reviewed to ensure children receive high quality learning experiences. All of the staff team actively contribute their views and opinions to the self-evaluation process. Children's views are also incorporated. The views of parents are beginning to be gathered to support the effectiveness of the provision. However, no systematic process is in place to input parents' views and this means the evaluation process may not fully identify any gaps in the provision.

Secure partnership working with parents positively contributes to children's well-being and ensures their care and learning needs are supported well. Parents receive information about the service the nursery offers with staff who are forthcoming in exchanging information with parents. Many ways are used to share and exchange information with parents, such as, regular newsletters and emails, highly informative wall displays including a welcoming entrance hall with a comprehensive range of parent information and daily handover communication sheets. Parents spoken to on the day of inspection speak highly of the service provided. They say an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere is provided by staff who know their children and families well.

Partnership working with other agencies is well-established and although there are currently no children attending the nursery with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities, there are effective systems in place to support children who do have specific needs. Staff value children's backgrounds and their home languages with effective systems to help children and families with English as an additional language. Good links have been forged with many local schools to help support children, with teachers visiting prior to children moving on to school. The nursery is fully aware of the importance of good communication and partnership working and has a good working relationship with the local children's centre as well as the local authority early years advisor.

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	EY378136
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	873827
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	62
Number of children on roll	109
Name of provider	University Of Hertfordshire
Date of previous inspection	24/02/2009
Telephone number	01707 284448

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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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