

The Stables Nursery

1 & 2 Glenridge Cottages, Margaretting Road, Galleywood, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8TS

Inspection date	09/09/2013
Previous inspection date	07/06/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	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		3
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

- Children have free choice from a range of toys and play materials, indoors and outside, helping them make choices and become active learners.
- Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, and any outside professional help is utilised well to enable children to be included and make maximum progress.
- Children form affectionate bonds with staff caring for them, so they feel secure and settled.

It is not yet good because

- Risk assessments are not effective in identifying and removing all hazards to children, as nappy sacks and cleaning products are left accessible to children, potentially compromising their health.
- Children's starting points are not routinely considered when assessing their progress, so next steps may not be challenging or accurately targeted to help them make the best progress possible.
- The supervision and monitoring of staff practice is varied, resulting in some inconsistencies in the quality of care and teaching across 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 interacted with and observed children at play and during routine care in the various care rooms.
- The inspector held discussions with the provider and carried out several joint observations with the deputy.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation, including evidence of staff suitability, certificates, and children's developmental records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents gathered in advance of the inspection.

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Stables Nursery opened in 1993 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is privately owned by a limited company, and operates from 10 playrooms within converted stable buildings in Galleywood, near Chelmsford, Essex. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery serves the local community and wider areas.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Operating times are from 7.30am until 6pm. There are currently 175 children on roll, of whom 152 are within the early years age range. Children aged two, three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 37 staff, of whom 20 hold appropriate early years qualifications. It receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- maintain a safe environment by ensuring that risk assessments effectively identify and minimise any hazards to children
- ensure that an accurate assessment of children's prior skills, knowledge and achievements form the basis of an individual learning programme for them so that next steps are precise and realistic.

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

- strengthen the effectiveness of monitoring and supervision of staff so that all staff are supported and able to maintain consistent quality of care and teaching for all children.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff teach children the skills they will need for the future and to help them in the next stages of their learning. Children have use of the care rooms and a large, well-equipped outdoor play area. One part is sectioned off for the younger children so they can enjoy being outside and can see the older children, while still being able to play and explore safely. There are slides and climbing frames, a mud kitchen and space to ride bikes and scooters. This means children develop their physical skills and learn to manage risks and physical challenges in a safe and controlled way. There are all-weather suits available for crawling babies, and older children have boots and coats to wear so that even in wet weather they can go outside and have some fresh air. The nursery is situated close to a common, so staff ensure groups of children benefit from regular walks to see the changing seasons and wildlife.

Babies have space to roll and crawl about, and the toys are placed within their reach or at low level to stimulate them and encourage them to explore. Toddlers take part in sensory activities, such as jelly play, and staff provide them with opportunities to experience texture, colour, taste and smell. Older children confidently choose where to play, and make up their own games in the role play areas or use the sand for explorations. A group of children play a card game, learning how to be patient and wait for a turn. A child concentrates on his stacked tiles, and explains that he has to remove one without the stack toppling, demonstrating his careful and controlled fine motor skills.

The quality of teaching varies across the nursery. Some staff are less secure in their knowledge of child development and, therefore, their understanding of how to speak to and interact with children and help them to develop. For example, when helping younger children follow routines, such as hand washing and using the bathroom areas, sometimes muddled instructions are given, so children are unsure of what is expected of them.

While staff ask parents about children's routines and their likes and dislikes, they do not ask about what the children can do, or make early assessments of their capabilities. Therefore, when assessing children's progress and setting their next steps, these sometimes lack challenge or are not precisely focused on what will help children make maximum progress. Children aged two years have a progress check carried out by their key person, and the results are shared with parents. These broadly show how well children are progressing and allow for any problem areas to be tackled. All children have a monthly progress report sent home, and they can view the children's development profiles at any time. These contain many photographs and observations showing the activities children have been taking part in. Staff help children develop an understanding of the world around them as they explore festivals and charity events. An annual nativity performance marks the Christmas season and rounds off the autumn term. It is a time for parents and families to celebrate with the children and staff.

Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. The setting's special educational needs coordinator works closely with the area coordinator and any other outside professionals involved in children's care. These include speech therapists, one-to-one support staff, and teachers at other settings attended by the children. She ensures that all essential information and plans for the children are shared with parents. She is dedicated and works hard to secure the best support for the children,

and ensures that they can join in and enjoy all activities with their peers.

Circle time allows children to express their ideas and feelings. This is when staff ask children about their interests and plan the following week's activities to include these. They sing songs and action rhymes, and children who show readiness are introduced to phonics or linking sounds with letters. A book-lending scheme has recently been introduced so that parents can borrow books to share with children at home, to develop literacy.

Older children attend the nursery for holiday care, and they enjoy a programme of themed days, activities and outings. Sometimes, the nursery children join in and benefit from sessions they spend socialising with the older children.

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

Children form warm and affectionate attachments with the adults caring for them. The key person talks to parents before children start to gain an idea of the child's likes, dislikes and home routines. For babies this includes their sleep and feeding patterns, so staff can replicate these as far as possible. Staff say they have a good rapport with parents and value the daily informal chats at home time.

Children's dietary needs are met as they are provided with meals and snacks throughout the day. A chef prepares lunches from fresh ingredients, and portions are generous, so children eat as much as they need to keep them satisfied. They serve themselves from large serving platters and learn to use cutlery properly from an early age. There is an option for packed lunches for parents who prefer to send them. Staff encourage all children to eat and behave sensibly at the table, by sitting with them and supporting them. Children have drinks available at all times, in their own beakers, so they remain hydrated, especially during warm weather.

The nursery is located in a series of care rooms, and up to ten rooms may be in use at any time. In each room the staff take responsibility for checking the equipment and their daily routines for the safety of the children they are caring for. In some areas, the risk assessments do not identify and minimise potential hazards to children, so they have access to unsuitable items, such as nappy sacks or cleaning materials in an unsecured cupboard. This means that children are not fully protected from risks in the environment in which they are receiving care.

Additionally, in some areas the layout of equipment, such as in the bathroom areas, is haphazard and not well thought out. Children cannot easily access soap to wash their hands as it is on a high shelf and they have no step. Also the bin is not close to the paper towels, so they do not know where to dispose of used towels. This hinders children's development of their understanding of these aspects of self-care and hygiene routines and does not minimise risks to their health.

Children's transitions through the nursery are managed by a series of visits to their new room, helping them become familiar with new staff and surroundings. The key person

does a verbal handover to the new key person, and passes on the child's development record so that there can be continuity of care. When children are ready to move on to school, staff liaise with the various feeder schools and may accompany children on visits, or welcome the reception teachers into the nursery. In all cases, they prepare the children for the changes ahead by talking to them about what they can expect and by promoting their independence, for example, changing for a physical education session and managing a lunchbox.

The nursery is undergoing refurbishment and some rooms now have new furniture and flooring, improving the environment for children. As children move around the setting, such as between rooms or when going outside to play or for a walk on the common, they learn to manage risks and take control over their own personal safety. For example, staff remind children to be careful and sensible when lining up and when using the play equipment outside.

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

Children are safeguarded as staff at the nursery have an understanding of child protection matters and can respond to any concerns by referring them to the appropriate authority if necessary. The deputy and one other senior staff member take the lead role in ensuring that all staff can deal with safeguarding matters; they have attended the required training and understand how to protect children. Policies and procedures are in place, and all staff are aware of these as they are part of the induction process and are refreshed at staff meetings. All staff and volunteers or students are vetted and checked for suitability before they have contact with children. New staff are mentored by a more experienced staff member until they have successfully completed a probationary period. After this time, an annual appraisal is carried out when training needs are assessed and any professional development needs discussed.

While there is some ongoing, largely informal monitoring of staff's performance, this varies in its effectiveness across the nursery. Some staff say that they feel that the level of support is less effective and does not address their needs for feedback and steps they can take to improve. As a result of this, the quality of teaching and care, while generally sound, is at times inconsistent, for example, in helping children complete routine tasks and develop self-care skills.

The management team have recently updated the self-evaluation and identified some areas for improvement. These are focused on maintaining the premises and upgrading the environment by providing new furniture and flooring. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed, demonstrating an ability to improve. For example, planning and activities are now led by children's interests, giving them more choice and promoting their independence. Links with other settings attend are in place and information is effectively shared to aid the continuity of care and learning for children.

Parents' views are sought during face-to-face discussions and when they visit the nursery for open days and special events. Many parents send cards and letters stating their

satisfaction and regard for the time their children spend at the nursery. Staff generally work well with parents, keeping them well informed, and in partnership with external agencies to meet the diverse needs of children. This helps to provide appropriate intervention and support as required, in a timely fashion. New initiatives, such as the book-sharing scheme, also strengthen to partnership with parents and involve them in their child's learning in a meaningful way.

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	204074
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	909556
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	110
Number of children on roll	175
Name of provider	Avis Richardson and Susan Mann Partnership
Date of previous inspection	07/06/2011
Telephone number	01245 348159

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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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