

Active Learning Dorking Nursery

Active Learning House, Moores Road, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2BG

Inspection date	30/10/2013
Previous inspection date	10/06/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	1
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 a broad range of activities that are based on children's current interests and which move them forward in their learning.
- Staff ensure a good range of resources are readily available. Therefore, children of all ages are able to choose from these independently.
- Staff promote children's creative and physical skills particularly well. As a result, children make good progress in these areas of learning.
- Staff consistently support children's understanding of safety and risk taking, which helps the children to explore and play safely.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children cannot choose when and for how long they play outside, which slightly reduces play opportunities for children who prefer playing and learning outside.
- Staff do not advise parents on activities they can do at home. This results in missed opportunities for them to complement and support children's learning.

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 inspectors observed activities in all the rooms and an outside area.
- The inspectors had discussions with parents, staff and senior management.
- One inspector undertook a joint observation with the senior manager.
- The inspectors sampled a range of documentation including children's records, policies and procedures and staff suitability checks.

Inspector

Jill Steer and Janet Thouless

Full Report

Information about the setting

Active Learning Dorking is one of nine nurseries run by Active Learning. It opened in 2009 and operates from a converted house in Dorking, Surrey. Children are grouped in rooms according to their age range and use base rooms, an art studio, performing arts studio and science and discovery studios. Several garden areas are also available. Rooms on the ground floor are easily accessible to everyone and those on the first floor can be accessed by a lift. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6.30pm for 51 weeks of the year.

There are currently 80 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. There are currently a number of children attending who are learning English as an additional language. This nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

There are 14 members of staff who work directly with the children, 10 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification level 2 and four are working towards a qualification. One member of staff has achieved Early Years Professional Status and one has Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery provides funded free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- provide more opportunities for children to make choices about where they learn for those who find it more interesting, and learn better, outdoors
- provide parents with better information about their child's next steps in learning.

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy many opportunities to express themselves creatively. They have specific sessions in a variety of studios, as well as time in their own base rooms to enjoy more freedom to choose their own activities. For example, in the art studio children watch with fascination when they drop a piece of clay into some water. Staff expertly question the children to extend their thinking and introduce new ideas. For example, they explain that they could see through the water before but now it is murky with the clay. They ask

children to predict if the feather they have just added will float or sink. When children confidently state it will float, staff talk about what they might add to make it sink. This clearly helps to extend children's learning. Children enjoy opportunities to express themselves in the performing arts studio. They surprise many of the staff with the confidence they display by volunteering to stand up alone to sing on the stage. Staff encourage children to rehearse and perform many productions here for parents to proudly applaud their children. Outside, children enthusiastically join the sports teacher and listen carefully to the instructions for the activity. He shares his observations of the children's achievements with their individual mentors who add them to the children's development records. These records show the whole range of skills they have used such as physical, social and emotional as children behave very well and feel great pride in their achievements. Staff base their planning for the sports activities on children's interests as much as the indoor activities. For example, staff construct an obstacle course for the children to negotiate in the manner of their current favourite super hero. This enables them to jump in the same way as their favourite character.

All staff support children well and help them become self aware and confident. Children proudly point out the wall displays of their own creations and describe exactly what they are. Therefore, it is clear that they have gained good knowledge from the activity. Staff base planning is very much on each individual child's current interest. They observe children as they play, record their achievements and interests in order to plan the next steps in learning effectively. This results in activities such as undressing and bathing dolls for children who are interested in dressing and cleaning. Other activities include cutting paper and fabric to help children decide if they prefer to use one hand more than the other. Parents are involved in children's learning from the beginning, sharing what they know their child can already do. They know they can view their children's development records at any time to see the progress they are making and discuss every day what they have done. However, parents are not always encouraged to continue the children's learning at home. This reduces opportunities for them to extend and support what children are learning in the nursery. Children's progress is assessed continuously with a more focused assessment of children's achievements against the prime areas of learning while they are two years old. This means any support needed can be put in place quickly to give children time to catch up before they start school. Staff working with children of all ages are caring and supportive and promote children's learning well. They organise activities that are interesting and personal to the children. This instils in them a fascination in the world around them that makes them keen and motivated learners, ready to move on to school.

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

The key person system works well. As soon as babies and children start at the nursery they are assigned a member of staff who is their mentor. This member of staff builds a close relationship with the parents and the child, initially to help them settle in so they feel secure, especially for the babies. As the children grow and develop and move through the rooms of the nursery, they visit their new rooms and mentor regularly. This enables children to get to know them well, so the move takes place smoothly and without any

upset. Children spend a large part of their days in their base rooms with the same staff and other children who are at similar stages of development. In this way they feel safe and can gradually enjoy additional learning opportunities elsewhere in the building. For example, they have sessions in the art studio and performing arts studio where the activities greatly encourage self-confidence building. The support children receive from well-deployed staff helps them feel safe, so they can explore their surroundings and develop their independence. Children learn to manage their own personal care needs such as those within toileting and washing routines, which prepares them for when they move on to school. Mealtimes provide more opportunities for children to do things themselves, such as serving their own food. They help to lay the table with cutlery and take the amount of food they feel they can manage to eat. Staff are nearby to advise on the safe use of the cutlery, including how to use the knives to cut the sausages. Children recognise they are hungry because they have been really active outside during the morning, demonstrating what they are learning about how their bodies work.

Children greatly benefit from, and look forward to, learning about being healthy through the sports sessions outside. They eagerly line up to hear the instructions for the activities, still based on their continued interest of athletics from the summer. They hear that they must stand on the footprints, bend their knees, swing their arms and jump as far as they can. They then have to write the initials of their names with chalk where they landed. As they each complete their jump they quickly look out for the sports teacher to give them a 'high five' hand gesture to acknowledge their achievements. Physical activity is planned and taught very well so that children find it great fun and eagerly join in. However, most children go out each day at planned, set times. This does not use all the outdoor space effectively or allow those children who prefer to be active as they learn the choice of when and for how long they stay outside. The rules and discipline needed for these organised activities, helps children understand the importance of safety and good behaviour. They readily accept the instructions for balancing across a 'shark, crab and crocodile infested' obstacle course, as pirates going to their ship because they have been told what the risks are.

Children behave well in general as they are busy and engaged, with gentle staff reminders of rules such as how to use tools. Children can help themselves to most resources as they are stored with labels to help them find what they want. Staff resource each base room well for the children present and make these attractive to them. For example, babies enjoy many sensory and visual images such as monochrome displays while older children are surrounded by images of their own work as inspiration.

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

As the nursery is one of a small chain there are several levels of management. The senior managers routinely visit the nursery to monitor the quality of the care and learning for all children. They offer support to the nursery manager/principal, who is responsible for the daily management of the nursery and oversees the work of the staff team. She regularly meets with them as a team and individually to discuss practice issues and ongoing staff

development. A rigorous system for staff recruitment and probation is in place that includes checking the suitability of applicants before they are appointed. Some staff are given additional roles, such as for safeguarding, and they attend appropriate training so they have the level of skills required. All staff attend basic level training in child protection and they discuss aspects at each staff meeting. They fully understand the policy and procedure and how to report any concerns about the welfare of the children. Staff conduct risk assessments and daily 'open and close' checks to monitor the condition of the premises. This helps to ensure the premises remain safe and in good condition for the children.

All the rooms are fitted with a webcam, and this system is used effectively for safety and general practice issues. This means that management and staff can view how staff work, for their individual staff development. Parents can log in for a short time every day, whenever they choose, to see what their children are doing. This means they can see some special activities happening such as performances in the performing arts studio. Parents' involvement in the nursery is welcomed and encouraged. A parent forum that had lapsed is about to re-start to encourage parents to be fully included in decisions about what happens in the nursery. Parents' views are valued and sought through a questionnaire that contributes to the action plan for improvement.

Staff reflect on their practice through discussion at staff meetings so they can recognise what they are doing well and how successful they are in meeting children's needs, but also what they can improve on. Key recent changes have included updating the system for planning and assessment of children's learning and the recruitment of only qualified staff. This commitment to evaluating practice demonstrates the drive for continued improvement in the care and learning for all children attending.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory 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	EY390039
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	914890
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	91
Number of children on roll	80
Name of provider	Active Learning Childcare (Guernsey) Ltd
Date of previous inspection	10/06/2009
Telephone number	02031 674988

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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

T: 0300 123 4234
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