

Animal Crackers

Sandy Hill Farm, Fradley Junction, Alrewas, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, DE13 7DW

Inspection date	25/10/2013
Previous inspection date	11/05/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- The provider has failed to implement the safeguarding policy and procedure, such as reporting to Ofsted, within 14 days, any allegations against members of staff and the actions taken.
- The provider fails to ensure adequate staff to child ratios to provide supervision with regard to meeting the needs of children with possible special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The provider has failed to ensure effective supervision of all staff to identify any support, coaching and training that is needed to promote the interests of children.

It has the following strengths

- The education programmes are monitored to ensure children's progress toward the early learning goals is fostered. There are positive relationships between staff and parents, which support children's bonding and attachments.

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 activities in all downstairs and upstairs base rooms and all outdoor areas used by children.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation; children's learning journal records, staff suitability records, the complaints log, attendance registers and risk assessments.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager, the deputy and staff working in the base rooms at various times throughout the day.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents and children spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Mary Henderson

Full Report

Information about the setting

Animal Crackers nursery was registered in 1999 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in converted farm buildings in the Fradley area of Burton-Upon-Trent and is managed by the registered person. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four rooms and there are enclosed areas available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 20 members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 6, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two at level 2. One member of staff holds Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 120 children attending, who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure children are adequately supervised, taking into consideration any higher staff to child ratio identified to meet children's special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- provide effective supervision support, coaching and training for all staff to promote the interests of children.

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

- ensure children in the three-year-old's room access the outdoor areas during their child-initiated play times to support their independent choices about where they want to play
- use routine activities consistently to strengthen children's growing independence to do things for themselves, such as pouring their own drinks at snack time.

Inspection judgements

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

The management and staff provide a welcoming environment for children and their parents that helps children settle effectively into the nursery. The management and staff have a sound knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, children of all ages generally make effective progress in their learning and developmental progress. However, although staff to child ratios meet requirements within the nursery as a whole, they do not always meet the needs of all children attending. For example, higher staff to child ratios are not in place to meet the needs of children who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, a lack of supervision of younger children, particularly in the toddler room, does not adequately support children's behaviour to ensure all children are kept safe and their well-being fostered at all times.

The observation and assessment systems incorporate the prime and specific areas of children's learning. Children's interests are identified through sound exchange of information between staff and parents. The next steps in children's learning are identified and revisited. This helps to ensure children are progressing appropriately towards the early learning goals. Staff are aware of the need to discuss with parents the most suitable time to complete the short written summary in time for children's health visitor check before they are three-years-old. Arrangements for children's next phase in their learning are suitably supported through valuable links with other providers, including other nurseries and schools.

Staff ensure areas are well defined and appeal to children's interests. Resources are labelled with pictures and words, so children can find what they want to play with. Toddlers, three-year-olds and pre-school children have the opportunity for free-flow play between the indoor and outdoor areas. However, staff working with the three-year-olds do not always ensure that children can access the outdoors during their child-initiated play times each day. As a result, these children are unable to make independent choices about where they wish to play during these times. The outdoors provides children with lots of opportunities to extend their physical development. This includes using equipment such to support their climb and balance skills and various wheeled toys, such as trundle trikes and scooters. Staff organise time for three-years-old and older pre-school children to come together in the covered play barn. As a result, children make friends of various ages, thereby extending children's personal social and emotional skills.

Staff follow children's lead and join in with their play, thereby generally promoting the characteristics of effective learning. Older children's communication and language skills are suitably supported because staff use open-ended questions during their play. This supports children's understanding and speaking skills well. Staff working with babies talk to them all the time to ensure they are able to hear and understand language in readiness for the development of their speaking skills.

Children of all ages enjoy a range of opportunities to make marks. For example, toddlers

paint the fence with water and brushes and older children enjoy making marks in the sand. Babies too enjoy making marks as they push their hands and fingers through paint and other media. As a result, children's physical skills and literacy skills are developing well. All children enjoy visiting their book areas, looking through books with their peers and listening to stories told by staff. This means that children are acquiring some of the skills they will need, in order to be ready for school.

Pre-school children begin to learn about numbers and counting as they play indoors and outdoors with their peers because staff use various opportunities to extend their skills. For instance, children are encouraged to recognise shape as they cut and mould the play dough and they count during everyday activities. Younger children explore the properties of sand and water, thereby exploring capacity and measure. Babies and toddlers also discover concepts of number and counting as staff support them with their tidy up time, counting the cars and blocks back into the boxes.

Children's understanding of the world is also fostered by staff because they all enjoy a range of outings in the environment around them within the farm based nursery setting. Babies like to go out in the light wind, watch the leaves blow about and notice the changing weather. Toddlers and older children like to go on walks wearing their wellingtons to look at nature, pick up items of interest and notice the wildlife, such as ladybirds and snails. Their interests are fostered further back in their rooms where they talk about their findings.

Staff communicate effectively with parents and involve them in their child's learning at home. Information sharing ensures that parents are kept up to date about their child's care and learning. Daily discussions and diaries provide parents with information about their child's care routines and learning activities.

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

Generally, staff interact positively with children to support their feeling of safety and security within the nursery. Older children and babies are supported with their behaviour through praise and sufficient staff to child ratios to ensure they are closely supervised and kept safe. However, this is less consistent in the toddlers' room. Staff have attended training on supporting children's attachment through considering how children's brains work. Staff report that this has much improved their understanding of child development and enabled them to further support bonding between them and children they care for. As a result, children settle quickly in their base rooms and are more ready for the next phase, such as moving up to the next base room. Also, the pre-school children are more ready for their move onto school. Children's school readiness is further supported because staff caring for older children ensure there is a range of opportunities to talk about school life, listen to stories about starting school and that they play with a range of resources, such as the school uniforms and the school prospectus housed in the home corner.

Staff gather relevant information from parents about their child to ensure they effectively get to know children. Parents are provided with access to children's learning journal

documents, which ensures both they and staff work cohesively to support children within the nursery and their home setting. Children's work is displayed for them and their parents to enjoy, thereby promoting children's sense of belonging to the nursery. Staff support children to take risks under supervision. Children learn about personal safety as they all practice the evacuation procedures of the setting.

Staff generally promote children's understanding of the importance of physical exercise and a healthy diet. Most children have daily access to fresh air in the outdoor play areas. However, the three-year-olds do not always have the same opportunities. Children's specific health, dietary needs and allergies are adequately documented and understood by staff. Children are provided with healthy snacks and meals and learn about the importance of appropriate hygiene procedures through routines as they wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. This generally supports children's developing independence. However, staff caring for the three-year-olds, do not always allow them to pour their own drinks.

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

The manager and staff have a sound awareness of the safeguarding policy and procedure to be followed. However, the provider does not always take adequate action to ensure that Ofsted are fully informed, within 14 days, of any allegations made about any members of staff and any action taken in relation to this. This is an offence and means that one of the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage is not met.

There are adequate procedures in place to ensure the suitability of all staff and robust procedures in relation to the recruitment procedures of the nursery. There is a clear policy in place with regard to the use of mobile telephones and cameras and this is shared with parents. Risk assessment of all indoor and outdoor areas and outings off the premises are recorded and checked for recurring issues. Children's outdoor play areas are secure and locked to ensure no unauthorised persons can enter. Access to the premises is closely monitored and there is a key code system on the main entrance door to keep intruders out and children in. The manager or deputy monitors the entrance door at the start of and end of day. Staff enter the premises through the use of the key code system. A key code door is also housed at the entrance of each base room, so staff can see who is on the other side and let parents in with their child. As a result, children are safeguarded from intruders.

The management and staff use their knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements and how children learn to ensure the educational programme provides children with a range of suitable learning activities. The room leaders hold supervision sessions with staff to help to identify where support is needed to improve staff performance. However, the registered individual has not yet ensured that supervision is in place for the room leaders themselves to ensure a positive impact on all children's learning and development.

The manager and staff have improved the self-evaluation procedures of the setting since the last inspection. They have identified the strengths and some weakness of the nursery provision as a whole. There are targets in place for further development to improve children's opportunities for learning. For example, the nursery is developing a forest school area in the grounds of the nursery, following staff training about this. The management has, however, failed to identify the actions, recommendations and the offence identified as part of this inspection.

Partnerships with parents are positive. Parents speak highly of the nursery provision. This includes comments, such as 'my child is happy, secure and safe with the staff and I know my child is in the right place' and 'the baby room staff are fantastic and all staff are warm and caring, cannot fault them.' There is an array of information about learning and development, which is housed in the foyer for parents to see. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning at home and share information about children's achievements. The management have a clear understanding of the importance of working in partnerships with parents, other providers and external agencies to ensure support and appropriate interventions for children is sought. This ensures that children make adequate progress from their starting points towards the early learning goals.

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	218403
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	940076
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	86
Number of children on roll	120
Name of provider	Animal Crackers Children's Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	11/05/2011
Telephone number	01283 791030

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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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