

High Elms Manor School

High Elms Lane, WATFORD, Hertfordshire, WD25 0JX

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

22/10/2013

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

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 are settled as staff are attentive to their care needs and they treat them with kindness, leading to the development of trusting relationships.
- Children are well supported when they move rooms or go onto nursery so that this time runs smoothly.
- The management team are working closely with supporting professionals to develop the day care and drive improvement.

It is not yet good because

- Children's interests and learning needs are not effectively used in the themes that are used in planning to promote their next steps. The level of interactions with children is not always consistently effective to help extend all children's learning.
- The use of props, pictures and photographs are not consistently used to help all children develop their language and understanding.
- Opportunities to enhance children's independence during meal and snack times and their free choices about playing indoors or outdoors are not always well promoted.
- The monitoring and supervision of staff does not fully promote good teaching so children do not make better than satisfactory progress.

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 children's play and staff interaction in the inside and outside learning environment.
- The inspector spoke to children and staff, she looked at children's and staff's details and other documentation relating to the children's care and learning.
- The inspector and the manager conducted a joint observation of activities in the outside area.
- The inspector spoke to parents and obtained their views about the day care.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Full Report

Information about the setting

High Elms Manor School (The Nest Day Care) was registered in 1997 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It operates from a building called 'The Nest' in the grounds of High Elms Manor School. It is privately owned and provides care for children aged up to three-years-old. The Nest is accessible to all children and there are enclosed areas available for outdoor play.

The Nest employs six members of childcare staff; of these one member holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2, five staff members hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including the manager who also holds a management qualification at level 4. The nominated person, who also assists in management, holds a level 6 qualification and has Early Years Professional status.

The Nest opens Monday to Friday all year round apart from two weeks at Easter, Christmas and bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm and children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 27 children in the early years age range attending The Nest, which provides funding for three-year-old children. The Nest supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve the assessment system to ensure all staff understand children's learning styles, their interests and achievements and that they use this information to plan purposeful activities to support the next steps in their learning and ensure staff use open-ended questions during children's routines and play
- improve the monitoring and supervision procedures so that coaching and training needs are easily identified so that good teaching is used consistently with all children.

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

- develop the use of timelines, props, pictures and photographs showing familiar events, objects and activities so that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, younger children and those with English as an additional language can be supported and express their preferences and thoughts
- provide further opportunities to develop children's independence, such as being involved in the preparation and serving of food and drinks, and freely choosing between the indoor and outdoor areas.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are, mostly, cared for in different rooms according to their age and ability. Each room is well resourced and has a range of Montessori equipment for children to explore. The room for the older children cared for within The Nest is divided into two sections so that the space can be well used to promote children's learning according to their stage of development. For example, children can concentrate in one area on their Montessori tasks and have age-appropriate stories away from their younger friends. Children's language and communication is further promoted during singing. For example, staff spontaneously sing songs and children happily join in with the chorus. Children independently access books indoors and outdoors and sit alongside staff who read familiar stories. This supports children's interest in books and develops their love of reading. Children happily share books with their peers and giggle together as they retell the story to each other. This provides children with some of the key skills needed to support their continued progress and development when starting school.

Some staff members who are more experienced are good role models and interact positively with children. This contributes effectively to their learning and development.

However, the quality of effective teaching is variable, resulting in some children's learning not being as effective as it could be. For example, the use of open-ended questions to help children think and explore their thoughts is not consistent across the whole staff team.

Some staff use simple sign and language with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to help them in developing their language skills. This includes those with English as an additional language, which helps them to understand conversations. Staff obtain key words children use at home so that they can understand what children say. Staff are taking appropriate steps to increase their knowledge of sign language. This includes baby signing. However, staff have not fully explored other ways to support some children's understanding, such as using timelines of the routine, props, visual aids, pictures and real-life objects, to demonstrate what is being said. This means all children's understanding of language is not as well promoted as possible.

Staff carry out detailed observations on children and obtain from parents information about their interests and what they can do at home. In addition, staff complete the progress check at age two and share their findings with parents. However, the planning of activities is not consistently linked to the next steps in children's learning and what staff know about each child. This means they do not make better than satisfactory progress in their learning. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress through daily discussions and the completion of a daily activity document. This contributes to a continuity of care and learning between parents and the staff. Regular letters keep them informed about the general activities children take part in.

Parents contribute to initial assessments by providing useful information about what their children already know and their likes and dislikes. They are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning through discussions with the staff. Currently, activities are based on themes and children's interests are incorporated into these. For example, older children attending The Nest love imaginative play and a planned autumn party supports their imagination. They excitedly discuss costumes that they will wear and discuss food that they will enjoy at the party. This, generally, supports children's language development. However, the themes used do not always effectively support babies' and younger children's emerging interests and learning needs. As a result, some children are not making as good progress as they could be, given their starting points.

Children have free access to the resources and staff review the layout of the rooms so that children can play with resources that meet their needs. For example, the climbing frame is positioned so that toddlers can easily practise their skills. This promotes their self-esteem. Staff sit and engage with babies. They introduce items of interest, such as interactive toys, wooden resources and shakers containing different materials. They are very attentive to the babies' care needs, providing cuddles and reassurance when needed. They give their personal, social and emotional development a priority and this ensures children feel settled and secure.

Children have daily timed opportunities to engage in energetic play, which the children enjoy. However, the organisation can be chaotic with children having to wait until everyone has their coats, shoes or boots on. This can lead to children becoming restless.

This means that children who prefer learning outdoors cannot easily choose playing between the indoor and outdoor environment. As a result, children's independence is not promoted as much as it could be. During outdoor playtime children learn to negotiate space to ride their scooters and bikes. They enjoy constructing a train track and dressing-up in favourite costumes and they run around telling their friends about their costumes. Children enjoy digging, planting and harvesting the vegetables they have grown, such as sweetcorn. This means that they are learning about the world around them. Babies enjoy the ball pool and those practising new skills, such as standing or walking, are provided with suitable toys to support this.

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

Children are settled and show confidence as they freely access their own play materials. Staff are kind and caring and they are attentive to each child so that they are content. Children build secure emotional bonds with their key person and the wider staff team. The key person shares information about children with all the staff team during the day and at regular meetings. Parents share information about their children's care routines, likes and dislikes prior to their children starting. This means that the staff team are aware of each child's needs and children form positive relationships with them. Parents are appropriately informed about the key person system and how this operates. They comment that the staff are 'very caring and that the atmosphere is very nice'.

Transitions between rooms are well managed. During quiet periods children are cared for together in one base room. This means that when children move to the next room they are very familiar with the surroundings and the staff. In addition, siblings can see each other during their play and mealtimes. This promotes their personal, social and emotional development. The majority of children attending move onto the adjoining nursery room. This transition time is well managed. For example, children's new class teachers visit the children so that can get to know them. This eases children's transitions to nursery.

Children benefit from freshly prepared, healthy meals and snacks, which are prepared and cooked on the premises each day. Meals are eaten together and staff sit with the children encouraging good social skills. Food provided by parents is appropriately stored and dietary needs are well known. Children tuck into their meals and snacks and can have second helpings if they wish. However, children are not routinely involved in the preparation and serving of these so their independent skills are not as well promoted as possible. For example, older children within The Nest are not offered the opportunity to pour their own drinks or to make decisions about the food that they have. Appropriate opportunities enable children to develop healthy lifestyles. They play outdoors in the garden, accessing resources to support the development of their physical skills. They grow vegetables and these are used in their meals. They go on walks during fine weather to visit the surrounding area, including the nearby farm. Most children settle to have a sleep following lunch. They are checked frequently to ensure that they remain comfortable and settled and can sleep or rest according to their individual needs.

Children's personal care skills are adequately managed. They learn about personal hygiene as they wash their hands before lunch. Children cooperate during nappy changing routines

and staff are mindful of ensuring children's privacy is protected. For example, they ensure the door to the changing area and toilets is partially closed so that any passing adults are unable to see children during toileting times. When ratios allow, two staff members are allocated to the role of changing nappies so that children's welfare is protected. The manager is in the process of reviewing the layout of the children's toilets and the nappy changing area so that children's overall privacy can be improved.

Children are encouraged to develop good behaviour and to be considerate towards their friends. However, on occasions pushing and shoving occurs which results in upset children. This mainly occurs when children are less engaged in activities, such as tidy up times and when waiting to go outdoors. This is a result of inconsistent teaching from staff. Staff use explanation, praise and encouragement to promote children's understanding of caring for others. This contributes to skills children will need when they go to nursery or school and helps children learn right from wrong. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through reminders about how to use the climbing frame safely and to use 'indoor feet'.

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

This inspection was brought forward due to a late notification of a significant event, which resulted in the issuing of a low level warning letter. The notification made to Ofsted included details that raised concerns about recruitment of staff and ongoing supervision arrangements, with particular regard to procedures to assure the continued suitability of staff. In addition, a concern was raised relating to the security of the premises, the key worker system and safeguarding procedures. The provision was found to be meeting the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements that the concerns related to and that recruitment procedures are robust. The management team effectively use this to help them verify the initial and ongoing suitability of the staff they employ. Qualifications, experience and all necessary checks are obtained, including a verbal reference from previous employers. Staff's ongoing suitability is monitored through regular discussions and meetings. Probationary periods, appraisals and a secure induction procedure are in place. Staff are continually monitored as the manager works in each room on a daily basis and the provider discusses with staff their overall needs. Meetings with staff are held regularly and they are offered support and guidance as the need arises. Any issues raised by staff, which impact on the children are appropriately monitored.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures. They attend training on a regular basis. This keeps them up-to-date with current practice and enables them to be fully aware of what procedures to follow in the event of a concern regarding children or staff. This includes notifying outside agencies. Staff complete risk assessments and routinely carry out safety checks on all areas used by children. They are vigilant about children at all times so that they are kept safe. Since the concern raised about security, all doors have been fitted with a secure key lock. Parents ring a bell to gain access and those spoken to on the day of inspection know not to allow any unknown adults into the building. Parents are kept informed about the day-to-day operations of the provision, including changes to policies and procedures. They receive information through letters,

emails and notices in the corridor and cloakroom. Some children attending also attend other settings, such as childminders. Information about the children's day is appropriately shared so that partnership working benefits the children's care and learning.

The provider carries out a self-evaluation of the provision and the views of parents, children and staff are welcome as part of this process. In addition, questionnaires and regular meetings contribute to this. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities, including the key person role. They give time for the children to settle before allocating a permanent key person, ensuring that children's feelings are considered. Since the last inspection, raised sand and soil beds for digging and growing have been introduced. This has benefited children's learning outdoors and has introduced them to a variety of experiences, such as observing how the sunflowers grow. The manager is working with the provider, the staff and the local authority development worker to make improvements to the nursery. For example, they have started work on a recognised award to bring about improved outcomes for children. In addition, a good quality resource teaching pack has been purchased. This will be used to help staff gain a clearer understanding of how to link the Montessori methods of teaching to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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	EY290026
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	939371
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	27
Name of provider	Marlin Montessori Schools Partnership
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01923 681103

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

