

Solid Start Day Nursery

10 Village Square, Chelmer Village, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 6RF

Inspection date

25/10/2013

Previous inspection date

04/09/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

4

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

- Staff plan a suitable range of activities and interesting outings into the local community. This means that children make steady progress in their learning and development.
- Staff form positive partnerships with parents, which ensures they are kept well-informed about their children's accomplishments and can support learning at home.
- The new manager is highly motivated and committed to raising children's achievements. As a result, staff are keen to make improvements to the nursery and are developing effective systems to do so.

It is not yet good because

- The security arrangements are not consistently effective as staff are sometimes unaware when parents enter the premises.
- Some aspects of teaching are variable as not all staff confidently support children's play and critical thinking using open-ended questions. In addition, the opportunities for babies to investigate natural and sensory materials have not been fully explored.
- New children sometimes feel unsettled as the key person system is not consistently effective in supporting their needs.

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 the indoor learning environment and went on an outing with staff and children, this included a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff and children.
- The inspector viewed a sample of children's development journals.
- The inspector saw evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff, risk assessments, policies and procedures and other documentation in relation to health and safety checks.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and from comments made in children's journals.

Inspector

Patricia Champion

Full Report

Information about the setting

Solid Start Day Nursery was registered in 2011 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is run and managed by a limited company. The nursery operates from three first-floor playrooms in converted premises in Chelmer Village, Essex. It serves the local area and the playrooms are accessible via a flight of stairs.

The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or higher. The manager holds a Foundation Degree and the owner holds Early Years Professional Status. The nursery also employs a cook and administrator.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Opening times are from 7am until 7pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions or out of school care. There are currently 50 children attending, who are within the early years age group. There are also 11 children aged between five and 11 years, who attend for out of school care. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of 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:

- review the security arrangements to ensure that staff are fully aware when anyone enters the premises
- ensure that children develop the characteristics of effective learning by supporting their play and critical thinking using consistently high quality interactions, such as open-ended questions.

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

- develop the key person system further by establishing a buddy system to ensure that should a key person be absent the buddy key person will take over and be there to comfort and respond to children's needs
- provide a wider range of natural and sensory materials to enable babies to explore new things and experiences and use their senses.

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

Staff have a suitable understanding of the learning and development requirements and how young children learn. The planning, observation and assessment systems have recently been reviewed. This means that staff are beginning to use a more focused approach to planning experiences based on children's interests and developmental needs and children make steady progress in learning. Positive observations are made of children's achievements and progress and these are then transferred to children's development journals and are enhanced by photographs and examples of children's own efforts. Learning priorities are frequently identified and shared with parents, so they can support children's progress at home.

Teaching is mainly effective in supporting children's learning. Staff are fully engaged in supporting children at all times and ensure that children are happy, acquire new knowledge and have fun taking part in the activities. Interesting outings are organised. This means that children are curious and motivated to find out where food comes from, particularly when they visit the nearby supermarket to buy ingredients for cooking activities. Children develop a 'can do' attitude when they are involved in weighing and mixing these ingredients together to make cakes. They increase their vocabulary as they discuss the tools they are using. However, some staff are less confident in responding to children's individual ideas. For example, they sometimes overlook opportunities to develop children's critical thinking because they do not use open-ended questions to encourage

their thoughts and promote full and interesting answers.

Children show pleasure as they take part in planned activities linked to all areas of learning, alongside having a free choice. They have easy access to a range of good quality play materials and toys are regularly rotated to provide added interest and stimulation. Older children particularly enjoy taking part in sensory experiences without a pre-determined end result. For example, they collect and explore autumn leaves and experiment with different painting techniques. However, although babies have access to different textures by investigating man-made items, they have fewer opportunities to use all their senses by exploring natural materials.

The skills children develop and the steady progress they make helps to prepare them for the next stage in their education. Staff promote literacy skills as children enjoy sharing books. They listen attentively to group stories and individually look at books for pleasure, showing great interest in what they see when they turn the pages. Posters and labels all around the nursery help children to understand that print carries meaning. They have free access to writing materials, so they gain strong pencil control and learn how letters are formed. Counting and number recognition is an integral part of the daily routine. Children explore shapes, volume and capacity as they use sand and water play. They express their creativity through a range of craft activities, as well using expressive actions and movement as they sing or explore music. Babies and young children are supported in making sense of the world around them as they explore a range of role play props and resources. Older children independently access the computer to develop their technology skills.

Effective relationships with other professionals help staff to meet the needs of individual children, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language. As a result of this, children are cared for in a fully inclusive environment. The partnership with parents is friendly and helpful as staff understand that working closely with parents has a significant impact on children's learning and development. Parents complete initial documentation, so that a clear picture of each early years child's individual needs and background is obtained. In addition, when staff complete the 'progress checks at age two', parents are asked to contribute to this. There are also opportunities for parents to regularly comment on staff's observations of their children's progress and achievements. Newsletters give parents information about the forthcoming events. This means that parents feel valued and are encouraged to support their children's learning in the nursery and at home. For example, parents encourage their children to participate in special events by providing costumes for Halloween or provide family photographs for display.

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

The majority of children are happy and settled in the nursery. Staff work closely with parents, gently settling children in and ensuring that the transition from home is generally a smooth and positive experience. Each child has gradual settling-in sessions and these are flexible to meet children's needs. All children are allocated a key person to support them right from the start. The key person gathers sufficient information from parents

about children's care routines and individual needs, so they can effectively support children from the outset. However, a key person buddy system has not yet been set up. This means that staff do not always have ready information to hand, to support children who may feel uncertain, when their key person is absent.

Children are appropriately supported as they move between rooms or transfer on to full-time education in school. They are given time to explore and talk about changes in their lives, when they join in activities with their new key person and meet new friends. Staff have close links with local schools and arrange for teachers to visit the nursery to meet children. This supports children's emotional well-being and encourages children to feel safe and secure in a new environment.

Staff are calm role models and treat children with kindness and respect. Plenty of staff are available so that children receive plenty of attention and individual time. As a result, children behave very well and know what is expected of them. They enjoy playing with others and are developing an understanding of how to share and take turns. They follow the safety rules which are in place, such as walking indoors and respond well to instructions and reminders from staff. Children talk about how to keep themselves safe on outings. They know to hold onto the rope and they wear high visibility jackets, so they can easily be seen. Babies and younger children demonstrate that they feel safe at the nursery as they play confidently and enjoy cuddling up with staff for reassurance.

Children learn to adopt healthy lifestyles and are developing good personal hygiene routines with support from staff. Meals are varied, healthy and nutritious and children are encouraged to make healthy choices. Older children develop their independence skills as they pour their own drinks, serve their food and control their own portion sizes. Staff are knowledgeable about any allergies and special dietary requirements are specifically catered for. They hold first aid or food hygiene certificates so they can deal with minor injuries or prepare food safely. In addition, staff follow the secure medication policy when children require medicine at the nursery. There are suitable arrangements for children to exercise and develop their physical skills. As the nursery does not have its own designated outdoor area, children are taken on frequent visits to local parks. This means children have access to a variety of physical challenges and can play in the fresh air.

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

The management and staff have an appropriate understanding of the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. A recent change in management has resulted in a full review of many procedures and the practice in the setting. The new manager is very committed to making improvements and has immediately taken action to ensure that staff are more focused on enhancing children's experiences. Supervision meetings and appraisals have now started to ensure that staff's performance is monitored. Staff are also very receptive to helpful information received from the local authority advisors. A high priority has been placed on making improvements that have the most impact on children's learning and development. This means that activities are now more closely linked to children's interests, needs and capabilities and the

actions from the previous inspection have been addressed. The manager has started closely monitoring the learning of every child in the nursery to ensure that no child gets left behind. However, little time has passed to ensure the changes are fully embedded into practice, so it is too early to determine whether children are making better than steady progress.

Staff have a sound understanding of their responsibility to protect children from harm. Designated staff have attended appropriate safeguarding training and their knowledge is cascaded down at staff meetings. The nursery has clear policies and procedures in relation to child protection. This means that staff are vigilant and know what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare. All staff have completed the relevant background checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Clearly written risk assessment documents support staff in reviewing potential hazards to maintain a safe environment for children to play in. Children are appropriately supervised as they play as the required staffing ratios are met at all times. In addition, the manager regularly checks the playrooms to monitor the staffing arrangements. Overall, the premises is secure as steps have been taken to prevent unauthorised access. There is a controlled entry system and parents are given key fobs so they can access the entrance doors. However, it has recently been identified that this security system is not totally robust. This is because staff are not constantly aware of the number of people on the premises, as parents can potentially enter the premises unnoticed.

Parents are fully informed about the provision the nursery offers and how their children are progressing. They also receive a prospectus and the nursery website helps keep them up to date with activities and events. Notices and displays inform parents about the areas of learning. Parents have recently had the opportunity to offer ideas and make suggestions. They are also aware of how to make a complaint about the provision and these are dealt with in a prompt and professional way. Staff listen to parents' concerns and, where appropriate, adapt their policies and procedures accordingly. Parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive about the nursery. Parents say they are pleased with their children's progress and appreciate the daily diaries that keep them informed about the youngest children's routines. Staff also work closely in partnership with other early years professionals and settings to support children's transitions and to promote continuity in their care and learning.

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	EY418824
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	940365
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	38
Number of children on roll	61
Name of provider	Solid Start Childcare Services Limited
Date of previous inspection	04/09/2013
Telephone number	01245 461477

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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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