

Elm Cottage Day Nursery

11 Crescent Park, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 2HS

Inspection date	17/01/2014
Previous inspection date	16/01/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children's learning is promoted excellently by enthusiastic and highly motivated practitioners who understand the importance of working with children's interests. They consistently provide an exemplary variety of stimulating and challenging activities that promote children's learning through play.
- A highly successful key person system means children are cared for by practitioners who know and understand their individual needs. Children display a very strong sense of belonging in the nursery as they play and explore with great confidence and independence.
- Innovative self-evaluation procedures lead to improvements which are well targeted, and all practitioners demonstrate high aspirations for continuous quality of care, resulting in an excellent impact on the outcomes for children.
- Partnerships with external agencies are very well established and highly effective. This ensures that any needs for additional support are identified promptly and all children receive an exceptionally good level of support and consistency in their care and learning.
- A very strong programme of professional development means practitioners are very well qualified and fully trained in the nursery's policies. All practitioners are highly motivated and work exceptionally well as a team to meet all children's individual 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 throughout the whole of the nursery and the outdoor play area, and viewed equipment, toys and resources.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation and discussed these with practitioners.
- The inspector and manager took part in a joint observation of practice within the baby room.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability, deployment and qualifications of practitioners working with children, safeguarding procedures, behaviour management, toilet training procedures and discussed the self-evaluation and improvement plan with the manager, deputy and area manager.

Inspector

Marina Anna Howarth

Full report

Information about the setting

Elm Cottage Day Nursery opened in 1989 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is one of five provisions run by Elm Cottage Limited. It operates from a large converted house situated in Heaton Norris, Stockport. The nursery serves the immediate locality and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. There are currently 102 children on roll. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are a total of 19 members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at degree level, and one holds a level 5 early years qualification, eight hold level 3 and three hold level 2. The nursery is supported by a general manager who is a qualified teacher and the deputy is working towards Early Years Teaching Status. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consolidate reflective evaluation to ensure that the high quality, first-rate practice already achieved is sustained and constantly improved upon.

Inspection judgements

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

Children have access to a highly stimulating, vibrant environment, both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners are highly skilled and have a deep knowledge and understanding of the seven areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, and of how children learn and develop. As a result, the activities and experiences that are provided are targeted exceptionally well to meet children's individual needs, learning styles and interests. All children benefit from a wide range of sensory experiences. Babies explore their environment which is filled with a variety of resources, igniting their natural curiosity. They investigate natural materials and everyday objects, such as sponges and wooden spoons. They eagerly explore paint and glue, which they squelch between their fingers, and sprinkle glitter on their toes. They develop their investigative skills by turning knobs and pressing buttons, and observe with interest the effects they create, such as different sounds and movement. Toddlers explore shaving foam and squeal with delight as they immerse model sealife creatures into the foam. They explore and develop their own

ideas as they introduce additional resources, such as sponges and brushes, and enjoy observing the different patterns and effects they create. Children are provided with an extensive variety of experiences outdoors and in the garden area. Pre-school children participate in woodwork activities, where they discover how to use a range of tools. They build a water shoot by using a variety of recycled materials and problem solve as they create various positions to enable the water to flow in different directions. Children enjoy exploring the natural environment as they dig for insects and use their imagination and creativity by erecting 'bug hotels' for the insects to live in. They discover seasonal changes as they experience different weather conditions and exclaim that 'trees are just twigs' in winter. They create dens using a variety of materials and retreat to areas where they are able to mark make and converse with their peers.

Teaching techniques are consistently strong across the nursery, resulting in all children being effectively supported to acquire the skills and capacity to learn and develop effectively. This ensures they are well prepared for their next stage in learning. All practitioners know the children extremely well and use their starting points on entry to accurately assess their progress. They have high expectations of children, make regular observations and plan their next steps carefully, challenging children to develop further in specific areas. Subsequent assessments are precise, sharply focused and consistently monitored to ensure children are developing at a very good rate, and any areas of concern are highlighted. As a result, early intervention is put in place to help close any gaps in development and children make rapid progress. Practitioners are skilled in providing children with opportunities to explore their own ideas and creativity. Children move around the environment with confidence and help themselves to resources of their choice. Practitioners support and enhance their play skilfully by providing challenges that encourage children to solve problems, identify solutions and overcome challenges. For example, in response to children's interest in super heroes, role play has been enhanced and children enthusiastically follow missions presented to them by practitioners. They search for hidden lids which are labelled with numbers and colours, further developing their skills in reciting numbers in order and number recognition.

Children are effectively supported to develop their social skills through group activities that are purposeful and interesting, and where they are encouraged to work and play together. All children are secure in communicating their needs and preferences as practitioners actively encourage the use of phonics to promote children's understanding of sounds and letters. Babies and toddlers are encouraged to engage in simple gestures to communicate their needs, and visual timetables help children to understand and become familiar with routines of the day, such as going to the bathroom and tidy-up time. Children of all ages are provided with a variety of opportunities to mark make and develop their early writing skills. Young infants have access to chunky paintbrushes and crayons which they can hold easily and are encouraged to use their fingers to create patterns and marks in tactile materials, such as sand and cornflour. Pre-school children have access to a range of writing materials, which they use around the environment in a variety of activities. Older children confidently demonstrate they are able to recognise their own name and write recognisable letters and numbers. They access a variety of books and engage in story sessions. These are significantly enhanced by the use of puppets. Practitioners use animated voices and expressions, keeping children involved, interested and motivated, while supporting their early literacy skills.

Parents are supported and totally engaged and involved in their children's learning. Children's learning journals are always available for parents to view and key persons make time to discuss children's learning and development at any time. Resources are provided for families to take home, further supporting their children's learning. Consequently, parents are fully informed about how their children are developing and they are able to share and complement the activities and learning at home, resulting in consistency for children. The setting is extremely proficient in working with parents, other schools and settings to support children in moving on. Practitioners are able to visit schools and welcome teachers into the nursery, prior to children starting. Children's time spent at the nursery is acknowledged, as when they leave they participate in a graduation ceremony where they dress-up and are awarded certificates. This enables them to finalise their time at the nursery in a celebratory way as it is marked as a positive occasion and achievement. As a result, children are extremely well supported in their transitions to school.

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

The nursery is homely and inviting, where all children are welcomed by caring, sensitive practitioners. Children are free to explore the environment and make independent choices from an extensive range of high quality resources. As a result, they develop high levels of confidence and a strong sense of security and belonging. They enter the nursery enthusiastically and are confident and happy during the time they spend there. Effective settling-in procedures include initial home visits conducted by practitioners, including the child's prospective key person. This enables children to meet their key person in their own environment where they feel secure and provides time and space where parents can discuss their child. A well-established key person system offers every child and family the opportunity to have a special relationship with one practitioner. The key person works closely with parents from the point of entry. They effectively use detailed information obtained to establish what children can do, and define initial targets linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, children and their families establish very strong attachments with their key person, continuity of care and learning is firmly established and emotional well-being is fostered exceptionally well. The continuity of care from the key person also means that transitions for children as they grow and develop are seamless. Young babies are given complete attention by sensitive and highly skilled practitioners. They ensure that babies care routines closely match those from home, helping them remain settled in established routines. Secure attachments are evident throughout the entire nursery, resulting in an atmosphere in which children flourish.

Practitioners encourage children to play cooperatively from an early age, encouraging children to understand the benefits of playing harmoniously. They expertly identify children in need of support and work closely with parents and external agencies to manage children's behaviour. Younger children display high levels of self-control and independence as they play together. They work cooperatively as they play a parachute game, lifting the parachute in sequence and taking turns to run under it. Older children initiate games with large balls where they negotiate taking turns to roll the ball to each other. They use communication-friendly spaces which provide quiet time to enable them

to engage in discussion, and they show great imagination as they look at books together and use expressive voices to recite stories. Children are encouraged to explore feelings and express themselves through the use of puppets and actively treat each other with kindness and respect. They are supported effectively by practitioners who provide them with first-hand experiences to develop their awareness of meeting the needs of others. For example, they engage in events within the community, such as singing in residential homes and collecting produce for food hampers. Practitioners work exceptionally hard to include all children and treat them with equal concern. Children learn to appreciate different cultures and religions through participating in the celebration of a variety of festivals. They access a wide variety of toys and resources that reflect diversity, enabling them to respect each other's differences. They are sensitive to children's individual needs by using familiar phrases of home languages. Gestures, signing and visual timetables are also used effectively to enhance early language skills and support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Care practices are very effective in helping to develop children's personal skills. Older children independently remember to wash their hands. They competently use large spoons to help serve their meals. They learn about healthy eating as the nursery has a strong commitment to provide freshly cooked, locally sourced food of good quality. Young infants are encouraged to feed themselves from an early age and time is provided for them to practise at each meal. Information from parents and carers regarding children's dietary and health needs is well documented, ensuring that children are kept safe and well cared for. Practitioners fully understand the importance of promoting good health. Children are provided with opportunities to engage in a variety of exercise programmes, such as ballet and football. All children are highly motivated to play outdoors and actively enjoy the fresh air and exercise. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe as practitioners provide opportunities to manage risk in a safe but controlled environment. Children learn to use a variety of tools and equipment safely, such as woodwork tools, knives when preparing food and a range of gardening tools. Their awareness of safety is further enhanced through visits into the community where they learn about different risks, such as developing their awareness of road safety.

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

The management team are highly committed and have an excellent understanding of their responsibility to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Statutory framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Policies and procedures are well documented and are understood by practitioners and parents, ensuring consistency and the safety and well-being of children. For example, practitioners follow stringent hygiene procedures when changing children's nappies and when supporting children who are toilet training. Records are maintained daily for each child, highlighting the frequency of nappy changes and detailing any soiling accidents. Staff recruitment is robust, effective induction procedures take place and all practitioners are suitably vetted to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm. The environment and equipment are checked on a daily basis and robust risk assessments ensure that the areas are safe for children to play. Daily registers record the hours of attendance for children and practitioners, ensuring that

practitioners are well deployed and that ratios are maintained at all times. Robust procedures are implemented to cover any practitioner absences via the use of supply workers or the management team. Children are kept safe and secure as all practitioners are appropriately trained in child protection procedures and first aid. Accident records are maintained and monitored to a high standard, ensuring that appropriate interventions are sought where needed.

The management team are fully committed and passionate about promoting a high quality learning environment for all children in the nursery. Their knowledge and understanding of the areas of learning and development and how children learn is extensive. Individual induction programmes, appraisals and supervisions are well established and highly effective. Practitioners access a wide range of training through higher level studies, in-house and external training. The knowledge and skills gained are implemented effectively to support each other and maintain consistently high standards throughout the nursery. This is highly effective in fostering a culture of continuous improvement. All practitioners are fully supported and mentored, especially new recruits or practitioners taking on new roles in the nursery. This results in highly effective team working throughout the nursery.

The manager effectively utilises a comprehensive range of monitoring tools to accurately assess the quality of the provision. The quality of the educational programme and observations of children's learning are closely monitored. A highly effective monitoring system tracks all children's progress quarterly to quickly identify any groups of children who fall below their expected achievements. The information is used astutely to deploy resources and practitioners for maximum efficiency and seek external help if beneficial. Parents' views are routinely sought through discussions with staff and in regular questionnaires. An excellent commitment to partnership working with external agencies is well established and contributes to effectively meeting the individual needs of children. The management team are highly committed in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ensure that practitioners work closely with a range of professionals, such as speech and language therapists, oral health workers and more recently the early years behaviour support team. Practitioners are committed and receptive to use available support and advice and are keen to implement suggestions to enhance their practice and provide additional support for children. Excellent partnerships with local schools and parents, both before and after children start school, mean children and families are very well supported throughout the transition.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	307135
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	948151
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	103
Name of provider	Elm Cottage Limited
Date of previous inspection	16/01/2013
Telephone number	0161 443 2228

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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.

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.

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