

Elm Park Nursery

Elm Park Nursery School, 90 Clarence Avenue, LONDON, SW4 8JR

Inspection date	10/10/2013
Previous inspection date	10/04/2013

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 does not ensure that there are always sufficient numbers of staff deployed to keep children safe.
- The provider fails to provide staff with regular supervision, effective mentoring and coaching to develop and improve their practice, to improve the provision for children.
- Staff planning for the educational programmes does not take enough account of children's individual interests and needs.
- Staff do not put in place effective support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to help them make appropriate progress.
- The youngest children do not learn to enjoy books or talk about what they see in their environment, owing to a lack of appropriate resources. Local outings are not organised to broaden experiences of the natural world for these children, and stimulate speech.
- Staff do not fully exploit opportunities to develop older children's independence in preparation for the move to school.

It has the following strengths

- Staff plan a varied range of activities to encourage babies to explore and experiment through using their senses.
- Staff show a positive attitude to developing their knowledge and skills to improve the outcomes for children.

- The nursery garden is well equipped to support children's physical development.

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 activities indoors and in the garden.
- The inspectors spoke to staff, children and parents taking into account their views.
The inspectors sampled a range of documentation, including policies and procedures, children's health and assessment records, staffs planning, class registers and staff suitability records.
- The inspectors held a meeting with the director and manager
The manager shared her evaluations with the inspector on the outcomes for children's learning from staffs planning for sand play during the tour of the premises which included all play rooms and classrooms.

Inspector

Amanda Tyson

Full Report

Information about the setting

Elm Park Nursery is one of two nurseries in London owned by the directors. The nursery is a combined private nursery school and day nursery. It opened in 1991 and is located in a large converted house, with car parking to the front. There are 11 purpose built classrooms over three floors with an enclosed garden with a smaller area for babies.

The nursery is situated in Clapham, in the London Borough of Lambeth. The nursery caters for children from three months to five years. There are currently 126 children on roll. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. The nursery operates Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. throughout the year. It is closed for public holidays and breaks at Christmas/New Year (one week), Easter (one week) and August (two weeks). Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language.

A total of 39 teaching staff and a manager are employed to work with children. All the staff have a relevant early years qualification. The proprietor holds Qualified Teacher Status and the manager has a BA degree in Early Years Teaching. Five of the staff have Montessori qualifications and the nursery uses some Montessori teaching methods.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure that there are sufficient numbers of staff deployed to provide adequate supervision of the children throughout the day
- ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have clear individual educational plans in place that are well targeted and developed in close partnership with parents and external agencies involved with children
- introduce rigorous performance management and monitoring systems, by putting in place arrangements for all staff to receive regular opportunities to engage in personal discussion about their professional development needs and to receive support and coaching to improve their practice, particularly where underperformance is identified
- ensure that planning of the educational programs fully consider the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child, so they are engaged in their learning
- develop a secure system for monitoring and self-evaluation, to foster a culture of continuous improvement to promote the interests of children.

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

- improve further the range of resources to support the younger children's early literacy, communication and language development, so they develop an interest in books and talk about these and what they see around them
- enable older children to further develop their independence skills in readiness for school, such as by taking on small responsibilities at mealtimes.
- help babies learn about their physical world, such as by making use of the local area to experience nature.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are happy and enjoy their play. Most staff demonstrate a general understanding of the areas of learning and how to support progress. By the time children make the move to full time school, most can count reliably and use numbers in context. They can recognise and write their name and link letters to sounds. Some children are able to use this skill to work out simple words. However, in contrast, the nursery is lacking in resources to support younger children's communication and language development and those with communication and language delay. For example, there are few books available for babies and toddlers. Those that are available are in extremely poor condition. This prevents staff from sharing pictures with the youngest ones to widen their vocabularies and to encourage an early enjoyment of books. Some staff engage older children in worthwhile conversations and make use of open-ended questioning to extend their thinking skills.

Activity planning does not link closely enough to children's individual interests. Staff focus too heavily on planning activities that link to a topic pre-determined by staff. For example, the youngest ones decorate pre-drawn templates of emergency vehicles because the topic of the month is 'People who help us' and the focus of the week is the police and fire service. For babies, whose understanding of people who help them is centred on immediate family members, these activities are meaningless.

The quality of staff observational assessments and planning for children's next steps in learning is too variable between staff. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not have clear individual educational plans matched to their particular requirements, to help them progress appropriately. Staff are not trained to use any specialist strategies to support children with identified needs. Some staff work with parents to support children's learning. For example, by sharing ideas to support mathematical development, thus enabling parents to support learning at home. Most parents are provided with regular written reports summarising their child's achievements, including the required progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. Again, however, there are inconsistencies between staff. Communication between staff and parents and external agencies involved with children is not always effective in meeting all children's needs, which impedes progress.

Staff provide an interesting range of play activities for children to explore using their senses and to support their physical development. Babies discover how to make different noises with paper that crackles when they scrunch it. They handle different size objects and make patterns with their hands in shaving foam. Toddlers enjoy finding empty containers which smell nice and experiment by rolling cotton reels over their skin. Children develop their hand muscles as they manipulate dough. All children have access to a variety of role play equipment. Children become deeply involved in transferring liquids and grains using real resources, such as glass jugs and tweezers.

Staff in pre-school help children to learn about nature by taking them on outings and, for instance, adopting a turtle. They enjoy making things, such as 'police radios' from juice cartons. However, unlike older children babies are not taken out into the community to learn about their immediate world first hand, for instance to see traffic and people. Their outdoor area is lacking in natural features and although there is a park opposite the

nursery staff do not take them there.

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

Children are cared for in a clean, well-furnished and maintained environment. However, basic resources, such as books and sand are not replaced, replenished and supplemented as needed. This weakness restricts children's experiences. The nursery garden is well equipped and is spacious. This area provides ample opportunities for children to practise their developing physical skills. For example, there are trees to climb and digging areas to explore. The wooden 'wobble bridge' excites the children and they manoeuvre diggers to collect bark chippings with skill. However, on the day of inspection the majority of children, including toddlers and four-year-olds all went out to play together at 11 am. There were so many children it was extremely difficult to keep track of them in order to maintain their safety. For example, a toddler climbed onto, and stood up on, a seesaw then fell off. Staff were vigilant, but spent their time constantly racing from one child to another in an attempt to prevent accidents. The quality of play was reduced because of the sheer number of children of mixed ages all outside together.

Children are helped by staff to understand how the police and fire service keep them safe and they practise the fire evacuation procedure. Staff help children to understand the importance of hand washing after going to the toilet or caring for the nursery rabbit, and after playing outdoors.

Most children are helped to successfully settle in to nursery life through a gradual parent-child separation process. This is supported by a designated member of staff who becomes their key-person. For example, parents spend a week visiting the nursery with their child. Staff use this time to build relationships with children and parents and to learn all about children's personalities and needs. Children then begin to stay without parents for increasing periods, usually with parents remaining on site for the first time. This is a well thought through procedure. However, staff then proceed to leave the classroom understaffed resulting in children who are distressed by parent separation not receiving the attention they need from their new key carer. As a general rule, children retain the same key person for the duration of their time in nursery. Staff move with their children to the next room which helps them feel secure. Overall, staff communicate closely with parents about children's wellbeing. Staff provide parents with a written summary of babies' daily care routines to help ensure consistency and continuity of care. Staff ensure that babies are able to sleep according to their usual home routines, but are less flexible with regards to meeting the sleep needs of young toddlers.

Older children show they enjoy the nursery meals when they ask for second and even third helpings. The cook provides for all special dietary needs, including a nutritious weaning menu. There is a procedure in place for parents to inform staff of all foods babies have tried successfully at home before they are offered at nursery. This helps to ensure allergic reactions do not occur when children are away from home.

Babies enjoy exploring the texture of food with their hands and are helped by staff to

progress to using the skills to use spoons, followed by knives and forks. However, although older children scrape their plates after they have finished their meal, staff serve their portions and pour their drinks when they are capable of doing this for themselves. While some staff make the most of mealtimes to engage children in sociable conversation, this is not a strength of all staff. Most staff recognise and respond to children's emotional needs well. However, staff skills in managing challenging behaviour are variable. Staff encourage children to use common courtesies and help them to develop friendships during group activities and circle time discussions.

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

This inspection was brought forward as a result of concerns and incidents reported to Ofsted. This inspection found that management follow appropriate safeguarding children procedures in response to an allegation against staff. However, management do not ensure sufficient monitoring and supervision of staff following an investigation whereby underperformance is identified. There are clear and appropriate procedures in place for recruiting and vetting suitable staff. Management say that the interview process includes an assessment of staff member's ability to read and write in English so that they are able to independently complete assessments and reports on children. Staff sometimes complete these reports at home, but children's folders containing all their personal information are kept on site at the nursery at all times. Management ensure that there are sufficient numbers of staff working each day to care for the numbers of children due in. However, their calculations do not take enough account of the large number of children who arrive between 8am and 8.30am, resulting in times when the deployment of staff does not provide adequate supervision of children.

Although there are enough staff on duty in the building throughout the day, they are not always well deployed to ensure adequate supervision of children. For example, on the day of inspection, one member of staff was left alone in a room with 11 children while two others left the room, one for an extended period. Furthermore, two staff were observed escorting twelve children aged two years from the first floor to the nursery garden. The last child in the line left the stairway returning to a classroom unsupervised. The member of staff towards the rear was unable to leave the majority of children to retrieve this child. Instead the inspector did this. This lack of effective organisation compromises children's safety and raises concerns about the effectiveness of the nursery's emergency evacuation procedure. There is suitable provision for food and drink.

The vast majority of staff have not had an appraisal for over three years, some for much longer. No staff member has a current performance development plan, even where underperformance is clearly identified. Some staff, but not all, receive mentoring from their room leader, for instance in completing assessments on their key children. However, management fail to monitor the effectiveness of these, including whether or not they take place. Furthermore, room leaders also have key-person responsibilities and there is no procedure in place for reviewing the effectiveness of their planning for individual children. Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is inadequate.

Assessment records are incomplete; individual educational plans are not in place and communication with parents and external agencies involved with children is poor. Such children do not get the help they need.

All staff complete child protection, first aid, and basic health and safety training. Most staff show suitable understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Room leaders have recently completed an introduction to leadership course. However, while this is positive, they are not being helped to implement what they have learned.

Opportunities for staff to attend training to improve the quality of their teaching practice, for instance in planning the educational programs for the seven areas of learning, are poor. Room leaders of lower, middle and upper school plan monthly meetings for all staff. However, attendance is variable and room leaders lack the confidence and skills to address this. Room leaders advise management of priorities for improvement and of any concerns, but little action is taken. For example, management was informed well before the end of the summer term that the books in the baby room were all broken and needed replacing. No new books have been obtained. Furthermore, there are insufficient quantities of sand in all rooms to support worthwhile play and learning. Management's current improvement plans are focused on developing the garden. However, while these may further improve the facilities for outdoor play, management fails to respond to more pressing priorities.

Although there are inadequacies in the nursery's partnership with some parents and external agencies, most staff communicate effectively with parents. There are good procedures in place for supporting communication between staff and parents of babies in relation to their routine care needs. Management's strength is that, in the main, they successfully recruit suitable staff. Many stand out as being dedicated to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. With this in mind, and with matched commitment from management, the provision has the potential to make the necessary improvements.

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	EY455615
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	935594
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	96
Number of children on roll	126
Name of provider	Elm Park Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	10/04/2013
Telephone number	0208 6781990

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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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