

Animal Crackers

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

Inspection date	28/03/2014
Previous inspection date	25/10/2013

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 requires improvement

- Older children in pre-school area, children in toddler area and babies benefit from good quality teaching strategies that are deployed by staff, which effectively supports and extends their learning. This includes providing one-to-one adult support where necessary.
- Partnerships with parents and other professionals contribute to identifying and meeting children's needs. All the required safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and contribute to keeping children safe.
- Management's drive for improvement is demonstrated by the number of successful improvements that have been made since the last inspection that support children's achievements.

It is not yet good because

- Teaching requires improvement because staff in the young pre-school group room have not yet received sufficient coaching to ensure they have the skills to provide good levels of support for children's learning. This is in relation to using information about children's achievements to guide their interactions during adult-led activities and activities led by children.
- Staff in baby room do not fully focus on encouraging children to imitate words and sounds, in order to fully support their communication and language skills.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

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

Inspector

Christine Armstrong

Full report

Information about the setting

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

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 120 children on roll, of whom, 105 children are in the early years age range. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two-, three- and four-years-old. It currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 members of staff who work directly with the children, of these, 12 work full-time. One member of staff has qualified teacher status, three staff hold early years qualification at level 6 and one at level 5, all other staff hold level 3 qualifications, with two further staff holding level 2 qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- provide further coaching to improve the personal effectiveness of staff in the young pre-school group room, so that they have the skills to provide good levels of support for children's learning, particularly in relation to staff using information about children's achievements to guide their planning of adult-led activities and interactions with children.

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

- enhance the support for babies communication and language skills by focusing more on encouraging them to imitate words and sounds.

Inspection judgements

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

There have been significant changes in practice since the last inspection. As a result, children receive much better support to prepare them for school and their next steps in

learning. In most instances, the quality of teaching is good, which is ensuring most children are effectively supported to develop the characteristics of effective learners and to make good progress in their learning. For example, there has been a reorganisation of the pre-school. This has led to two rooms and an outdoor area being designated for the oldest children in the nursery who are preparing to move onto school. Staff who have been allocated to work in this area are highly driven to provide the best for the children in their care. They know how to teach children to learn and they have extended their knowledge and skills by working in partnership with other professionals, including teachers at the local school. As a result, staff in this area effectively focus on creating indoor and outdoor spaces that are specifically and effectively designed and resourced to continuously motivate and engage children's learning. Children are continually practising and consolidating the knowledge and skills they are being taught in all areas of learning. They are immersed in an environment that is rich in visual aids, prompts and print that reinforces their learning and encourages them to practise and build upon their growing literacy skills, understanding of mathematical concepts, understanding of the world and ability to be creative and imaginative. Most importantly, staff in this area are very skilled in their interactions with children. They show high levels of interest in what children do and say and they become involved in their play. For example, staff become involved in children's play as they look for pirate treasure and make a number 'hopscotch'. During these activities, they skilfully encourage and support children to express what they are thinking and doing by asking 'who, what, where why' questions and they extend this further by asking 'I wonder what would happen?' and 'how can we?' As a result, children take part in sustained shared thinking, problem solving, planning and making decisions, testing ideas and making predictions and learning through trial and error. Good focus is given to involving parents in their children's learning, which helps to support the progress children make. For example, parents are provided with specific advice to support children's emerging writing skills. Also, parents are encouraged to provide information about children's learning at home, which supports more accurate assessments. Parents spoken to on the day of inspection, report that they have seen much improvement in their children's progress since they have moved into this area.

Improvements in toddler room have also led to good quality teaching. Staff are working effectively as a team and they have embraced and implemented changes that have improved their observations, assessments and planning systems. As a result, they are effectively using the information they obtain about each child to plan the environment, guide their interactions and provide all the necessary one-to-one support to children. This ensures children receive tailored support to meet their needs; particularly for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, children whose achievements are lower than those expected for their age and children who are learning English as an additional language. It means that staff are on hand and know how to support children to take part in activities and be included. As a result, teaching strategies are effective and children are becoming active, curious and motivated learners who make good progress in their development, given their starting points and capabilities. Staff place good focus on using fun gestures, body language, pictorial prompts and singing as well as words. This is effective in supporting and extending children's ability to listen, understand, follow instructions and take an active part in routines, such as tidying away and circle time. Staff purposefully use these activities to build upon children's vocabulary and motivation to express themselves, in order to demonstrate what they are beginning to learn, understand

and enjoy. This type of adult-led activity is well balanced with an abundance of stimulating resources, indoors and outdoors, that are purposefully provided to support children's interest and support and extend child-led learning. As a result, children develop simple problem solving skills using number and shape, they learn to play together using their imagination and developing expressive skills.

Staff in baby room place good emphasis on providing children with an array of experiences that stimulate their natural interest and curiosity in the things they see hear and touch, indoors and outdoors. This is effective in helping very young children to become active learners. It motivates them to move and explore and experiment by using things for their own purpose and to begin to take part in symbolic imaginative play, which helps them to develop their understanding of things that happen around them. Staff stay close to children who are starting to enjoy and explore using their physical abilities. This ensures children are kept safe, which gives them confidence to continue to explore and challenge their physical skills. Staff use effective strategies to support children's communication and language skills. They talk and sing all the time to babies, which provides a rich environment for children to begin to understand language in readiness for the development of their speaking skills. Staff repeat sounds and words children make, although, they focus less on encouraging them to imitate words and sounds, in order to fully support their progress.

However, teaching requires improvement because younger pre-school children do not benefit from good quality teaching. There have been some improvements to the physical learning environment in this area, which means that children benefit and enjoy initiating their own play and follow their own interest indoors and outdoors. However, staff in this area are less skilled in using the information they have about children's achievements to guide their interactions with children. As a result, some adult-led activities are not well matched to children's abilities. Therefore, staff fail to capture children's enthusiasm or interest during these sessions, which can hinder their motivation to learn. Staff are also less able to provide effective support to extend learning through children's self-initiated play because they are not always clear about what their next steps in learning are or how to support these. Consequently, children's learning is not fully supported or extended.

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

The nursery provides a welcoming environment for all children, parents and visitors. There is a variety of positive images of diversity throughout the nursery, which provide a strong message that everybody is welcome. Children in the pre-school have weekly French lessons and staff work in partnership with parents to use children's home language in the nursery, which contributes to helping them develop positive attitudes and value diversity. In most instances, key persons develop an in-depth knowledge of children to provide a stimulating environment, which effectively supports their all-round development. Good focus is given to supporting children's emotional well-being. Key persons in the baby room are particularly sensitive and proactive in working in partnership with parents to ensure initial settling-in experiences are tailored to meet children's individual needs. This may include extending sessions and using items from home to ensure children become confident and familiar with their key person, which supports their emotional well-being.

Parents spoken to on the day of inspection state that staff are 'brilliant', 'very helpful', 'supportive' and 'flexible' during this period. Key persons in the toddler room focus extremely well on preparing children for changes in the daily routine. They sing songs and use pictorial routines as well as talking to children about the time of the day and what happens next to help them to remember what they need to do. This results in children becoming very familiar with the routine of the day and what is expected of them, which contributes to supporting their emotional well-being, independence and confidence. In all areas of the nursery, staff are kind and caring towards children, which also contributes to children's emotional well-being and confidence. The effective partnership working with local schools supports children's move to school.

Throughout the nursery, staff provide effective support for children to develop friendships and to learn to manage their behaviour, in relation to their age and abilities. Toddler room staff are particularly effective in providing individual support through action plans that are devised in partnership with parents where necessary, to ensure all children have the support they need to learn to behave well. This contributes to ensuring all children feel safe and enjoy a harmonious environment. Throughout the nursery, children are supported to develop their self-care skills. As a result, children in the baby room become independent in feeding themselves and washing their hands and faces and older children in pre-school are able to manage most of their own needs during mealtimes. During this time, staff effectively encourage children to think and talk about how food contributes to their good health.

In most instances very good focus is given to providing children with the opportunity to work and play on a larger scale outdoors. Staff working with older pre-school children provide a particularly rich variety of stimulating and challenging range of activities to support this, although, younger pre-school children do not benefit from accessing the same quality of provision. Children's awareness and understanding of their body, the need to stay safe and to develop a healthy lifestyle is further promoted through a range of activities and experiences, including Forest school sessions that are run by staff who are qualified in this approach and football sessions that are run by qualified coaches who visit the nursery on a regular basis.

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

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are understood and implemented by the manager and staff team. There are suitable safeguarding policies and procedures in place. For example, there are suitable recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure adults suitability to work with children. This includes Disclosure and Barring Service checks and references for all staff. There are suitable arrangements in place to ensure staff receive safeguarding training in level 1 and 2 and staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. As a result, staff are able to recognise potential signs of abuse and take all the necessary steps to safeguard children. Management are fully aware and committed to notifying Ofsted of significant events, in line with requirements, which contributes to safeguarding children. Good focus is given to keeping the environment safe for children. A member of

staff is designated as Health and Safety Officer to oversee safety in the nursery and staff undertake risk assessments that identify and minimise potential hazards, in order to keep children safe and secure. An ongoing training programme ensures staff hold current paediatric first aid certificates, which contributes to ensuring children receive appropriate care if they become ill or injured. Accurate records of the names of the children being cared for and their hours of attendance are maintained, which contributes to keeping children safe.

The manager has sought and acted upon expert advice and guidance and she has worked mostly effectively with the staff team to make significant changes in practice since the last inspection. As a result, there has been a significant reorganisation of staff, children's play areas and improved systems have been put in place to monitor children's progress and plan for their individual learning. This is particularly evident in the older pre-school area, toddler and baby area. There has been significant improvement of the provision of supervision, support, coaching and training for staff. In most instances, this has resulted in staff improving their skills and knowledge, which has enabled them to make improvements that have had a direct positive impact on the quality of their practice and children's learning. As a result, in most instances, the quality of the provision is good. This is particularly evident in the toddler room where children are flourishing with the individual support that staff are providing. It is also evident in baby room where staff are particularly effective in supporting children's emotional and physical well-being, which effectively supports their future learning. The improvements in monitoring staff practice has also led to the manager developing a very clear understanding of staffs' strengths and weaknesses. This has led to some good targeted support for staff. However, unfortunately, the manager has prioritised building upon already good practice within the nursery, rather than focusing and targeting further support in the younger pre-school group, where she knows weaknesses in staff knowledge and individual performance remain. Consequently, the nursery requires improvement, so that all children benefit from good quality teaching.

Parents continue to express their high satisfaction with the service they receive. Any dissatisfaction is effectively managed through the nursery's complaints policy, which contributes to maintaining and developing children's care and learning and partnerships with parents. Parents spoken to on the day of inspection are aware of the changes being made in the nursery and feel these are benefiting their children, particularly in relation to the re-organisation of the older children's pre-school playrooms. The improvements within the nursery are contributing to making children's learning more visible to parents. This is helping to keep parents informed and involved in their children's learning. The effective focus in toddler room given to working in partnerships with parents whose children's achievements are lower than those expected for their age, contributes to the quality of support provided to these children. The nursery works effectively in partnership with other professionals to provide tailored care and learning for any children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure their needs are fully met.

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	218403
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	961463
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	86
Number of children on roll	120
Name of provider	Animal Crackers Children's Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	25/10/2013
Telephone number	01283 791030

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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