

Amber's Attic Ltd

109-123 Stand Lane, Radcliffe, Manchester, Lancashire, M26 1JR

Inspection date	26/03/2014
Previous inspection date	20/11/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement
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

- Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes resulting in a lack of continuity and disruption in children's care and learning. Some staff do not know children well enough to identify their needs. Assessments of some children have not been frequent enough to ensure they get the support they need.
- Rigorous procedures to keep children safe are not always implemented. Occasionally, recruitment procedures have been insufficient to fully evidence staff suitability and staff do not always keep required records of the administration of medicine.
- Sometimes, poor deployment of staff means that ratios of qualified and unqualified staff working with groups of children are not maintained. Additionally, staff who are employed to support specific children are sometimes unable to do this effectively when they are needed to meet the needs of the larger group.
- Some staff lack leadership. Consequently, some routines lack purpose and interaction with children is poor. This impacts on children's behaviour and language development.
- Partnerships with parents have not always been good enough to give them the information they need about their child's care and learning.

It has the following strengths

- The newly appointed manager and the provider both aspire to improve. They evaluate successfully and have a clear understanding of many of the priorities for improvement. They are already taking some suitable steps aimed at improving quality.

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 care routines or activities in the baby room, toddler room and pre-school room, in addition to the outside area.
- The inspector observed an outside play session with pre-school children alongside the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the provider and the manager and spoke to staff and children at suitable times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children and discussed the provider's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and through comments made in the nursery's documentation.

Inspector

Angela Rowley

Full report

Information about the setting

Amber's Attic Ltd was registered in 2004 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in converted premises in the Radcliffe area of Bury and is managed by a limited company. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from five playrooms on two levels, the lower of which is accessed by stairs. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, the manager holds Early Years Professional Status, one member of staff holds a qualification at level 5, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, one holds a qualification at level 2 and three members of staff are unqualified. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 85 children attending, 72 of whom are in the early years age group. The nursery also offers before and after school and holiday care for children aged from five to 11 years. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of 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:

- implement effective systems to ensure that staff and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children (including those living or working on the premises) are suitable, including checking their previous employment history
- ensure staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety by assigning a consistent key person to every child, making sure required ratios of qualified staff are met and by making sure staff allocated to support specific children are able to carry out that role
- ensure all staff understand the nursery's procedures for administering medicines, including the requirement to keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child and to inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable
- ensure consistent use of the observation and assessment system to enable staff to understand children's levels of achievement and use the information to tailor activities and plan opportunities to meet children's individual learning needs and support their progress
- develop staff's understanding of their role in promoting children's communication and language development, including asking open-ended questions, describing what children are doing by providing a running commentary, planning activities to highlight specific vocabulary and supporting children in using a variety of communication strategies, including signing, where appropriate
- ensure all staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities by providing consistent staff, leadership and effective monitoring across all areas
- ensure parents are given information about their child's care and learning to provide consistency for children, including the range and type of activities and experiences provided, the daily routines including individual children's care routines, the name of their child's key person and their role and how they as parents and carers can share learning at home.

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

- develop familiar, orderly routines and strategies that support children's understanding of reasonable yet challenging expectations along with clear and consistent boundaries.

Inspection judgements

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

Not all children are making good enough progress and developing the skills they need in readiness for school. This is because recently there has been considerable disruption in staffing, which has led to gaps in planning and provision for individual children's learning. The lack of consistency has meant that when children have been identified as being at risk of developmental delay, action has not always been taken swiftly enough to plan the necessary support to help children progress and to narrow the gap in achievement. This has also meant that assessment has not always been continuous, precise or accurate and some staff have not fully understood how to use the development guides available to them to track children's progress. Staff do not always take full account of information given by parents at the start of the placement to plan how to meet children's specific learning needs. For example, in the toddler room a parent has made staff aware that her child was making little attempt at speaking, staff have not planned specific opportunities to support the child's communication and language in a targeted way. This has been compounded by key person changes and remaining staff members being unsure of who is taking responsibility for planning for the child's needs until a new staff member is recruited. Assessment for children with already identified special educational needs and/or disabilities has continued and individual learning plans have continued to be implemented. However, despite managers recently recruiting a highly qualified individual to undertake the role of an individual support staff member, the effectiveness of her support is undermined by poor staff deployment. She is not always able to provide the individual support intended because she is needed to support other staff and the organisation of the larger group she is working within. Parents are generally informed of children's progress and information sharing is beginning to improve, although, some parents comment that they do not always receive sufficient information.

Children's progress is hindered because some staff lack the skills they need to provide an effective, well-organised and purposeful routine. Too often activities lack differentiation because staff attempt to manage children in whole groups. Consequently, activities do not meet their individual needs. For example, in the pre-school room prior to lunch children are asked to all sit on the carpet. One staff member attempts to support the whole group alone, while others organise lunch and supervise the bathroom. The staff member attempts to talk to children about healthy eating, however, this discussion lacks planning and focus. Children quickly lose interest and begin to crawl around the floor or leave the area. Their lack of attention is further hindered when staff continually take small groups of children to and from the bathroom, which causes additional disruption. During lunch children serve themselves, which promotes some independence effectively. However, many do not attempt to and are not encouraged to use their knife with their fork. Consequently, children are not being supported well enough to develop the attitudes, behaviours and skills needed to help them prepare for school. Staff do not use meaningful routines and opportunities to support and extend children's communication and language. Children in the toddler room sit around small tables at lunchtime and staff sit with them, which is a positive approach. However, staff fail to use the opportunity to converse with

children. Any communication is largely focused on the function of the mealtime. Consequently, too often staff merely ask closed questions, such as 'Have you finished?' which invite no more than a single word response.

In some areas of the nursery, however, staff are beginning to support children's learning and development purposefully. Babies are benefitting from the expertise of a newly recruited and highly experienced room leader. The room has been reorganised and the learning environment imaginatively resourced to promote independent exploration. Consequently, babies are curious and motivated to explore a range of sensory objects. They shake bottles filled with different coloured paint, they make sounds using metal whisks and pots and they feel the texture of sand between their fingers. Babies show interest in books because they are provided with relevant chunky books to explore. They access them freely and relax comfortably in the black and white themed cosy corner, purposefully created to promote further sensory stimulation. Children with complex needs are also appropriately supported at times by staff by the individual use of a sensory room. This has been specifically equipped to provide a safe, stimulating environment to explore. Continuous play provision in the pre-school room is improving and enables children to independently access a suitable range of equipment, which promotes most areas of learning. They enjoy stories on an individual or very small group basis when they access the cosy corner and staff read books selected by children. They enjoy exploring natural materials, such as water play. However, too often staff supervise and facilitate, failing to recognise their vital role in promoting children's learning. Children enjoy exploring outside, which is used on a timetabled basis everyday. Occasionally, staff plan and provide some meaningful activities, which children enjoy and which support some learning. For example, pre-school children challenge themselves to balance on stepping stones and staff encourage them to count as they step on each one. They also happily take part in a game of 'What time is it Mr Wolf?' They are sufficiently supported to match the number of their steps to small numbers shouted out and they anticipate with excitement when the wolf will shout 'dinnertime' and begin to chase them. More able and confident children are encouraged to take on the lead role, however, staff fail to continue to offer support and children quickly lose interest.

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

The last inspection took place very shortly after new directorship of the nursery. Since that time, in an effort to drive up quality, the nursery has been through a significant period of change. This has resulted in almost half the staff team leaving the nursery. Seeking to maintain required staffing ratios, a number of supply staff have been used until permanent replacement staff have been employed. This has meant a considerable number of different adults working with children and it has been unsettling for some. In the process of re-evaluating staff skills, managers have redeployed staff to new rooms. This has meant further disruption to the key person system for some children. The new relationships within the staff team has also resulted at times in a lack of communication. This has led to not all staff being fully aware of children's individual needs. For example, on one recent occasion a child's nappy was not changed during their session at nursery. The disruption in the key person system has also meant that children's learning and development has not

been consistently promoted. However, new leaders, including the Early Years Professional, are already addressing the issues with the key person system. They are also systematically working through every child's limited records to establish new clear information about their current care and learning needs to give new key persons a clear starting point. Some rooms are now more stable than others. The baby room is consistently staffed with three key persons, who know children well. As a result, babies have formed clear attachments and when needed they seek out their familiar adults for reassurance, demonstrating who they feel safe with. The sense of security they have developed enables them to explore with confidence. They enjoy staff involvement in play alongside them. These relationships and the resulting interaction extend the possibilities for their learning.

Issues with staff deployment hinder the management of children's behaviour, their safety and their well-being. On occasion qualified staff leave unqualified colleagues working alone with children. Additionally, children who need individual support and supervision occasionally access equipment in unsafe ways when their allocated adult is needed to support other aspects of the organisation of the room in which they are based. The premises is generally well-maintained and staff have a clear awareness of any hazards. Recent fire safety training has increased their awareness of checking and emergency procedures. However, they do not always use what they know to raise children's awareness of staying safe. For example, despite staff coning off some slippery unsafe steps in the outside area, staff use them in full view of children and occasionally they also support children to use them. This sends mixed messages about wanted behaviours and also about taking unsafe risks.

Children's health needs are not consistently met. While recent improvements have been made, procedures for administering required medication have not always been rigorously implemented. This has on occasion led to children not receiving the medicine they need. Suitable systems are in place to ensure staff only give children medicines when requested and signed for by their parents. However, legal requirements have been breached when staff have not kept records of the medicines they have administered. Staff do not always fully understand children's needs because they do not know them well enough. For example, during the inspection staff generally oversee children's safety in the bathroom and are not focused on children's individual needs. They fail to notice when a very young pre-school child chooses to use a potty instead of a toilet. They also fail to notice when the child attempts to empty it by themselves, which results in its contents being spilled. Children are mostly well-nourished and thoroughly enjoy the meals and snacks provided. Meals are freshly prepared on the premises and the nursery has received 5 stars in its food hygiene rating. Children are provided with access to drinking water so they can refresh themselves whenever they are thirsty. Good use is made of the outside play area, which means children access fresh air and sunlight necessary for their good health everyday. Additionally, when possible, babies are taken out for walks using prams so they can explore the local community and the world around them.

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

This inspection was carried out after a number of concerns were raised with Ofsted in relation to the quality of provision for children, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safe practice. This inspection found deterioration in standards largely due to the significant changes that have taken place. This has resulted in considerable staff changes, which have led to children's needs not being consistently met and their well-being ineffectively supported. Safeguarding practice is not always rigorous. Recruitment and selection procedures have not always been carried out in the safest way. Gaps in information have not been probed, which means the provider cannot fully demonstrate staff suitability, particularly with regard to checking previous employment history. However, arrangements for obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service checks are largely sound. This inspection has also found weaknesses in staff deployment and medication procedures. These significant weaknesses in practice are breaches in the safeguarding requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and some are also breaches of the requirements of the Childcare Register. Children are secure in the nursery. All entrances from the reception area are accessed using a key coded system and closed circuit television is monitored in the office. Child protection procedures are sound and the new management team have appropriately prioritised the monitoring of all information to ensure they are fully aware of children and families who need support and intervention. All staff have attended safeguarding training, some at a higher than basic level and almost every member of staff holds a current paediatric first aid certificate.

Very recently, a new Early Years Professional has been employed to manage the nursery and to support the work of the new directors. In a very short space of time together the new management team have accurately evaluated and identified some of the priorities they need to address. They have already addressed weaknesses in nappy changing procedures and implemented a recording system so staff can check that all children have been changed frequently enough. They know that learning and development requirements have not been consistently met. Through their monitoring of learning journey records they have identified that children with very low starting points have not always been identified and targeted to support their progress. They know staff have lacked understanding of how to plan to support children's progress and they know that the lack of any meaningful, continual monitoring has left it difficult for them to see if and where there are gaps in children's development. They have been working towards addressing areas for improvement raised at the last inspection; however, progress with most has been hindered by staffing issues and changes. They demonstrate a clear drive and determination to improve the quality of the provision for children, particularly in relation to teaching and learning. The Early Years Professional has been leading some practice, particularly in pre-school, which has led to more secure routines and higher expectations of children's behaviour. However, as yet staff are unable to sustain this new organisation when she leaves to monitor and support other rooms. Remaining staff indicate they are slowly beginning to see improvements and have confidence in the management's ability to support them in delivering suitable provision. Staff training and development has, quite rightly, been a key focus. The provider has sought to recruit some staff with higher level qualifications and experience. Some impact of this strategy is already being seen, for example, improvements already made to provision for babies. However, it is too soon to see any further impact due to the very recent appointments of staff with areas of expertise and recent changes to practice not yet being securely embedded. Early

indications are, however, that their plans for improvement are largely accurate and well-targeted and this demonstrates that given time they have the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

Partnership working has not always been secure. Communication with parents has on occasion lapsed and as a result, parents have been unsure of the changes taking place in the nursery, which has led to concerns about the impact on their children. The nursery's complaints procedure is clear and managers have strived to address concerns raised directly with them. Parents also report to the nursery that they do not always receive enough information about their child's learning and ways to support them at home. This has been an area staff have been working to improve. Baby room staff complete daily diary sheets, which now give parents clear information about their child's day. Managers have ensured that they have carried out the progress check at age two for every relevant child and are beginning to involve parents in this process. Parents have been asked to contribute more about children's learning at home using the 'wow' boards displayed. They are provided with a wealth of information about how the nursery operates through the many displays in the welcoming reception. This includes information about local support, for example, children's centres, which the new management team have started to make links with. The nursery works closely with other professionals involved in children's care and learning, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- implement effective systems to ensure that the manager of the later years provision and any person caring for or in regular contact with children is suitable to work with children, which must include obtaining an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, is of integrity and good character and has skills and experience suitable for the work (Compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- keep records of any medicine administered to any child who is cared for on the premises, including the date and circumstances and who administered it, including medicine which the child is permitted to self-administer, together with a record of a parent/guardian/carer's consent. (Compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- implement effective systems to ensure that the manager of the later years provision and any person caring for or in regular contact with children is suitable to work with children, which must include obtaining an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, is of integrity and good character and has skills and

experience suitable for the work (Voluntary part of the Childcare Register

- keep records of any medicine administered to any child who is cared for on the premises, including the date and circumstances and who administered it, including medicine which the child is permitted to self-administer, together with a record of a parent/guardian/carer's consent. (Voluntary part of the Childcare Register)

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	EY271791
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	959330
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	111
Number of children on roll	85
Name of provider	Amber's Attic Ltd
Date of previous inspection	20/11/2013
Telephone number	0161 723 1555

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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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