

Silks Farm Nursery School

St. Ives Road, Somersham, HUNTINGDON, Cambridgeshire, PE28 3ET

Inspection date

12/05/2014

Previous inspection date

03/07/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Strong partnerships and effective communication between parents and nursery staff help to ensure children's care and learning needs are very well met.
- Staff use their teaching skills well to motivate and engage children in their learning experiences, which supports their good progress.
- Children are protected from harm because managers and staff have a thorough understanding of safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Children's progress in communication and language is very good, due to purposeful conversations with skilful staff and ample opportunities to explore stories, songs and rhymes.
- Children's healthy growth is supported well through nutritious home-cooked meals and snacks.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Younger children's opportunities to benefit from outdoor learning experiences are not fully exploited because they are not always enabled to make their own choices about whether to play indoors or out.
- There is scope to enhance children's independence through daily, practical activities and routines.

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 the children indoors and out during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with staff and looked at the children's learning records.
- A range of documentation was examined, including details of staff suitability checks and qualifications, policies and procedures and the self-evaluation.
- A meeting was held with the senior management team to look at monitoring processes, supervisions and underpinning management procedures.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents and looked at parent surveys to check their views on the quality of the provision.

Inspector

Veronica Sharpe

Full report

Information about the setting

Silks Farm Nursery School is one of seven settings. It opened in 1995 and has been under the current ownership since 2008. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It operates from a converted barn between the village of Somersham and St Ives, Cambridgeshire. The nursery is open each week day from 7am until 7pm throughout the year. All children share access to two enclosed outdoor play areas, nature reserve and surrounding grounds. The nursery is currently caring for 152 children, some of whom attend part time. The nursery provides early years funding for eligible two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language. The nursery employs 22 staff, 14 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The manager holds a level 4. Three members of staff are improving their qualifications. The nursery also employs a cook and cleaning staff. It is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review routines to enable younger children to move between the indoor and outdoor areas according to their individual preferences and enhance their learning experiences
- enhance children's independence by increasing their already good opportunities to undertake practical tasks on an everyday basis, such as preparing and serving their own foods and getting ready for outdoor play.

Inspection judgements

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

Children become motivated and enthusiastic learners because staff know them well and plan activities and routines that closely match their individual interests. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, for example, staff tailor story times to exactly the right level for the children involved. As a result, children are enthralled throughout and develop a positive attitude to learning. The physical environment has been carefully thought out, enabling children of all ages to easily access toys and equipment to encourage their individual stage of development. For example, babies have walkers and sturdy furniture available to support their early attempts at toddling. Staff effectively promote children's communication and language from the outset. They engage with young children well, using good eye contact and establishing close relationships. They repeat the sounds that babies and very young children make and talk to them about their activities.

This sets up good habits for the future, helping to ensure children make good progress. As children grow, their language skills extend as staff teach them new songs and rhymes and engage in more complex two-way conversations. This prepares them well for the next stage of their learning. Older children's readiness for school is demonstrated well by their competent communication skills. They express themselves confidently and show a keen understanding of conversational skills. During role play, for instance, they assign roles to each other and competently negotiate and agree their scenarios. Enjoyable phonic sessions support children's learning as they begin to read and recognise letters and sounds. Staff value children's home languages. They obtain information from parents and display key words and phrases around the room. Assessments take into account children's ability to use their home language, ensuring there is an accurate understanding of their development in English. Some staff are skilled at sign language, which is used well to further support children's inclusion in activities. As a result, all children make good progress, given their starting points.

Children in all areas have good opportunities to develop their early writing skills. Babies benefit from sensory play that promotes their physical development, such as finger painting, or using sand and water. Older children make independent use of well-equipped mark-making stations, where they choose from a wide range of writing materials. Staff are good role models, using paper and pens alongside the children. Clipboards and writing materials are deployed in all areas, so children can spontaneously write as a normal part of their play. As a result, by the time they are ready for school, children are confident to attempt their names, and many use recognisable letters. Children's understanding of the world is supported well. Staff and children collect eggs from the nursery chickens and make practical use of them in recipes. They explore the characteristics of giant African land snails and engage in discussions about their food and habitat. The wider grounds of the nursery are used to teach children about wildlife and nature. They turn over logs to look for bugs and find spring flowers. Staff extend these experiences to consolidate children's learning, for example, they help children to take photographs and plan related activities, such as representational drawings. Staff use routine activities to promote children's understanding of mathematics, for example, they join cooking activities where they learn to count, weigh and measure.

From the start, parents share information about their children's learning through discussion and written contributions. They complete a detailed 'all about me' form when their children first start, so starting points are clearly understood. Staff develop flexible weekly plans from their observations of children's achievements and interests. They regularly track children's progress towards the early learning goals, including a progress check when children are two-years-old. Consequently, children's development is monitored well to ensure they meet their expected milestones. A comprehensive learning journal is compiled for each child, which provides a detailed view of their progress and achievements as they grow and develop. Ongoing discussions with parents provide staff with a broad view of children's routines and activities at home. This enables them to plan effectively for children's next steps and ensure they make the best progress possible.

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

Children form close bonds with staff in this warm and friendly nursery. The effective key person system helps to ensure all children soon become settled and happy. Flexible settling-in sessions are used to collect information from parents about children's routines and preferences. As a result, staff understand their care and learning needs and meet them well from the outset. Parents are consulted about any changes to their child's key person and moves between rooms. This gives them confidence and enables children to transfer easily. Children's emotional well-being is obvious as they enjoy affectionate cuddles with staff and turn to them readily for help and support. Older children, in particular, show high levels of self-esteem and confident attitudes. Children gain a good understanding of acceptable behaviour because staff are clear in their expectations. Older children come together for sociable circle times, where they talk about clear rules, such as tidying away resources, reinforcing their understanding. Staff teach children practical skills so they are ready for school, for example, they support them to use toilets and wash their hands independently. Older children help to wash their food dishes after lunch and sometimes prepare their own teas. However, opportunities to extend their self-reliance are not always maximised. For example, older children do not always serve themselves at lunchtimes. Additionally, staff have a tendency to intervene too soon when children are attempting to do things by themselves, such as putting coats and wellington boots on for outdoor play.

The setting is well organised so children in all areas of the nursery freely access good quality resources and develop their independence. Older children play outdoors according to their individual choices for most of the day. As a result, they benefit well from plenty of fresh air and exercise in their preferred learning environment. However, although younger children have daily access to outdoors, occasionally, they tend to go outside at set times, rather than according to their preferences. Therefore their outdoor learning opportunities are not as sustained or spontaneous as those for the older children. Staff in all areas make sure children are appropriately dressed for the weather and encourage them to explore the environment. For example, they support them enthusiastically to play in the rain and jump in puddles.

Children benefit from well-balanced, varied and nutritious snacks and freshly cooked meals, prepared by a qualified cook. Ingredients are mainly organic and locally sourced where possible. Meal times are taken in children's key groups, enabling them to spend time with their special companions and their key person. Younger babies have their meals appropriately mashed or chopped and are thoroughly supervised to ensure they eat safely. Good hygiene is well maintained so that children learn healthy habits. Children learn to minimise hazards as they risk assess their outdoor games and practise safety procedures, such as the fire drill.

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

Managers and staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues. They all attend regular child protection training and review the policies and procedures at team meetings to extend and sustain their ability to protect children. All staff hold first aid qualifications to promote children's health and safety if there are minor accidents. Staff

deployment is good, ensuring children are supervised during their play to keep them safe. The leadership and management of the nursery is effective because senior managers are passionate about raising the quality of the provision. They transmit their enthusiasm to staff, who show good morale and a strong commitment to the nursery. Performance management arrangements are clear, helping leaders to identify staff strengths and work together to address areas for development. In-house and external training courses enable staff to continually develop their skills. For example, some staff are attending Forest School training so they are well equipped to support children's learning in the new woodland areas.

The management team oversee the planning and delivery of the educational programme to ensure all children are making expected progress. Staff know the children well and this helps them to identify children at risk of delay and implement individual learning plans to support their ongoing development. Ambitious self-evaluation helps the nursery prioritise and develop more effective working. Parents and children are asked for their views and staff contribute their individual expectations. This leads to effective action plans that support staff to enhance their practice. For example, there is a new focus on reducing the paperwork connected with observation and assessment so there is more time spent on practical teaching. This helps to ensure all children make good progress in their learning and development.

Strong partnerships with parents contribute well to children's sense of security. Parents are extremely positive about the staff and praise them for being warm and friendly. During recent changes in the nursery they have shown solid support and say they have been kept well informed. Staff communicate with parents effectively through daily conversations, feedback sheets and the web-based social networking site. Parents confirm staff listen to them and respond to their comments and concerns. For example, in response to parents' requests, newsletters are issued more regularly and open days have been arranged. As a result, parents are more closely involved in their children's learning. Well-established partnership arrangements with other settings enable continuity of learning and confident transitions for children moving on to the next stage of their learning. The nursery engages with other agencies to effectively support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as speech and language specialists.

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	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	EY387704
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	873927
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	94
Number of children on roll	152
Name of provider	Magic Nurseries A Ltd
Date of previous inspection	03/07/2009
Telephone number	01487843525

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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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Piccadilly Gate
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