

Artisans Kindergarten

Artisans Kindergarten, Crabtree Fields Scout HQ, Waldergrave Park, Harpenden, AL5 5SF

Inspection date	24/04/2014
Previous inspection date	20/05/2009

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

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- The quality and consistency of teaching is exceptional as staff have an excellent knowledge of how children learn. This is supported through the precise and accurate assessment and planning that is in place for individual children to ensure they make outstanding progress.
- The inspirational and highly motivated manager and staff continually update their professional development by attending purposeful training courses. They incorporate what they learn into their practice so that children's experiences are enhanced even more.
- The promotion of children's independence is at the heart of the care and education of children. This effectively promotes their personal, social and emotional development. The excellent partnerships with parents and external agencies ensure that individual needs are very well known and extremely well met.
- The manager and her staff carry out very detailed monitoring and evaluation of practice. This means that there are continuous developments made to this outstanding nursery, which benefits children's learning.

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 both indoors and in the outside play area.
- The inspector looked at a selection of children's records, policies and procedures and a range of other documentation used to provide information to parents.
The inspector held meetings with the manager and spoke to members of staff and children during activities. She also checked staff's qualifications and their suitability records.
- The inspector looked at a sample of children's learning records, planning documentation and the system used for monitoring children's progress.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Full report

Information about the setting

Artisans Kindergarten registered in 2008 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is owned and managed by Tasty Tales Limited and follows the Montessori ethos of teaching. The nursery operates from a Scout headquarters located in a residential area of Harpenden. It serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area for outdoor play. The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold Qualified Teacher Status, two hold Early Years Professional Status and nine hold a Montessori teaching qualification. A cook is also employed. The nursery opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am until 4.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 96 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- implement the plans to enhance the already successful teaching of communication and language by extending the access to books outdoors.

Inspection judgements

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

The experienced and highly skilled staff have an excellent knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Every child is highly valued and respected in this vibrant and stimulating setting. Staff assess and identify children's starting points and ongoing developmental stages extremely well. They undertake regular observations and precise assessments of the children and use this information to plan for their individual next steps in learning. The assessment and tracking of children's progress is a key element to this highly effective, child-led nursery. Staff continually monitor and evaluate children's interactions and developmental progress. This includes the progress check at age two to ascertain children's achievements, and this is also shared with parents. Staff have recently implemented a software program to enhance their monitoring methods. This is highly effective. For example, all staff are able to quickly see each child's next steps in their learning, and they enthusiastically contribute to this throughout the day. Parents state that they love the online access, which provides them with a broad range of information about their children's progress and the next steps in their learning. They feel very happy to share their children's achievements outside of the nursery. As a result, they are extremely involved in their children's learning.

The quality of teaching is exceptional. Staff use highly effective Montessori methods to support children's learning. They expertly use their experience as qualified teachers to facilitate and inspire children's independent learning. Staff harness children's interests and ideas very effectively, and are excellent role models for children. For example, they ensure children are heavily involved in the planning of the exciting activities. Recently they enjoyed creating a water play feature and a 'sound wall'. The children delight in experimenting with various lengths of tubes, a wide range of funnels and different sized containers to create the water feature. They use their curiosity to discover how to successfully operate the new construction. The inspired learning takes place because staff are committed and passionate about providing an environment that supports active and independent learning. Excellent adult support interests and absorbs the children in their chosen activities. Thoughtful open questions are used throughout children's activities. This extends their thoughts and ideas for further learning. Children are provided with ample meaningful opportunities to write for a purpose. For example, they independently create labels to identify seeds planted. Children are able to access books both indoors and outside; this supports their communication skills. These are further supported by the plans to create further opportunities for children to access books in all popular outdoor learning spaces.

Children's stimulating and challenging range of activities include a comprehensive range of exciting Montessori resources to investigate. They are inspired to explore practical life activities, such as buttons and zips. This supports children's hand-eye coordination and contributes to them developing excellent independence skills as they move on in their learning, such as starting school. They build towers with deep concentration and are successfully helped to discover how to extend their own learning. Small group activities enable even the youngest child to concentrate on completing their chosen tasks. Children's home languages and cultural backgrounds are highly valued. Some staff are fluent in some languages used by children and their families. Parents are well informed about the importance of using first languages, and are invited to share stories and songs with the children. This helps children to make connections in their learning. Children requiring additional support to achieve are extremely well supported so that they can fully participate in all activities. There is a very strong partnership with parents and carers, with a strong flow of information between both parties. The manager and her staff use a variety of methods to engage parents in their children's welfare and learning. This joint approach supports all children extremely well to make very rapid and exceptional progress towards the early learning goals.

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

Children thrive in this vibrant, stimulating and welcoming nursery. Staff work extremely well together to ensure children are sensitively supported to settle happily into the nursery. For example, they use carefully planned introductions and flexible settling-in sessions. As a result, transitions from home to the nursery run very smoothly and there is excellent continuity of care. Children's key persons work in pairs and take great care to ensure they build close working relationships and from the start. Parents receive a wealth of information about how the nursery operates before their child starts and during their time at the setting. This includes information about how children's welfare and safety are

a highly promoted. For example, any children returning from a period of absence are extremely well supported to ensure their needs are met, and that they continue to thrive. Key persons have an excellent understanding of all children's individual care needs and routines. All children form exceptionally close bonds with their key persons, which supports their emotional well-being exceedingly well. As a result, children are settled and exceptionally happy in their care. For example, children of all ages demonstrate that they have high levels of confidence when they independently explore the extensive range of resources. They make choices and decisions about their play, both indoors and in the stimulating outdoor play area. Excellent links with local schools ensure children are emotionally very well prepared for the move when the time comes. The purposeful use of photograph books showing children their new schools and visits from teachers contribute to the smooth transition times.

Staff encourage positive behaviour by calmly engaging with children so that they develop skills to play harmoniously with each other. Children are taught from an early age to recognise and begin to understand their emotions and those of others. Older children confidently help younger ones to understand right and wrong. As a result, children's personal, social and emotional development is highly promoted. The creation of 'feelings' books and small group activities also contributes highly to this. Consequently, children are extremely confident, independent and self-assured individuals. Children learn to keep themselves safe and effectively learn to take risks in a safe manner. For example, with staff's help, children discover how to successfully link challenging play items together without harming themselves or their friends.

Children enjoy nutritious meals which are freshly prepared on the premises. These often include herbs and vegetables, which the children grow in the garden. Children are highly involved in the preparation of meals. For example, they show great care as they help to lay cutlery, plates and flowers on the table. They pour their own drinks, independently manage their aprons and develop excellent self-care skills in managing their personal hygiene needs. All staff follow good hygiene practices. For example, all areas used by children are maintained to a very high standard. Children's physical health and development are promoted extremely well as staff provide them with ample opportunities for fresh air and exercise. For example, they benefit from a partially covered, vibrant outdoor area which they have free-flow access to. In addition, staff skilfully use the nearby nature area to extend children's learning and development. They always ensure children wear appropriate clothing so that their welfare needs are highly protected.

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

The manager and her staff are inspirational. This is due to their strong drive and commitment to maintain the already excellent standards of care and education provided for all children who attend the nursery. A previous recommendation to increase opportunities for children's independence during mealtimes has been fully addressed. All staff are passionate about providing high quality care and education during all aspects of the children's day. They have an excellent knowledge of how to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All staff have undertaken

safeguarding training and have a thorough understanding of what to do should they have concerns about a child. They implement a wide range of strategies to ensure children are extremely well protected. Robust recruitment procedures ensure all those working with children are safe to do so. Excellent induction systems include information regarding the use of mobile phones, cameras and social media sites. Rigorous monitoring of staff means that professional development is at the heart of this nursery. For example, regular discussions, appraisals, high quality supervision and purposeful peer observations mean that staff are constantly improving the already outstanding practice. Thorough risk assessments and excellent awareness of staff regarding children's individual needs mean that they are extremely safe and secure.

The manager has an excellent knowledge of the skills of her staff and they are effectively deployed so that children's needs are met. She always ensures there is a high ratio of experienced staff on duty. This has a strong impact to children's care and learning. The manager and staff have a superb understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The outstanding standard of teaching by all staff results in children being highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. Consequently, all children are making excellent progress in their learning and development given their starting points. Monitoring of children's education programmes is consistent and robust so that there is a high focus on their achievements. The overall monitoring of the nursery practice is sharply focused to bring about continual developments to benefit children's learning. For example, there are plans to increase children's involvement in the day-to-day planning of activities. Views of staff, parents and children are included in the monitoring process and these are highly valued.

Staff work extremely well with parents and carers to ensure children's individual needs are exceptionally well met. There are many opportunities available in order for parents to discuss their children's care and learning, such as the interactive record system. In addition, the flexible drop-off and collection times mean that there are always senior staff and key persons readily available to discuss any issues. Consequently, parents are able to have purposeful discussions with staff about any matters regarding their children. Any concerns raised by parents are taken seriously and fully investigated to ensure that an agreed solution is fully implemented. Parents' comments are extremely positive; they state that 'the staff are great' and 'my child has grown in confidence since coming'. The entrance area has an abundance of useful information for parents to read. In addition, there is a parents' forum where views are gathered to share with the staff so that the nursery continually maintains high standards. Partnership working with external agencies and professionals, such as speech and language therapists and staff based in the local schools, is excellent. They visit the nursery, and information is actively shared so that any additional support is implemented to aid children's learning and development. Staff specialising in supporting children with special education needs and/or disabilities are extremely knowledgeable. They are passionate in providing the best possible opportunities for children. As a result, all children make excellent progress in their learning given their starting points. They are extremely well prepared for their next stage in their learning, such as starting school.

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	EY376536
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	959622
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	96
Name of provider	Tasty Tales Limited
Date of previous inspection	20/05/2009
Telephone number	01582 768 428

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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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