

Chives Montessori School

Akenham Studios, Akenham, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 0HL

Inspection date	08/07/2014
Previous inspection date	19/04/2013

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

- There are several breaches of requirements. Management is weak and ineffective in identifying weaknesses and taking effective action to minimise hazards and make improvements. As a result, some areas of the premises are poorly maintained, unsafe and unhygienic.
- The quality of partnership working and care for children with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities is unacceptable. Too little is known about their individual needs and there is no contingency plan when their key person is absent. As a result, this does not support the provision of continuous care for children.
- Staff do not plan effectively for all of the children in the setting. Assessment and tracking of children is inconsistent and does not accurately reflect their levels of achievement. Therefore, children do not make good progress.
- Children do not have continuity of care and are unable to form effective bonds and attachments as the key-person system is not effective.
- Children are not adequately protected, as there is a poor understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements, including child protection arrangements.

It has the following strengths

- Children enjoy fresh air and exercise every day in the outside area.

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 interacted with children and observed activities in the playrooms and in the outside area.
- The inspector held discussions with various staff members, the provider and the manager, and carried out a joint observation with the manager in the garden.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation, including evidence of staff checks, policies and children's development profiles.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection.

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full report

Information about the setting

Chives Montessori School was registered in 1989 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in the hamlet of Akenham, close to Ipswich in Suffolk, and is privately owned and managed. The setting serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three main classrooms and there is an enclosed garden available for outdoor play. The setting employs 13 members of childcare staff, 10 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The setting opens Monday to Friday all year round, from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 68 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The setting provides funded early education for three-year-old children. A number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend, and some who speak English as an additional language. The setting uses the Montessori approach to education for children aged two years and above.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take the following enforcement action:

We will issue a welfare requirements notice requiring the provider to;

ensure that the premises, including outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose and that toys and equipment and spaces used by children are safe, suitable, and hygienically maintained

assess the risk to children's safety and take action to minimise the risk; in particular with regard to the use of specialist care equipment, medication, the consumption of hot drinks in close proximity to children, broken buggies and a play tunnel with protruding wires and sharp edges, a wooden boat with splinters and protruding nails and screws, items left in children's bags, sun protection, the risk of children's fingers being trapped in doors, the sleeping arrangements for babies and the tripping hazard from frayed carpets

ensure that the designated safeguarding lead has attended an appropriate child protection training course that enables them to identify and respond to signs of possible abuse and neglect

deploy staff effectively to meet children's needs and maintain their safety through appropriate supervision

implement a policy and procedures to promote equality of opportunity for children, including support for children with special educational needs or disabilities which includes how the individual needs of all children will be met, the name of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices

review the key-person system to ensure that it effectively supports children and families by building a relationship that allows every child's care to be tailored to their specific needs

obtain and share information with parents, carers and other professionals working with the child to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.

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

- ensure appropriate arrangements are in place staff for the regular supervision and monitoring of all staff to foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement
- carry out regular staff appraisals to address weaknesses and promote individual staff's professional development
- ensure that for children aged under two, at least one member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification and has suitable experience in working with children under two; and, at least half of other staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification
- ensure that minimum indoor space requirements are adhered to in all rooms at all times
- take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises, for example, by implementing an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors
- ensure a written procedure for dealing with concerns is in place and keep a written record of any complaints and their outcome
- link with, and help families to access, relevant services from other agencies where a child has a special educational need and requires support
- monitor staff to ensure they respond to children's emerging needs and interests and monitor the use and provision of sufficient, stimulating and age-appropriate equipment as children play
- ensure that assessments of children's abilities and achievement are accurate and effectively identify any gaps in development; use the information from assessment to address gaps in learning and provide experiences which promote children's good progress

- ensure that when children require medication this is administered correctly by trained staff who have the required technical knowledge
- ensure an adequate number of toilets are available to meet the needs of the children
- take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children on the premises in case of fire.

Inspection judgements

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

Not all children make sufficient progress in their learning and development because their specific individual needs are not fully met. This is in relation to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for whom the support of their learning is not effective. For example, some children with identified additional needs have no specific educational plan in place to address their unique needs and help them progress in their development. Assessments are inaccurate and the lack of efficient tracking means that records do not reflect what stage children have reached and what they need to do next.

Children aged over two years follow a Montessori approach to their education, although at the present time, few staff have been specifically trained to deliver the Montessori approach. Children have access to resources; the materials are stored around the room at low-level, and staff follow the child's lead as they choose what to engage with. A weekly programme of letter sounds, colours and shapes forms part of the daily activities, and planned activities such as cooking complement and extend children's learning. A gardening club introduces children to plants and cultivation, and they learn some of the things they need to know about caring for living things. For example, children show they understand and think about the activity, saying 'plants need water or they will die'. Overall, the outside learning environment lacks sufficient stimulating choice for children, and some resources are of poor quality and lacklustre. Staff do not plan for, or make good use of, the outside area and resources to promote all areas of learning as expected by the setting, nor do they interact well with children to support their learning. Therefore, they miss opportunities to extend learning or make it more interesting for children by introducing vocabulary or imaginative resources. In addition, staff do not offer sufficient support to encourage children who have English as an additional language to use their home language in their play.

Care and learning for the under two year olds follows the Early Years Foundation Stage but does not use the Montessori approach as specified in the information for parents. Planning is weak, and the care of children is routine based rather than led by high quality, well thought-out planning and stimulating interaction. For example, topics such as 'nursery rhymes' are followed but staff lack sufficient understanding of how to link children's

developmental needs into the activities. These are not well thought through, or used to provide effective challenge and motivation for the children to engage and learn well.

Observations and photographs form the basis of a development profile for each child. It is the key person's responsibility to maintain this record and share it with parents so that they can continue the learning at home. The quality of the development profiles is very inconsistent, and, since many children are moved from key person to key person frequently, the assessments are often inaccurate. For example, some of the children's progress checks for children between the ages of two and three years are not robust and demonstrate that children are not being assessed correctly. This means the assessment system is not effective in tracking children and helping them make good progress in their learning and development in all cases. For some children, too little is done to prepare them for school readiness, as not enough is known about their needs and how to help them make progress.

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

The key-person system is not embedded. Many children have had several changes to key persons. This is because staff are deployed in different rooms throughout the week due to higher numbers of children attending on certain busy days. This, combined with rapid staff turnover, results in little continuity of care for children. This affects children's ability to form emotional attachments. Some staff caring for babies are unqualified, and lack the expertise and experience to enable them to effectively care for and respond to the child's immediate needs. For example, a baby who cried with what was interpreted to be teething pain, was soothed and distracted, but the toy he had in his mouth was removed and not replaced with a suitable teething toy. In particular, the care for children with what is, in some cases complex medical and specific educational needs, was not managed well. The key person who is assigned to more than one of these children also works as a staff member caring for other children; therefore, she is expected to divide her time between too many children. When she is unavailable, a different member of staff has not been identified to take responsibility for the children with special educational needs; therefore in practice, continuity for their care is ineffective.

Not all staff are aware of, or able to take action to minimise, risks to children. For example, there is no coherent policy with regard to the application of suncream. Children bring suncream from home but staff do not use this as they expect this to be applied before they arrive but the lack of a coherent policy means this cannot be assured. Staff do not apply any in the afternoon when children are outside, where little shade is provided. Fire drills are carried out but at infrequent intervals, just twice a year, and never when children are sleeping or at mealtimes. The records show that the evacuation routinely takes between seven and twelve minutes. Weaknesses in the process, such as children stopping to put on their shoes, are not addressed. This means that children are not effectively protected in the case of an emergency evacuation. Some aspects of the premises and resources are not safe or hygienic. There are only two toilets for children's use, which does not meet the requirement for one toilet for every 10 children over two years of age attending. The changing area is not kept clean as cleaning routines are not monitored effectively. Floors throughout are not cleaned well and there is mould on the

walls in one room. Frayed carpets pose a hazard to children, and accidents are not monitored well to minimise potential hazards of children using doors.

Children eat their meals and snacks in one room, adjacent to the kitchen. Currently, the lunchtime session is not organised in a way that meets children's needs well. For example, the routine is unnecessarily lengthy, resulting in unproductive time for children. Noise levels rise and there is a deterioration in behaviour as children are kept sitting for too long with nothing to do. Children's independence is not promoted as they are told where to sit and the meals are presented to them ready plated. Staff hand out cutlery and pour the drinks. Staff do not consistently ensure that children try to eat some of their food, or offer an alternative when a child does not like what they are given. As a result, some children, who are less able to communicate their needs, do not have a nutritious meal. The menus are not planned in advance and fresh fruit and vegetables are not planned for daily. For example, meals, such as pasta and baked beans, followed by a yogurt, was offered on the day of the inspection. Children use the outside area for play each day. The outside area has hard surfaces for riding bikes and scooters, and grass areas where children can run and play, or use the slide and climbing frame. There is a sand tray, and children can continue their learning of how things grow as water is available in a water butt so children can water the flowers. However, there is no planning in place for the outside area, and staff do not make good use of available resources, such as the baskets stored in the shed, the choice of activities is limited. There are some prams and buggies, but no dolls or blankets to extend the role play. The sand tray has a few spades but no containers. Other resources to support children's interest in other areas of learning are not made use of, for example, books or writing materials are not brought outside. Staff show little enthusiasm or initiative in extending children's learning by showing them how to use the toys or equipment imaginatively. This means a large part of every day is not used to promote children's development effectively. In addition, unsafe equipment is not removed in a timely way, exposing children to risk of harm from dangerous toys. Little thought goes into the baby room in terms of setting out resources which are appealing or age-appropriate. The role play units in the room are too tall and there is nothing in the cupboards, which does not support them to use their imagination in role play. Treasure baskets are out of reach so children cannot freely explore natural and household objects. The room lacks sufficient choices to enable all the children in this age group to be stimulated and engaged productively. Staff are unclear about the learning intentions of the topics and available resources so children's development is not fully promoted.

Some steps are taken to help children be prepared for the transition to school or their next setting. The reception teachers visit them and meet them in advance, so they have some idea about the changes ahead. Within the nursery, children change rooms and become familiar with different parts of the setting. However, because the key-person system is ineffective, parents are not always informed who their child's new key person is, and staff do not do either a verbal or written handover about the children's learning to the next key person. This means that assessment and planning for individual children is inconsistent. Many of the policies adopted by the nursery are not followed and contain out-of-date or incorrect information. This gives a false impression to parents who read them to gain an understanding of how their children are cared for, such as what type of learning approach will be used.

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

There are several breaches of the early years safeguarding and welfare requirements which have a significant impact on the care and education of children. There are also breaches of the Childcare Register. This inspection was prioritised when Ofsted received information which gave cause for concern. This related in particular to the care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and security at the nursery. Poor staff deployment resulted in a member of staff, who was caring for a child's specific needs, leaving a child unsupervised in order to attend to something else. As a result, medication was left on the floor, accessible to other children. It was also left in sunlight when it needed to be refrigerated. This resulted in care needs for children not being sufficiently met and staff not following required guidance for the use of medication. Care professionals were able to gain access to the premises and were not required to sign either in or out on more than one occasion. Therefore, the systems for ensuring the security of children and checking the identity of visitors are ineffective. The inspection found that the care routines for some children are poorly managed and fail to ensure that their needs are adequately and safely met. Staff deployment is at times haphazard and does not allow for adequate levels of supervision of children. For example, although there are sufficient staff on the premises to care for children, when the incident happened they were not deployed well to ensure there were sufficient staff to manage children's needs in the outdoor area. As a result, care needs are mismanaged. There is inconsistency and no effective contingency arrangements for children with complex and specific needs, so, if their key person is absent, their care is fragmented. Knowledge of the children's specific care routines is not shared effectively among staff. The inspection also found that standards of safety and hygiene were not adequate. Staff routinely have hot drinks in close proximity to children, such as when they are on duty in the garden and helping them on the slide. This puts children at risk from scalding by the hot drinks. Staff take a 'working break' and therefore have their drinks with them.

Toys and equipment in the outside area are not always safe and suitable for children's use. For example, broken buggies and a play tunnel with protruding wires and sharp edges, and a wooden boat with splinters and protruding nails and screws, are accessible to children. Staff fail to identify and minimise these hazards to children's safety. Some staff are disengaged and do not interact with children, they merely watch them. They do not show initiative in setting out interesting resources and have no learning intentions in mind when overseeing an activity, such as sand play.

Cleaning and hygiene practices are not effective, resulting in areas that are not suitable. For example, the changing unit is not properly cleaned and harbours dirt and debris. Wet washing is left in a heap for long periods, contributing to a bad smell which pervades the changing area. Large, full waste bins are stored in the play area, next to the toy store and sand tray. Children can touch them and staff say they have seen evidence of vermin, such as droppings next to the bins. Children are at risk of catching their fingers in any internal or external door as these are unsecured when open. After such an incident, no further risk assessments have been undertaken, or safety measures put in place, as a result. Staff do not routinely check children's bags, which are accessible to children, for unsuitable items.

Most contain suncream, specific to an individual child and not appropriate for another child to be in contact with. Used milk feed bottles, which are unwashed, are also placed in the bags. The walls in one room have black mould growing on them. Spores from this are a health hazard. The carpets are very frayed and worn in one room and this is a tripping hazard. Floors are not washed properly from day to day, and there is food and other debris behind units because the daily cleaning is not thorough. There is no monitoring or checking of the cleaning and the provider was not aware that standards had fallen.

Staff rearranged the cots for sleeping babies, and placed them in the office, in order to create more space in the playroom. A row of buggies, for additional sleeping children, and two large armchairs placed in front of these, mean that an evacuation in the event of a fire or other emergency would be seriously hampered and has not been considered sufficiently as part of the evacuation procedure. Staff made these changes to the furniture arrangements because they had insufficient room to care effectively for the number of babies and toddlers attending. The baby room routinely has far more babies than the floor space permits and does not provide enough space for the staff and children. This breach of safeguarding and welfare requirements seriously impacts on the care and development of the youngest, and some of the most vulnerable, children in the nursery. While there is a system for recording accidents, in many cases there is little detail on the record. There is no monitoring or analysis of the incidence or frequency of types of accident. The manager does not analyse the information to assess how similar accidents can be prevented.

Staff are subject to checks and references before employment. However, recruitment and deployment of staff are not well managed. Both the manager and deputy are counted as room staff, so they cannot effectively manage the day-to-day running of the setting as well as they would like to. The manager has considered areas for development and says she has made many requests to the provider for improvements to the premises, routines and practice in general. However, she feels that most of these requests do not receive attention and remain unmet, leaving her unsupported in making changes. The provider has not taken as active a part as in the past as she has been doing other things over the past year, and has 'taken her eye off the ball' in many respects. Staff are not effectively monitored and supervised. Some staff have had appraisals and some have not. As a result, some staff are unclear about their roles and responsibilities. For example, no staff have completed training to enable them to take the role of designated person for safeguarding. This means that there is no one to ensure that all staff are well informed and able to raise and act on any concerns they may have about any child. This means children could be at risk. There is no special educational needs coordinator in post. No arrangements are in place to ensure that the equal opportunities policy and the care and learning for children with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities is effectively met. Organisation is poor; staff arriving for duty do not know which room they are to be working in. The person in charge of babies is not suitably qualified or experienced to do so, and the qualification levels of the remaining staff in the room do not meet the minimum requirements for the number and ages of children cared for. Records and reviews for children are varied and inconsistent. The key-person system is not effective in building a relationship with the child and their family, so continuity of care is poor. Many assessments and reports for children are not signed or dated; information is not tracked well and information about their progress, and levels of achievement are inaccurate and unreliable. In some cases, next steps in learning set are not meaningful

and do not address serious matters concerning a child's welfare and progress.

Partnership working with parents and with outside professionals is poor in some cases. Children with specialised equipment that needs continual adjustment are not having this need met. This is because staff say they are instructed not to make adjustments to harnesses and chairs before consulting the suppliers of the equipment. The children's specialist care nurses find that children are poorly supported as a result of this discontinuity. Some children with apparent additional needs, and who have undergone professional assessments, are not given the additional care and support they require due to a breakdown in communication with parents. Ways to engage parents are not always successful and result in ineffective sharing of information. As a result, the children's care needs go unmet. Some parents are happy with the care and progress their children make, and say they like the family atmosphere and warmth and approachability of staff. Other parents spoken to during the inspection, have concerns that the standards of hygiene seem to have fallen in recent months. No complaints record is kept, even though there have been several complaints in recent months.

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:

- ensure that the premises and equipment used for the purposes of the childcare are safe and suitable for that childcare (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure a written statement of procedures to be followed in relation to complaints is in place, which relate to the requirements of the Childcare Register and which a parent makes in writing or by email (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that all necessary measures are taken to minimise any identified risks (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that the childcare is inclusive by not treating any child less favourably than another by reason of disability and/or learning difficulty (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).
- ensure that the premises and equipment used for the purposes of the childcare are safe and suitable for that childcare (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure a written statement of procedures to be followed in relation to complaints is in place, which relate to the requirements of the Childcare Register and which a parent makes in writing or by email (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that all necessary measures are taken to minimise identified risks (voluntary

part of the Childcare Register)

- ensure that the childcare is inclusive by not treating any child less favourably than another by reason of disability and/or learning difficulty (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	EY290559
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	980697
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	42
Number of children on roll	68
Name of provider	Carolyn Olive Juliet McNeill
Date of previous inspection	19/04/2013
Telephone number	01473 212448

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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
Store St
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M1 2WD

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