

Seymour House Day Nursery School

Broomfield Hospital Grounds,, Puddings Wood Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 7SS

Inspection date	28/07/2014
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	1 Not Applicable
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

- Children make exceptional progress towards the early learning goals. This is due to the consistently high quality of teaching and the provision of a stimulating environment which promotes their active learning.
- Children thrive and develop under the warm and affectionate care of the qualified and experienced adults looking after them. Children can confidently play and explore as they are secure, and form genuine attachments with their carers.
- The partnership with parents is highly valued and immensely effective in promoting children's development. A wealth of innovative strategies, and well-developed information sharing techniques ensure that all parents play an active part in their child's education and are fully involved at every stage.
- All children are extremely safe and secure because all staff are trained in child protection and demonstrate a deep understanding of how to keep children free from harm and how to maintain a safe and secure environment at all times.
- Inspirational leadership keeps staff morale high and ensures that new initiatives are constantly introduced, in order to maintain the dynamic and constantly evolving nursery environment.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector interacted with children in all the playrooms, and in the outside play areas.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and staff members, and carried out two joint observations with the manager.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation including, evidence of staff checks, some policies and children's development profiles.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection, and gathered in advance through various feedback forms and surveys.

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full report

Information about the setting

Seymour House Day Nursery School was established in 1992 and re-registered in 2014 as a limited company. It is on the Early Years Register and is one of eight nurseries in the group. The nursery operates from a converted coach house within the grounds of Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford, Essex. It opens five days a week, all year round, with the exception of Bank Holidays and one week at Christmas, from 7am until 6pm. There are currently 98 children on roll. Funded early education is available for children aged three and four years. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 16 members of staff, 15 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. One member of staff holds Early Years Professional status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider extending the range of activities and resources to enhance children's environmental awareness and promote a greater understanding of the need for recycling and sustainability.

Inspection judgements

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

Children of all ages make outstanding progress in their learning and development. This is due to the enthusiastic, skilled and dedicated staff, who share their expert knowledge and understanding of how children learn by planning and delivering an exciting programme of stimulating and imaginative activities. Staff know that by tapping into children's interests they can engage and capture their attention and imaginations, and inspire them to think creatively as they participate in activities. For example, recent themed play based on a popular film develops children's vocabulary, mathematical learning, imagination and understanding of basic science. They looked at melting ice, used mini-me puppets to create fantasy scenarios in a miniature 'frozen' world, and focused on the textures of bubble wrap, cotton wool and slippery slime. Throughout the nursery, the playrooms and outside play areas are carefully and thoughtfully resourced, with high quality, age- and size-appropriate furniture and equipment. This provides children with a child-friendly environment and a wide choice of easily accessible resources in all rooms. For example, toddlers can sit at a table with their feet firmly on the ground, comfortably sharing snack time with their peers. When they have finished, they take their own plate and cup, and come back to push in their chair. This shows well-developed levels of independence and self-esteem from a very early age. All children are active learners. They choose resources and make decisions about where they will play and, as a result, they persevere at activities, exploring them fully to gain a deep understanding and improve their skills. For

example, children use the digging area to move soil around and create play scenarios as they pretend to be builders. Wearing the hats and vests provided, they develop complex games and solve problems as they discuss with one another what they are doing. Staff in all rooms show high levels of awareness of how to support children's learning by playing and interacting with them, while understanding the importance of never dominating the play. They make suggestions and use open questions to encourage children to think critically and find solutions to problems. A group of children use play figures and some cardboard houses, talking about the attributes and characteristics of the dolls. The staff member asks, 'who lives in this house?' By encouraging children to think critically and make up their own stories, they gain confidence and satisfaction from simple, open-ended play. Staff working with very young children demonstrate how to use the equipment. For example, they show children how to make sounds by banging the saucepans, and laugh as the children jig about and dance. Children learn about life cycles of both plants and animals. They study frogs and butterflies, and cultivate fruit, vegetables and flowers in a carefully tended garden. They become environmentally aware, seeking out bugs and minibeasts, and examining leaves and plants in the wooded garden area, with the magnifiers provided. However, there is scope to further extend children's understanding of recycling and sustainability of resources, by providing additional features, such as a compost maker. Older children show strong signs that they are being exceptionally well prepared in readiness for school. A regular feature is the 'mystery box' session. This entails children taking turns to bring in an item from home, which is concealed in the mystery box. The staff member leading this session skilfully includes all children, and encourages them to put up their hand when making their guesses. Children take turns and are learning that their contributions to discussions are valued. There is much glee and excitement when the mystery item is finally revealed, and many questions follow as the children probe to find out why it is significant to its owner.

Staff demonstrate their superb teaching skills throughout their interactions with children. For example, they are highly effective when working with children either individually, when helping them play a board game, or when working with children in small groups to learn colour mixing. They never dominate, and always show a keen awareness of the children's stage of development and understanding. In this way, they challenge and stimulate the children to make outstanding progress and improve their skills and knowledge. Children are eager to share their 'learning story' folders, which contain examples of work and comments from staff, showing what each child has achieved. Children can recall precise details of what they did and what their pictures and stories represent. The combination of photographs of home events and nursery activities brings these records to life, and provides an eclectic picture, unique to each child. The nursery group has developed a unique pre-reading scheme, with sounds, word building and early reading books for children who show readiness. This professionally produced set of resources includes carefully considered help for parents to use at home, such as guidance on the pronunciation of phonics sounds. Children enthusiastically use the resources at home as well as in the nursery, and consequently make excellent progress in literacy before they start formal schooling.

Babies have their own bright and cheerful base rooms, specifically furnished and equipped to provide them with a safe and stimulating environment. This promotes their emerging independence exceptionally well. They can crawl into the cosy 'black and white' zone, or

snuggle down on the cushions with a few books. They select good quality toys and resources from the low-level units, and enjoy the choice of indoor or outdoor play as they wish. Fully waterproof, padded crawler suits are provided for those children not yet walking, so they do not miss out on fresh air and outdoor fun. The educational programme for under two-year-olds is broad and balanced, covering all areas of learning. It includes a range of sensory and open-ended activities, such as flour play, which inspire children to be curious and explore. They investigate the flour by touching, tasting it, watching how it moves and forms patterns, or how it reveals coloured paper when they use brushes in it. Their squeals of delight and animated body language clearly demonstrate their pleasure and interest. For pre-verbal children, or those who speak English as an additional language, many successful strategies are employed. These include the use of key vocabulary, signing, pictorial cues, and a commercial translation system which enables stories to be told in a number of different languages. As a result, children from varied cultural backgrounds are completely happy and settled, and confident to engage in their surroundings fully. The partnerships with parents are exceptionally well developed. No opportunity is missed to involve and engage parents at every stage of their child's development. All parents are kept well informed daily with regard to their child's learning, and those who wish can also take advantage of the 'stay and play' sessions offered. These give parents the chance to join in with their child's activities and speak to staff, to deepen their understanding of what, and how, children learn through well-structured play. The nursery successfully supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities by engaging with external agencies and health professionals where appropriate. By fully including all children, and sensitively adapting activities and resources, the best possible progress is made.

Transitions at all stages are managed in a highly professional manner. Children move from one room to the next when they show readiness, and the staged handover allows time for visits and familiarisation so that children are not upset or overawed by the changes. For children approaching school, activities and resources are set up to aid their understanding and encourage them to talk about the move to school. They can try on items of school uniform, practise managing a lunch box, and continue to develop their independence through self-care skills and organising their own belongings. These practical activities complement the ongoing teaching of skills, attitudes and competencies children need to acquire to support and extend their learning. Children leave the nursery with high levels of achievement and a clear understanding of the basics of phonics, word building and initial sounds. They can count and calculate accurately to 20 and beyond, and are articulate and expressive, creative and imaginative in their play. Outside, indicating a hollowed out tree stump with some glitter sprinkled inside, a girl explains in a whispered voice 'that's where the fairies live'. She creates an elaborate fantasy and enters an imaginary world with ease, enjoying her own creativity, and confidently including a visiting adult to share her story.

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

Children develop emotional awareness and demonstrate a very strong sense of belonging. They are happy and settled in this very friendly and exceptionally child-centred environment. Highly effective attachments between children and their key persons, as well as with their peers, ensure that children feel at home and have the confidence to explore

and play freely. From the very first contact, parents and staff work closely together to ensure that all information regarding children's individual care needs is well understood. The initial profile includes all the practical details, as well as information about children's development to date, so staff can begin to plan appropriately challenging activities for the child immediately. Home care routines are followed as far as possible, and parents are advised on a daily feedback sheet about feeding, sleeping and nappy changes, so that they know what children have been doing and to enable continuity of care. Every child has a 'passport' for when they are at the stage of moving to a new room. This ingenious method ensures that the new key person has full information to enable a seamless move for every child. Another transition initiative has proved very successful and popular with parents, due to the fact that children come from a wide area, a large number of primary schools are involved in receiving the children. In order to facilitate their choices of prospective school, a meeting is arranged at the nursery with local authority officials. This serves to provide all the information parents need, at the correct time, to make their selections.

Children are fully engaged in meaningful and worthwhile activities at all times. They understand the routines, rules and standards of behaviour expected of them, and respond very positively to staff's consistent behaviour management. For example, at lunchtime, children wash their hands, select a plate, cup and cutlery, and find their named place at a table. They achieve all this without specific direction from an adult, and wait sensibly for the food to arrive. Mealtimes, therefore, are social and relaxed occasions where children, who are able, serve themselves and gain valuable independence. The food served is nutritious and healthy. The generous lunches are brought in, reheated and served according to children's needs for quantity and consistency. Snack times are also used as a learning opportunity, as children count out how many cubes of cheese they can take and pour their own drinks with increasing skill. Fresh fruit and vegetables feature at every snack and meal time, ensuring children are offered a very well balanced, nutritious diet. Children listen carefully and are given time to respond, for example, when asked a question. Staff caring for babies skilfully interpret their non-verbal communication and care for them warmly and affectionately. For example, they soothe a child to sleep when they show that they are tired, or help them locate their own cup when it is time for a drink.

Children's good health is fully supported and they are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know that they need to wear protective clothing and boots in the garden when it is wet or muddy, but that they also need sun cream and hats on warm days. The garden area includes sturdy, exciting equipment, such as the monkey bars, which challenge children to test their own endurance and strength as they hang and twirl from them. Moveable toys and wheeled items are used imaginatively to transport goods and people around the area, and teach children the basics of negotiating space in a safe way. Any minor accidents are treated by qualified staff. The management undertake an analysis of all accident records every month, so any adaptations can be made if there is an area of the environment, or piece of equipment, that is proving a problem. Any existing injuries are noted and logged, and parents are asked to sign the record when they come to collect the child at home time. This attention to detail ensures that every child's welfare is constantly placed at the forefront of their time spent at nursery.

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

By aspiring to the highest possible standards in all aspects of the nursery's practice, the management team successfully provide care and learning that is inspirational and of consistently exemplary quality. The senior staff embrace their roles using a wealth of knowledge and experience, and so manage the staff team both efficiently and enthusiastically. All staff report that they feel extremely well supported and valued, and have no hesitation in approaching the management with any concerns or enquiries. As a result, there is a very stable team of staff who are ambitious and who strive for excellence every day. Safeguarding of children receives paramount consideration. Robust and well-established procedures for recruitment are in place and fully implemented. This ensures that children are cared for by thoroughly vetted and checked adults, who are appropriately qualified and skilled, and suitable to carry out their care and teaching responsibilities. Security procedures mean that children cannot leave the premises unseen. Additionally, all visitors are subject to scrutiny, with their identity verified. Continuously updated training in child protection means that every staff member is able to respond to concerns about a child, and that appropriate support is provided in a timely fashion.

A highly developed culture of reflection on every aspect of care and learning means that the nursery is constantly evolving and improving. Very focused analysis of aspects of the curriculum, such as communication development at different ages, gives staff the opportunity to unpick an area of their work and examine how they make provision for the children in their care. This model of themed reflective practice has proved successful, with staff sharing ideas and findings, and is continued by looking at other areas in similar depth. The senior management use their monitoring of the quality of teaching as a basis for any training needs, whether informal, online or at an attended course. Staff welcome these opportunities to extend their knowledge and readily support any new initiatives where this will benefit children and improve outcomes, as well as promoting their own professional development. One recent innovation, following a course attended by a staff member, has been a targeted physical play scheme. This uses specialised equipment in particular ways, to promote children's confidence and imaginative expression through movement. Senior staff carefully monitor the quality of all written work produced by staff, such as termly developmental reports, to ensure accuracy and consistency. As a result, the children's development profiles are meticulous and exceptionally professional in appearance and content. Parents' and children's views, ideas and opinions are constantly sought and taken into account within the rigorous, ongoing self-evaluation. This established process serves to identify strengths, and highlights areas where improvements and enhancements can be made to the already outstanding quality of care and learning. Current priorities include extending the parent library, inviting a wider range of professionals and visitors to enhance children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and building on practices to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as updated procedures due to revised legislation are implemented nationally.

The exemplary partnerships with parents and external agencies ensure that every child receives the care and nurturing they need to thrive and develop fully. The nursery is based at a large hospital and welcomes children from a wide variety of backgrounds. The

senior staff have not hesitated in engaging the parents to share aspects of their culture through food, stories and songs, or demonstrating skills and talents to the children, such as archery. Parents' feedback from these interactions is unfailingly positive. Parents spoken to at the inspection say they have the highest regard for the care their children receive, and all would highly recommend the nursery to others. A monthly bulletin is issued to parents. This high quality document contains information and photographs to show the themes that are being explored through carefully planned activities. As well as being informative, it gives parents an excellent source for ideas they can use at home to continue their child's learning, as well as providing them with many opportunities to be involved first hand in activities and information sessions organised by the nursery. One benefit of being part of a highly successful group of nurseries, with stringent quality control methods in place, is that the staff are given the opportunity to spend time in other settings and share ideas and excellent practice. This keeps the nursery dynamic and forward looking, and ensures that it continues to develop positively, to embrace changes and new thinking in regard to childcare and education.

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	EY472651
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	953302
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	98
Name of provider	Seymour House Limited
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01245514035

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

