

Seymour House Day Nursery School

140 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, CM1 1RN

Inspection date	04/08/2014
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

- All children make exceptional progress in their learning and development. This is because they are taught by staff who have an excellent understanding of how children learn and who provide them with an extensive range of exceptionally high quality resources and activities to inspire, stimulate and challenge them.
- Children develop very strong and highly effective attachments to the adults caring for them. This enables them to become confident and secure, so they can explore and play freely, developing well across all areas.
- Children benefit from the exceptionally well developed partnership with parents and with all external agencies involved in their care and learning. Parents are fully included, enabling them to continue with children's learning at home. Additional help for children who need it is readily available and ensures their very good progress and full inclusion.
- The leadership and management is outstanding. All staff show passion and enthusiasm for their role in teaching and caring for children, which results in exceptional outcomes for children. A professional pathway for staff, to continuously grow and develop their skills and experience, contributes to the high morale and dedication among the team.
- Children's safeguarding is paramount. All staff are trained and able to respond to any concerns in regard to child protection. They strive to maintain a completely safe and secure environment, where children are free to be active and happy learners, their individual care needs are also fully met.

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 playrooms and in the outside area.
- The inspector held discussions with various staff members and the manager and carried out two joint observations with the manager.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation, including evidence of staff suitability checks, some policies and children's development profiles.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents gathered from various recent surveys, feedback forms and questionnaires, in advance of the inspection.

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full report

Information about the setting

Seymour House Day Nursery School was re-opened in 2014 as a limited company. It is one of eight nurseries in the group. It operates from a converted house in Chelmsford, Essex. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. It currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are currently 97 children on roll in the early years age range. The nursery opens from 7.45am until 6pm five days a week, all year round with the exception of bank holidays and one week at Christmas. The nursery employs 17 members of staff, 16 of whom have appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. One member has Early Years Professional status and one has Qualified Teacher Status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider adding to the already extensive range of natural resources, to further enhance opportunities for children to develop creative thinking and problem-solving skills through open-ended play.

Inspection judgements

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

All children are eager and curious learners. They make exceptional progress across all areas of learning and development. They are taught by a skilled team of dedicated, highly-motivated and passionate staff who strive for the highest possible standards at all times. Activities are frequently based on children's interests and ideas, thereby guaranteed to keep children engaged and enthusiastic, so they learn and develop as they participate. For example, studying the life cycles of various creatures, such as butterflies and frogs, develop children's interest in growth and change. With help, they plant and tend a vegetable patch. Children of all ages eagerly observe and water the crops and talk about what they see growing. Finally, they enjoy harvesting and tasting the carrots and lettuces they grow. The spacious and imaginatively laid out outdoor area is very well used to provide children with freedom to move about and express themselves physically. The hard surfaces allow them to ride bicycles and tricycles, steering skilfully to avoid collisions, while the grassy areas allow for relaxed play, seeking out shelter in the teepees and using the trees as a basis for exciting imaginative games. Children explore the materials in the sand and water trays, pouring, filling and emptying containers as they discover the different properties and mathematical concepts, such as weight and volume. Inside, all playrooms are vibrant and exceptionally well furnished with high quality, child friendly furniture and storage. Every child can reach for and select what they would like to use. This encourages their independence and decision-making and children show that they are active learners. Two girls sit side by side with pencils and paper, spontaneously creating a fantasy menu.

They ask anyone passing what they would like to order and write down the foods on their list. They engage in conversations when asked 'what is on the menu?' and collaborate to offer a choice: 'you can have fish pie, or chicken nugget stew. For pudding you can have strawberries or yogurt and fizzy orange or water to drink'. These children show a sophisticated knowledge of how to communicate effectively and demonstrate their understanding that print carries meaning as they confidently use their emergent writing skills. Displays of children's writing, labels on their artwork and printed comments they have made abound in every room. These displays are consistently highly professional and well presented, so parents and visitors can share in the children's achievements and see what they have been working on. Children keenly point out photographs and pictures that are significant to them, demonstrating their high self-esteem and sense of belonging. Independence is promoted from the earliest days. Pre-verbal children indicate their desire to play outside by going to the box with hats and boots. Staff skilfully interpret children's gestures and body language and respond accordingly. They support children's communication development by making eye contact and speaking directly to children, listening carefully to them and giving them sufficient time to answer. Staff develop children's vocabularies by modelling language and bringing stories to life. For example, a favourite story of 'The Three Little Pigs' is enhanced by the use of appealing teacher-generated props and three-dimensional aids, which help very young children follow the story and gain fuller understanding. Staff fully support children's learning at all stages by using open-ended questions, exploring themes and ideas, which children show interest in and bringing to life their broader understanding of the world. A recent example is the focus on France, when children made flags and staged their very own 'Tour de France', sporting red, white and blue clothes and using the nursery tricycles to show off their cycling skills. By linking activities to real life events, the learning is meaningful and creates links for children with the world around them. Excellent, imaginative use of information technology, such as the ceiling-mounted projector, add a further dimension to learning. Children cluster round to watch and comment on a slide show about 'keeping safe', which features themselves demonstrating the various points. Staff guide them through, checking their understanding and reinforcing the ideas that will help them stay safe and become aware of others' safety. Children develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge they will need for future learning. As they approach the time they will start formal school, they gain a better understanding of the changes ahead by looking at photographs of their next setting, trying on items of uniform and managing shoes and games kits, as well as lunchboxes. Children talk confidently of what they expect to encounter at 'big school'. Many can name their new teacher and have already started the bonding process on their pre-visits and taster day sessions.

Children happily share their 'learning story' folders with visitors. These contain unique examples of their work and are annotated with comments from staff, showing what they have achieved. Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to these and many do so, with photographs of family events and outings. This record complements and brings to life each child's individual development profile. This document tracks their development against expected levels and serves to inform parents of what stage children are at, signposting them when any additional help may be needed. The progress check for children aged between two-and-three years is seamlessly incorporated into this process and the results shared with parents. Parents can access their child's complete record at any time as these are available electronically, via a secure system. This allows them to

view and contribute to their child's progress reports and communicate with the key person at times that are convenient for them. This innovative system helps to make the partnership with parents exceptionally successful. Another unique feature of the educational programme is the in-house reading and writing scheme. This has been developed by the nursery group and proved immensely popular with parents and children alike as it allows them to reinforce and extend children's learning at home and particularly in relation to school readiness. The programme is introduced to children whom staff deem to be ready, based on their observations and knowledge of the individual child. Excellent, professional quality resources are provided and full guidance is given to parents to ensure a consistent approach. Children become proficient in the basic skills of sound and letter recognition, the early stages of reading and writing supports their future learning.

The youngest children attending are cared for in their own, separate base rooms. These are homely and furnished with high quality fixtures and sturdy chairs perfectly suited to their size. Staff ensure that babies can access the plentiful toys and equipment, mostly in transparent boxes or natural baskets. The rooms provide babies with opportunities to learn to roll, crawl or start to walk in a safe and supportive manner. All children have access to outdoor play each day and the outdoor area is planned for with the same care, consideration for providing exciting and stimulating activities as the indoor classroom. Children have many opportunities to create play scenarios, for example, using the cardboard boxes from the food delivery, or searching for treasure in the digging area. There is still scope to provide further play opportunities based on natural materials and household items, indoors and outside, such as mud play, to extend children's creative thinking, as identified within the nursery's dynamic development plan. For children who speak English as an additional language, support and innovative practices ensure that they value and use their home language within their play and daily activities. Staff gather key vocabulary from parents, use signing and pictorial cues and incorporate the different languages used by children within story-telling, songs and rhymes. This enables all children to feel at ease, welcomed and confident in the nursery environment. Key to the nursery's successful educational programme is the partnership with parents and all other external agencies involved in children's development. Where additional help is required, for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, no stone is left unturned to acquire support to ensure that every child is included and given equal access to well-planned, stimulating and challenging activities and learning opportunities. Stay and play sessions allow parents to experience their child's play and learning through themed, focused activities and are very popular. Parents report, on the feedback sheets, that they gain valuable insight into how their children learn and develop through carefully structured, active play. Ultimately, children attending Seymour House Day Nursery School acquire the skills and knowledge that will launch them on to a lifetime of learning. They are confident, articulate and successful, they approach new experiences with joy and enthusiasm.

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

Children's exceptionally strong sense of belonging is evident throughout the nursery. They confidently move about and readily approach staff for reassurance, support and comfort, knowing that their needs will be met. Very young babies show their clear attachment to

the adults caring from them as they smile and babble animatedly and make eye contact, while eating snack or when playing on the floor. They are cuddled when receiving a bottle or when they show signs of needing a nap, before being placed into a cot or on a floor mat. Babies who have recently joined are closely observed and their individual characteristics noted, so that staff can approach them and manage their needs correctly. For example, a confident baby is happy to seek out and explore the toys alone, turning to the adults for reassurance, while a less confident child prefers to sit on an adult's lap and view the environment from a position of security. All staff show patience and an intuitive yet very professional understanding that every child is unique and develops at their own pace. By taking the time at the settling-in stage to find out from parents about the child's home routines, likes and dislikes, care is individually tailored from the earliest days. Parents are advised on a daily feedback sheet in regard to their child's feeding, sleeping and nappy changes, so they know what children have been doing and to enable continuity of care. The very well established key-person system is effective in building an excellent relationship with the child and their family, so that a two-way flow of information is maintained for the duration of children's attendance.

Transitions to the next stage care room are managed extremely well and phased gradually so that children have time to acclimatise to the change. The nursery policy is that children are only moved when they are ready for a new challenge and not simply because they have reached a certain chronological age. Often a key-person will accompany the children for the first few visits so they have a familiar face to relate to. This ensures that children's emotional well-being is effectively supported and they develop resilience and self-confidence. Older children point to photographs of themselves, friends and family members on the many wall displays, or in their personal learning story books. Their high self-esteem is clear and they proudly talk to visitors about what they have done, both at nursery and at home. Behaviour is very good, with children showing that they understand and accept the codes of behaviour. Staff issue gentle reminders when needed, such as thinking about taking turns and being careful when moving about. Children respond well to daily routines and enjoy being selected as a special helper when their turn on a rota comes round. This might be to help set up for lunch time, or to tidy an area such as the book corner. By giving responsibility and rewarding effort, staff help children to develop social skills and a positive attitude. Parents can share this approach by completing a 'wow' moments slip and displaying it on a board. Sometimes these are linked to children's next steps, so can strengthen the links between home and nursery because children understand the shared values.

Children's very good health is fully promoted during their time at nursery. The nursery environment is exceptionally clean and hygienic throughout, while staying warm and welcoming. Large windows allow for plenty of natural light and staff have the option of supplementing this with artificial lighting as they deem necessary. Children enjoy nutritious and balanced meals and snacks, at carefully spaced intervals so that their energy levels are maintained. Drinks are available at all times, so children remain hydrated, which is recognised as essential to brain function and development. They sit in small groups, supported by staff and serve themselves from the dishes of food on the tables. Any allergies or dietary needs are well known and scrupulously followed, so children only eat what is good for them. Conversations are encouraged so meal times are relaxed social occasions. Snack time always includes fresh fruit or vegetables. Visual cues,

such as laminated picture and number cards, help children choose a sensible portion. Children use small jugs to competently pour their own milk or water and any accidental spills are cheerfully cleared up. This means children gain independence and increasing self-care skills. Children know that they need suncream in hot weather so that 'you don't get burnt!' They choose a hat and skip off to play outside when the doors are open, giving them ownership of the play environment and choices about what they wish to do. This is because the nursery ethos is based on child-centred practice, which means that children always come first. They are listened to and given sufficient time to respond to questions, so that they can use their thinking creatively. Many activities and themes are a direct result of children's interests, so they are meaningful and relevant to them. Children are empowered to be active learners, to take calculated risks and challenge themselves, such as when climbing and balancing on the equipment outside. Procedures for dealing with minor accidents and bumps are well established and all injuries, including those that children may arrive with, are meticulously recorded, signed and counter-signed. Analysis of these records on a regular basis highlights any areas where improvements to equipment or procedures may be made to prevent further accidents. The all-round welfare of each child is the foremost priority during their time at the nursery.

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

Children's safeguarding has the highest priority at all times in this outstanding nursery. The premises are very safe and secure, with all visitors screened before admittance. Children cannot leave unseen and are only released to the care of a known adult. The manager is the designated person for safeguarding with overall responsibility for ensuring that every child is kept safe and free from harm. She makes sure that every staff member is well-informed in matters of child protection and knows what to do if they have a concern about any child. This ensures that any support needed from external agencies can be put into place swiftly and efficiently. Parents are reassured that every effort is taken to keep their child safe at all times. New staff follow a rigorous recruitment and induction programme, so they are very secure and clear about the details of their role when they start to work with the children. By carefully vetting and meticulously checking every staff member's history and background, children are kept safe and secure, cared for exclusively by suitably qualified and skilled staff.

Leadership and management is outstanding in every way at this highly successful, forward-looking and exceptional quality nursery. The highest aspirations for all aspects of care and learning are shared by all staff members and consequently, the team effort to consistently provide exceptional care for children is fully achieved. Reflective practice is at the heart of this and many innovative methods are used to ensure that staff constantly examine, analyse and improve their deep understanding of child development. Managers effectively supervise and appraise staff and steer them towards training where this will enhance their professional development. Staff who show particular promise can be promoted and take on areas of special responsibility. All staff are encouraged to review one another's practice and to celebrate individual and group achievements. Staff feel valued, nurtured and enjoy the incentives to improve their own practice for the overall good of the nursery. The stability of the staff team has a positive benefit for the children's

care and learning, as they enjoy consistency, enthusiasm and dedication of a team who are striving for excellence. The management take responsibility for monitoring every aspect of the quality of teaching. This includes the planning and delivery of activities and the written reports prepared for parents at regular intervals. By checking for accuracy and consistency, they are able to highlight any group of children or individual who may not be achieving at expected levels and put in place strategies to remedy this and bridge the gap. The children's records are available as written copies, or electronically and one of the key development points is currently to build parents involvement and interaction with the electronic records as this is seen as the most efficient method of staying up-to-date. The company's highly professional website has a wealth of useful hints and guidance for parents, including how they can contribute to their child's profile. There are also sections explaining the rationale for the various methods used, such as the reading and writing programme, so parents can make informed choices regarding their own child.

Children attend from a variety of cultural backgrounds and families. All are welcomed and their individual qualities are recognised so they can be nurtured and they develop to their full potential. This outstanding nursery provides children with the opportunity to use their initiative and increasing independence to make choices and be in control of their own learning. This prepares them for the future, acknowledging that the early years are the time of most rapid development, while not forgetting the crucial importance of a structured, child-centred environment for children's optimum development. The partnership with parents is recognised as key to the success of the nursery. Many initiatives, such as the informative monthly bulletin, the popular stay and play sessions, themed fun-filled open days and more formal interviews with their child's key-person all build on established excellent practice. Parents' and carers' views, as well as those of the children, are continuously sought and analysed, so that new ideas and initiatives are targeted at areas where they will have most impact on outcomes for children. The nursery tirelessly works to reach all parents and include them at many levels. For example, they can stay for sessions, provide a skill, such as yoga instruction, or read and interact with children at the regular, special open days such as those set up for dads and grandparents, who otherwise may not have clear ideas of what goes on in the nursery. Feedback from these sessions is unfailingly positive and feeds into the rigorous process of self-evaluation and ongoing quest for improvement to this outstanding nursery. Parents say they are extremely satisfied with the quality for care and education, they unhesitatingly recommend the nursery to friends and family.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY472659
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	953303
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	97
Name of provider	Seymour House Limited
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01245492642

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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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