

Midway Academy

Bramshall Road, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, ST14 7PG

Inspection date

12/08/2014

Previous inspection date

12/04/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

2

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

- Staff are highly experienced, enthusiastic and thoroughly enjoy their interactions with the children. Their expert teaching extends children's learning and development at every opportunity, encouraging children to develop critical thinking skills and become active learners. As a result, children make excellent progress.
- The caring and welcoming ethos of the nursery ensures that children quickly settle in and develop excellent relationships with staff and one-another. Therefore, their emotional well-being is superbly promoted.
- Staff enable children to become independent in their learning, thinking and self-care skills. This means that children are extremely well prepared for the next steps in learning, such as school.
- Excellent safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented by the staff, who place the utmost importance on ensuring children are extremely safe and secure at all times.
- Leadership is inspirational. Meticulous self-evaluation and reflective practice ensures that staff, parents and children are highly involved in the setting's continual improvement, in pursuit of excellence. Consequently, staff are highly motivated and have high aspirations for the children and all areas of the nursery's practice.
- Partnerships with parents and professionals are excellent. This ensures that children's needs are quickly identified and that they receive targeted support appropriate to their individual needs.

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 in the four playrooms and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and spoke with staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation and a selection of policies and procedures.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from information included in the setting's own parent survey.

Inspector

Sharon Lea

Full report

Information about the setting

Midway Academy was re-registered in 2003 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a converted house in the Uttoxeter area of Staffordshire and is managed by Cheshire Day Nursery Partnership. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four play rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 25 members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 3 to level 5, including one with Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Extended opening hours between 7am until 7pm are available by request. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 117 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of 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:

- enhance the use of print in the outdoor area, to reflect the print-rich indoor environment, providing continuity for children's excellent development in literacy skills.

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is outstanding. This is because the experienced and highly skilled staff have an excellent knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are highly dedicated and enthusiastic and this is reflected in the very high expectations they have of themselves and the children. They use their superb understanding of how children learn, to support children of all ages and abilities to achieve the best they possibly can in their learning and development. Staff make this learning fun because they thoroughly enjoy playing and interacting with the children and express immense satisfaction as they see children benefit from the support they provide. Consequently, children are highly motivated and engaged and thoroughly enjoy their time in the nursery, exploring the wide variety of high quality resources and activities provided by the staff, both indoors and outdoors. Staff gather detailed information about each child's interests and individual learning needs from their parents when they first start attending. From this information and their own observations of the children during play, they ensure that excellent activities and learning opportunities are made available based on the children's individual interests and identified next steps in learning. Staff identify and assess 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 create individual learning plans for each child. These are regularly updated and shared with parents, enabling continual progression in the nursery and at home. Staff also complete a highly comprehensive progress check for children between the ages of two-and-three years, fully involving parents. As assessments are thorough and ongoing, any identified gaps in learning or delay in children's development are therefore identified and addressed through early intervention. This, plus support from the staff and other agencies helps progress children's learning. Consequently, all children including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language receive outstanding levels of support from the highly experienced staff at the nursery.

Staff have an excellent ability to engage and enthusiastically interact with children, which results in them being highly motivated and eager to learn. There is a very strong emphasis on the 'voice of the child' being heard and their opinions valued. For example, older children's views are sought on what they particularly like to do at the nursery. Many photographs and examples of children's creative work adorn the walls. These are annotated with speech bubbles, to represent the child's voice regarding what they have said during the activity, or what they have drawn. The indoor environment is rich in print, promoting children's understanding that print conveys meaning. There is scope to enhance the use of print in the outdoor area to reflect the print-rich indoor environment, providing continuity for children's excellent development in literacy skills. Children of all ages take part in activities that cover all of their learning needs extremely well. Additional opportunities, such as dance, yoga and French sessions are provided, using external teachers, to extend the children's experiences. All staff understand the importance of supporting children's communication and language skills at all times, especially for those children learning English as an additional language. Staff use words from children's home language to reassure and reinforce their understanding, learning key words from parents in order to support the child's needs. During play, staff provide excellent commentary and open questions to engage children in practising their language skills. Children are not hurried to give a response and are clearly given time to think about what they want to say. Children demonstrate excellent communication and language skills as staff ask them appropriately challenging questions to make them think and find out more. For example, during a group game, older children are asked to count the number of objects that they have selected. Staff extend this, to encourage them to think about and compare the colours and type of objects, grouping them to identify which ones have more or less. Babies develop their problem-solving skills through open-ended resources, such as containers, cardboard tubes and curtain rings. Staff give them time and space to explore these resources to enable them to find out how they can fit these together while developing their physical skills in handling them. Outdoors, staff encourage toddlers to explore the weather, providing them with ribbons of paper which they wave in the wind or let go to see how far the wind blows them. Staff are highly attentive to the children and grasp every opportunity available to extend their learning and development. Throughout activities, children clearly show their enjoyment in trying new experiences and they beam with delight when they receive praise for their efforts and achievements. This builds upon their confidence and they successfully develop a 'can do' attitude.

Children enjoy listening to their favourite story books being read by the staff and become

engrossed in these. Books are available indoors and outdoors for children to use at all times and these include both stories and factual books, where they can identify insects that they find in the garden or learn about the wider world that they live in. Staff skilfully support older children's interest in literacy and language through phonics activities, such as 'sound of the week', which helps them to understand letter sounds and how these combine to form words. Babies and children of all ages have opportunities both indoors and outdoors to write and make marks, for example, in sand or shaving foam, with paint or pencils and crayons. Children are actively encouraged to develop these skills and to use their writing for a range of purposes, including writing labels or captions for their drawings. Staff engage parents, carers and others in children's learning and development, providing regular opportunities to discuss children's progress and next steps in learning. Parents are encouraged to provide regular information about their children's changing interests and abilities at home through 'my special moment' sheets which are added to their child's profile. This information is used to provide a complete picture of children's overall development. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to participate in nursery life, through sharing their job roles or reading stories with the children. Activity ideas for parents to do at home with their children, are shared through letters regarding new topics and newsletters. Staff share information on the 'sound of the week' and a book lending library is available to support shared reading at home. These positive partnerships and relationships ensure that there is effective information sharing and consistency for the child, and that those in need of additional support receive this to ensure that their needs are fully met. This joint approach supports the 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

The nursery has a very strong, caring and nurturing ethos and staff place a high level of importance upon children being happy and emotionally secure. Children quickly and happily settle into the nursery, through carefully planned settling-in sessions, where staff take time to get to know each child and their unique needs. All children have their own key-person who takes great care to ensure they forge close working relationships and excellent communication with parents. When the key-person is absent, a buddy key-person is in place, ensuring continuity of care for the children and continual parental engagement. Parents share information with staff about their child's care needs, interests and achievements on entry to the nursery. This ensures that key-persons have an extremely good understanding of each child's unique needs and routines. It also enables children to form exceptionally close bonds with them, which supports their emotional well-being exceedingly well. Family photographs are displayed at child height and babies are observed to delight in seeing these. Staff also understand the importance of the children spending time with their siblings who may be in other rooms in the nursery, facilitating this as often as possible. Consequently, children are exceptionally happy in their care, resulting in them being extremely confident, independent and self-assured individuals. Parents comment that they have excellent relationships with all staff who they feel are warm, caring and friendly. They report that 'the trust I have in the staff is absolute, as they have always encouraged open dialogue about what is right for my child'. As a result, children have strong and secure emotional attachments with the staff. This enables them to enjoy their time in the nursery and make excellent progress in all areas of their

development and learning, in a safe environment. Staff create a very inspiring and enabling learning environment for all ages. High-quality toys and equipment are in good order and easy to find. The learning environment enables children of all ages to independently select resources of their choice, supporting them to extend their play and their developing imagination. Displays celebrate children's creativity and the many photographs of children engaged in activities celebrate the skills they have used and the learning gained from these experiences.

Children quickly develop their independence in self-help skills. This enhances their progress in personal, social and emotional development. For example, children serve their own meals, pour their own drinks and attend to their toileting and hand-washing needs as soon as they are able. At lunchtime, staff sit and eat with the children, joining in their conversations and encouraging children to talk socially about their interests, developing their confidence in social situations. Staff support children well in understanding the importance of a healthy diet through activities and discussions, such as helping to grow fruit and vegetables outdoors, which are used within the nursery snacks and meals. Before outdoor play in the mud kitchen, children put on overalls and wellington boots themselves and when returning inside, remove and put them away in the appropriate places. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise and develop physical skills and confidence as they play on equipment, such as balancing beams, climbing frames and wheeled toys in the outdoor area. Children are supervised closely by staff at all times but staff also encourage them to use resources, such as real tools for woodwork, appropriately and to help with risk assessments of the outdoor environment. Staff are also developing Forest Schools activities, such as den building and cooking on open fires under very close adult supervision. These challenging activities help children to develop a positive attitude and to persist with more difficult tasks, which will help them become confident and active learners when they eventually start school. These opportunities also enable children to take safe risks under adult supervision and support children in understanding how to keep themselves safe.

Staff provide exceptional role models, being kind to one another and creating a calm, welcoming and supportive atmosphere. As a result, positive behaviour is highly evident and children happily play together. All children are polite and respectful, using good manners with staff and one another. The nursery has simple rules for older children, such as good sitting, listening and looking in group situations, which are reinforced through the use of 'listening leopards' during the sessions. Children are encouraged to develop caring skills, through helping to feed and care for the nursery rabbit 'Custard' who has free reign of the pre-school room and garden. They delight in him appearing while they are playing and are careful to avoid him when riding wheeled toys outdoors. Each spring, the nursery incubate eggs and the children patiently wait, counting down the days on a calendar, until the chicks hatch. Staff ensure that children are emotionally well prepared when it is time for the move onto school. Children are well supported through visits from their new teachers and discussions with the children about what will happen in school. The staff fully promote children's understanding of their differences and their similarities. For example, they provide pictures and resources that reflect positive images and children learn about different traditions, customs and beliefs. A map of the world is used to develop the children's understanding of the wider world they live in, through linking where staff or children have been on holiday. Children's well-being is addressed extremely well and

parents are provided with clear details about the nursery's practices through policies on safety, illness and accidents. The excellent partnerships with parents enable the staff to meet children's individual needs very well. The strong link between the nursery and the children's homes involves parents in their children's care, learning and play. This also means that the continuity of care between them all fully enhances children's well-being.

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

The nursery is managed by an experienced and inspirational leader whose continuous drive for excellence, is motivated by a desire to provide each individual child with the best possible outcomes from their time in the nursery. This strong, effective leadership, enables all of the staff to feel empowered and inspired, resulting in staff being highly professional and dedicated to their role in meeting the children's learning and development needs. Robust recruitment and suitability processes are in place, to ensure that all staff are safe to work with young children. On appointment, staff participate in a highly effective induction process, supported by a staff mentor. Before their employment is confirmed, they are tested on their knowledge and understanding of their job role and the policies and procedures, which underpin the exceptional practice in the setting. This ensures that they have the skills to carry out their role appropriately or identifies where further training or support may be needed. Safety and security procedures are in place and followed by all staff meticulously in order to safeguard the children from harm. Continual monitoring by the manager and effective and frequent supervision ensures that staff maintain high standards of professionalism and integrity. All staff have a thorough understanding of their role and responsibility in safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. Staff receive refresher training and policies are frequently updated so staff members are fully familiar with the child protection procedures in the local area and have confidence to follow these. Daily risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environments are undertaken and any minor accidents which occur are recorded and analysed. All of these measures in place ensure that children's safety and well-being is extremely well promoted at all times.

The management and staff have a superb understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The outstanding quality of teaching by all staff, results in children being animated, highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. Consequently, all children make excellent progress in their learning and development given their starting points. The quality of teaching is monitored by the manager through regular observations of staff practice. Feedback is provided to the staff on this and all other areas of their performance, through regular individual supervision sessions and annual appraisals. The manager has developed exceptional systems to monitor the progress of all children attending the nursery. She uses this system to identify children who may need additional support or to identify areas of practice which may need enhancing, such as provision for information and communication technology. Every term, each room receives a summary of what has been identified from this monitoring, providing positive feedback and any areas which may require further development. Staff have individual continuing professional development files which they extend through attending training. They then share what they have learnt with other staff in the nursery. Training

has a positive impact upon the children and the opportunities provided for them. For example, recent training on working with babies has enhanced staffs' understanding of emotional attachments and how babies learn. This has resulted in changes to the learning environment, such as the development of a black and white area to support visual development, and practices such as including a favourite toy of the babies in their nappy changing baskets. It is evident that training opportunities motivate and inspire the staff and enhances the already excellent practice in place.

Comprehensive self-evaluation systems are in place, demonstrating that staff do not become complacent and instead constantly strive for improvement. Regular staff meetings within the nursery, provide opportunities to reflect together on practice and to share views and ideas. Individual room and whole nursery improvement plans are developed, as a result of this continual reflection on practice, putting the needs of the children at the heart of everything. The nursery actively seeks and welcomes parents' views on the provision in order to continually review and improve practice. This is achieved through questionnaires for parents and children. The suggestions made are implemented wherever possible. Partnerships between staff and parents are without doubt outstanding. The information obtained from parents on their child's individual care, learning and communication is excellent. Parents highly value the positive relationships they have with the staff and this ensures that they work exceptionally well together to meet the children's needs. Parents' comments are extremely positive and include examples, such as 'all staff are very friendly and welcoming' and 'staff are continually engaged with the children'. Many parents comment on how well their children are progressing since starting in the nursery. An extensive range of information is made readily available to parents in the reception areas of the nursery, through a social media site accessible to parents and through regular newsletters, which keep parents up-to-date with nursery news. The ethos of openness and joint working is exceptionally strong, which greatly benefits the children who attend. Partnership working with external agencies and professionals, such as speech and language therapists, the areas special educational needs coordinator and teachers from local schools are all excellent. They are all very welcome to visit the children at the nursery and staff follow through with any programmes of support which are identified. Professionals provide feedback on their experiences in the nursery and this is highly complimentary, stating 'the setting is proactive and very inclusive of children with complex needs. Staff support children admirably'. This joint working is extremely effective in ensuring that children receive the best possible care and education. The nursery were asked by the local authority to contribute to a 'pathway to outstanding' conference, aimed at raising the quality of childcare providers in Staffordshire. This reflects the high regard which professionals have for the nursery and that their practice is considered worthy of dissemination to other providers.

The Childcare Register

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. 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	EY276002
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	860918
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	77
Number of children on roll	117
Name of provider	Cheshire Day Nursery Partnership
Date of previous inspection	12/04/2011
Telephone number	01889 562 089

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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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