

Skylarks

Valley Nursery School, Blakenall Heath, WALSALL, WS3 1HT

Inspection date	12/09/2014
Previous inspection date	19/01/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Teaching is good because the management and staff fully understand how to promote children's learning and they have high expectations for each child's achievements.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are effective because there is very good two-way communication, ensuring all parties are well informed and work together to identify and meet the children's needs and interests. Partnerships with other professionals and providers are also very effective.
- The self-evaluation process includes all stakeholders. Improvements bring about effective changes for all children on roll. Regular supervision and monitoring effectively supports all staff performance, and safeguarding children is a priority within the provision at all times.
- Children and their key persons form close emotional attachments. Children's behaviour is managed very well by experienced staff who are trained in supporting a range of behaviours, to ensure children's needs are met and they are kept safe.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always ensure the highest levels of privacy for younger children during daily care practices.
- Staff do not always maximise younger children's awareness of their sense of self and how this helps to keep them safe.

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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents; attendance registers, risk assessment, self-evaluation records and the provider's improvement plan, staff suitability and qualifications, the complaints log, and a range of policies and procedures related to the service provided.
- The inspector observed activities in all indoor and outdoor play areas used by the children.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the registered person, held meetings with the registered person and the manager, and held discussions with various staff caring for children.
- The inspector took account of the views of children and parents spoken to on the day and acknowledged a range of recorded statements.

Inspector

Mary Henderson

Full report

Information about the setting

Skylarks originally opened in 1999 and has been under its current registration since 2009. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It operates from the Valley Nursery School in Blakenall Heath, Walsall, Staffordshire. The provision serves the local area and has strong links with the school from which it operates. The nursery is accessible to all children and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The provision opens Monday to Friday, from 8am until 6pm, during term times only. Children can attend for a variety of sessions including lunchtime sessions. There are currently 88 children attending who are within the early years age range. The provision provides funded early education for two- and three-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The provision employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years degree, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 4, six hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3, and three hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- give younger children's privacy the highest priority during their everyday care practices, for example, by improving the siting of the nappy changing station
- increase opportunities for younger children to gain a strong sense of themselves as an individual, for example, by helping them to become aware of the different parts of their body, to enhance their understanding about keeping themselves safe.

Inspection judgements

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

All staff and the management team are fully aware of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, teaching is good and children are progressing well towards the early learning goals. There are appropriate expectations of the children attending. This, combined with detailed observations and assessments, alongside information collected from parents, ensures children make good progress given their starting points. The teaching strategies used to enhance children's physical and communication skills, alongside their personal, social and emotional development, ensure that the characteristics of effective learners are fostered. For example, the staff ensure every indoor and outdoor space is effectively utilised. This promotes children's learning during both child-initiated and adult-guided play times. Children can choose to play indoors or outdoors or move between the two throughout the

session. This supports children's individual learning styles and engages their interest in a wide variety of activities. For instance, children like to use their imagination as they make a ball shape from sand, and try to throw it across the outdoor beach area, laughing along with their peers. The well-equipped outdoor areas enhance all aspects of children's learning and development. This provides good levels of challenge appropriate to children's age and stage of development. Consequently, children become engrossed in their play. For example, children's physical development and imagination is supported very well through exploration of the mud kitchen. Here they use real kitchen utensils, colanders and pans as they dig in the dirt, pour, stir and play imaginatively alongside their peers. During such times, children self-talk and chat with their peers and the staff. In addition, the staff support children's imagination during such times, as they ask them open questions about what they are making and what they are doing, or 'what if' questions. This helps children think critically and extends their communication and language skills further.

The staff working with the younger children follow their lead. As children play with the dolls, choosing what to dress them in and having a go at changing the dolls nappy, the staff add resources to capture children's imagination and further their physical skills. For example, a box of nappy changing gloves are added which furthers children's imagination and supports their physical dexterity as they are encouraged to have a go at putting them on. The staff also weave in mathematical thinking as they ask if the nappy is too big or small, and encourage children to find the right sized doll or teddy. Children are encouraged to try and try again, and are praised for their efforts as well as their successes. Consequently, children are developing a good level of self-esteem and sense of belonging to the setting and, thereby, their confidence is growing. Children of all ages explore technology as they use the interactive boards. Here, they make scribble marks in different colours using their fingers and hands. During such times, the staff support children with their learning, showing them how to change programmes, so that they can explore a variety of learning opportunities, such as sorting, number recognition, shape and problem solving. All children enjoy stories and choose books for their key person to read to them. During such times, the staff enhance children's interest in books by showing them how to turn the pages, pointing out text and asking them questions about the pictures and the story. This helps to enhance children's literacy skills and supports their readiness for school.

Children of all ages enjoy having visitors to the setting. This includes the reptile man who brings along various exotic insects, snakes and other reptiles for children to see and talk about. They learn that such creatures come from all over the world. This helps children learn about the world around them, in addition to the wider world. Other visitors include parents who help children to make their own play dough. Here, the children learn to mix ingredients and observe over time how ingredients change to make one product. This further enhances children's understanding about the world. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported by their key persons. The key-person systems are very good and ensure staff observe children as they play, identify their interests and plan children's next steps in their learning. This effectively ensures children's needs are identified and met. Children's progress is tracked very well and overseen by management, to ensure effective monitoring and that any gaps in children's learning are fully identified. Staff caring for toddlers within the nursery discuss with parents the most suitable time to

provide a comprehensive summary of their child's learning and development, in time for their progress check between the ages of two and three years. The management work closely with the health visitors who are available for parents should they wish their child to be assessed within the setting. Partnerships with parents are strong. The staff and parents share what they know about the child. This includes home visits where the staff collate information from parents about the child's care, learning and interests. This helps to ensure consistency and continuity both at the setting and at home. This, and support for parents to further enhance their child's learning at home, effectively promotes children's learning across all areas of their development.

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

Children's emotional well-being is appropriately supported because the key-person systems are good. Consequently, children build close emotional attachments with the adults that care for them. However, at times, staff do not yet maximise younger children's awareness of their sense of self and how this enhances their ability to keep themselves safe. For example, younger children are not always supported to be aware of the different parts of their body, to help them as they begin to understanding about keeping themselves safe. As a result, children's self-awareness is not always fully promoted to the highest level to ensure they build on this understanding. In addition, the nappy changing station is not appropriately sited within the setting to ensure the highest possible level of privacy for younger children during care practices. The staff work closely with the children and interact positively with them, praising their efforts and encouraging them. All staff have attended behaviour management training, which ensures the highest awareness of how to promote positive behaviour with the children and how to manage disruptive or challenging behaviour. This includes managing any behaviour where children may be a risk to themselves, other children or adults around them. As a result, the staff are able to manage a broad range of behaviours that may be displayed by younger children to ensure all children and adults are kept safe. This aspect of the setting is clearly outlined within the behaviour management policy and procedure, which is accessible to all parents to ensure they are fully informed.

There are very good strategies in place to support children's transitions. For example, the setting provides home visits for children and their families. This ensures that all information about the child is collated and used to ensure a smooth transition from home to the setting, and that children's needs are identified and met from the start. This also enhances children's ability to settle in quickly. In addition, this gives parents the opportunity to talk to the staff about any concerns they may have about their child or the setting, including the policies and procedures that support the setting overall. The communication between the nursery, other settings and school ensures that all parties work together to identify and meet children's needs. As a result, children become ready for the next phase in their learning and school.

Children's healthy lifestyles are a key focus within the setting. This is fostered very well because children play in the fresh air and take regular exercise, using small and large equipment throughout the entire session. For instance, they can ride their tricycles, run around with exuberance with their peers, and use climb and balance equipment. The staff

support the children in their risk-taking skills, so that they progress well in their physical skills. Children also enjoy a variety of visitors to the setting that support their healthy lifestyles. This includes professionals that come along to encourage children's ball skills. During such times, children are supported to be physically active and develop their interest in sports. As a result of this, in addition to daily access to fresh air and exercise, children's physical development is built upon over time and their interest in their own healthy lifestyle is enhanced. During snack times, children independently wash their hands as staff talk to them about cleaning off the germs. Children enjoy healthy choice snacks of fruit and carbohydrates, such as toast and crumpets, each day. Their independence is supported because the staff encourage them to spread their own butter and to cut up their own fruit. This shows that staff make good use of everyday routines to further support children's learning and readiness for school. Children are beginning to learn some aspects of their personal safety as they are included in the evacuation procedures of the setting.

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

All staff and the management have a good understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, the staff assess any risk to children in both the indoor and outdoor areas on a daily basis. This ensures children's safety and well-being is fostered in all areas of the setting at all times. In addition, all children are closely supervised by the staff at all times to ensure their ongoing safety throughout the session. Robust policies and procedures are followed to ensure children are cared for in a safe and caring environment. Staff attend safeguarding training and, subsequently, are fully aware of the possible signs of abuse and what to do or who to contact should there be any concerns. The safeguarding policy in place includes what will happen in the event of an allegation against a member of staff. In addition, the safeguarding policy includes the use of cameras and mobile phones with the setting. The management have included a section on e-safety, so that all parents and staff are fully aware of the policy and guidance on this aspect of the setting. There is also a whistle-blowing policy in place; thereby, staff know what to do and who to contact should they have any concerns about anyone working at or visiting the setting. This helps to safeguard all children. All parents have free access to the policies and procedures of the setting at all times to ensure they are informed of the service provided. To ensure children's safety further, all staff have attended first-aid training. Parents are fully informed of any accidents, incidents or existing injuries, which are appropriately recorded and dated. Children's safety and well-being is a high priority within the setting at all times.

There are very robust and comprehensive recruitment procedures in place. This includes initial and ongoing checks of the suitability of all staff to work with children. References are followed up by management and the identity of all staff and their qualifications are checked. This is followed by an intensive induction programme to ensure all new staff are fully aware of the policies and procedures to be followed. As a result, children are kept safe. The monitoring of the teaching and learning programmes within the setting is very good. Consequently, this ensures children's learning and development is fostered appropriately and that their needs are identified and met. For example, the manager and

the registered individual observe staff practice and provide individual feedback to the staff through rigorous supervision, so that practice continues to improve over time. As a result, staff conduct is positive, thereby benefitting all children on roll. Staff are well qualified. They attend ongoing training, to further enhance their already good awareness of how children learn and develop through high levels of interaction and support from the staff as the children play. The continuing, targeted programme for the professional development of all staff ensures high levels of staff knowledge and understanding. The self-evaluation processes in place are good and include input from senior management, all staff, parents and children. Areas for continuous improvement to benefit the children's learning and development are identified on an ongoing basis.

The partnerships with parents and other providers and professionals are effective. As a result, everyone works to support the needs and interest of each individual child. Information is provided to parents about the provision, their child's care and their learning and developmental progress at all levels. The relationships between the staff and parents are very strong within setting. Parents speak exceptionally highly about the staff that care for their children and the provision as a whole.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory 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	EY394854
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	988835
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	72
Name of provider	Valley Nursery School Governing Body
Date of previous inspection	19/01/2010
Telephone number	01922 710518

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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.

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.

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