

Saffron Walden Nursery School



Saffron Walden Nursery School, Shirehill Industrial Estate, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3AQ

Inspection date	30 January 2017
Previous inspection date	26 April 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The very well-qualified manager motivates the staff team well. Staff are supported to further their skills and strive for outstanding quality throughout the nursery. She also works closely with the local authority to offer support and guidance to other settings.
- Staff use effective questioning to enable children to work things out for themselves. Children quickly learn to have a go before asking for help. Staff give them specific praise for their efforts. This helps to build children's confidence as they grow into independent learners.
- Children are given many opportunities to learn about and explore the natural world. They look for birds and mini-beasts through binoculars and magnifying glasses. They compare the difference between using dirty puddle water and clean tap water when washing the toy cars. They decide the clean water is the most effective.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are skilfully supported to make good progress. Key persons make time to gain information from parents to help them understand children's needs. Staff help children to learn about other families and customs and teach children about festivals that are important to their friends.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Some members of staff do not have the most precise information about how their key children are developing, in order to support their learning to the highest possible levels.
- Staff in the pre-school room do not always refresh the well-planned activities through the day to help children to stay interested and engaged in high-quality learning.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen the use of information gained from the high-quality observations of children's learning to promote their development to the highest possible levels
- enhance the stimulating pre-school learning environment even more to enable children to be consistently engaged and challenged in the highest-quality learning.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities, both indoors and outside.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at appropriate times during the day and held a meeting with the manager.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at children's records, planning documentation, information about the nursery's self-evaluation and a range of other documentation, including policies and procedures.
- The inspector checked the evidence showing the suitability of staff and the committee.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection and through written documents.

Inspector

Jill Hardaker

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff know the possible signs of abuse and when and where to refer any concerns they may have about a child in their care. Managers have established robust recruitment procedures to help ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff performance is monitored through supervision meetings and targeted training. Staff who are not performing at expected levels receive mentoring and extra support to help them succeed. The manager and staff are highly reflective about their practice. They have recently made changes to the younger children's room. The addition of a quiet sensory area gives children opportunities to rest and relax.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff use their teaching skills well. They provide interesting and challenging activities that match children's interests, particularly in the room for the youngest children. Children are given time to explore however they want to. They spend time exploring bubbles in water and learning about volume as they fill and empty containers. Older children spend time mixing powder paint with water, experimenting with colour and texture. There is no expectation from staff that children will use this to paint. They understand the importance of the process of learning rather than focusing on the end product. Younger children enjoy exploring in the garden. They play with dinosaurs in green gloop. Staff support their developing communication and language skills as they use descriptive words such as slimy and crumbly. Staff observe what children know and can do and use this to plan for their individual next steps in learning. They regularly share development information with parents and find out about children's achievements at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children thoroughly enjoy the wonderful outdoor area. Staff provide waterproof clothes so that children can play comfortably outside all year round. They enjoy splashing in puddles and digging in the vast sand area. Children play cooperatively together, sharing toys and taking turns. They develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, on the day of inspection, children had coned off the climbing frame as they knew it was wet and that they might slip. Children are provided with healthy foods at snack and mealtimes and they are learning how to attend to their own care needs. Parents speak highly of the nursery staff. They feel their children settle quickly, build a good bond with their key person and are very well prepared for moving on to school.

Outcomes for children are good

All children make good progress, considering their starting points and capabilities. Children show their developing literacy skills. For example, they identify on their pictures which parts are drawings and which are writing. Staff support children's mathematical understanding well, relevant to their age. They introduce different sizes and length as children play with toy dinosaurs. Children use mathematical language in their own play as they talk about toy cars going up and down ramps. Children are quickly gaining the skills they need to be ready to move to their next stage of learning or on to school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	650123
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	1064244
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	71
Name of registered person	Saffron Walden Nursery School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP901952
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2013
Telephone number	01799522108

Saffron Walden Nursery School was registered in 1993. The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The manager holds qualified teacher status and early years professional status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 8am to 4pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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