

The Firs

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	06/01/2010
Inspector	Jane Wakelen

Setting address	114 Dover Road, Sandwich, Kent, CT13 0DB
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Telephone number	01304 612040
Email	stbartshouse@aol.com
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

The Firs, is one of four settings run by St Bart's Day Nurseries. It opened in 2001 and occupies a detached house and uses five rooms for the children plus an office, kitchen and toilets. It is a privately owned setting and is situated in the coastal town of Sandwich in Kent. It is open each weekday from 7.30 am to 6.30 pm throughout the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 64 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are 14 members of staff of whom 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications, with the two other staff completing training to level 3. Four staff members either hold the Early Childhood Studies degree or are in the process of completing it.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are treated with respect and make good progress in their development because well-qualified and motivated staff have an excellent understanding about the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). All children are included within the setting with staff forming close relationships with the children supporting their feeling of security and trust. Excellent partnerships with the parents ensures children's individual needs are met, enabling them to flourish in the care of the nursery staff. A comprehensive, extensive self-evaluation of the setting is carried out on a regular basis resulting in sustained improvement to provide excellent outcomes for children .

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- display posters, pictures and other resources to reflect the setting's positive attitudes to disability, ethnic, cultural and social diversity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are exceptionally well protected within the nursery because the managerial staff and the staff team give high priority to ensuring children's safety.

All the staff have attended training in child protection and ensure the safeguarding policy is fully implemented into the setting. The owners ensure that staff have the relevant checks and references carried out to ensure their suitability to work with the children. Procedures for the safe arrival and collection of the children, including a password system further help to promote children's safety.

The owners of the nursery are committed, enthusiastic practitioners who understand the importance of promoting training for the staff team, to ensure they can deliver excellent outcomes for children. A successful system of staff appraisal and staff supervision helps to identify staff training needs and their personal development, to ensure a motivated, well qualified staff team. All staff are included in the self-evaluation process, monitoring the effectiveness of the provision, alongside the managers to ensure continuous improvement and development throughout the whole nursery. Parents views are obtained through yearly questionnaires and exit surveys when children leave the nursery for school and comments are summarised and changes made where possible. This regular monitoring of the setting ensures children's needs are given high priority and parental wishes met and implemented.

Children are able to access the well maintained resources in their rooms and freely move around independently making choices about what to play with. Three of the play rooms open directly onto the outside area allowing free flow for most children, enabling them to make decisions about where they would like to play. The nursery monitors the resources it has available and replenishes these or replaces well-used toys to ensure children can access an interesting, safe range of resources both indoors and outdoors. All children are treated with respect and encouraged to share and take turns, learning to accept each others differences. However, there are limited resources throughout the nursery on display to reflect the positive attitude towards diversity in the local community.

The management team understands the importance of working with outside professionals and ensure children's additional needs are identified and supported through this partnership. Individual educational plans are implemented to ensure children develop to their full potential, with the support of outside agencies, parents, the key person and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. This enables all children to be fully integrated into the setting. Links with other providers are in place, although there are few children attending that have additional childcare arrangements.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Staff value and understand the importance of working with the parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Managerial staff carry out home visits to enable children to feel secure in their home environment, before the settling-in visits at the nursery. Parents are asked to give written records of their child's routine as well as informing staff about how their child likes to sleep, thus ensuring children experience continuity of care and their welfare fully promoted. Parents are given copies of the main policies for the nursery and have access to the whole range of policies available in the entrance hall, ensuring they are aware of the procedures the nursery follows for different aspects of care. Parents are introduced to the child's key person when their child starts at the nursery and are kept informed on a daily basis about any observations

that have been recorded, together with the diary sheet informing parents about their child's day, including sleeps and food intake. The progress records and learning journey are made freely available to parents. They are encouraged to contribute to the assessment procedure to ensure their children are able to make full progress in their development. This is supported by three parent evenings throughout the year, to provide parents with a more formal time to sit with the key person and discuss their child's progress.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are extremely settled and happy within the warm, caring nursery environment. All children are able to develop excellent relationships with the staff, including babies who show close attachments to their key person. Children make excellent progress in their development, taking into account their starting points and capabilities. Staff have a firm understanding of the EYFS and use their knowledge of child development to help all children progress in their learning. Written observations are recorded in the children's progress records and these are linked to show progress towards the early learning goals. Observations are used to plan next steps in children's learning with regard to the six areas of learning, which informs the plans on a weekly basis. This system ensures all children's needs are identified and their individual learning styles and interests are taken into account when planning activities for the children.

Babies are allowed to follow their own routines and thrive in the homely environment where they go for walks to feed the ducks or have opportunities to practice their walking skills by pulling themselves up on the furniture, or using their senses with the treasure baskets. Staff treat all children with respect and as individuals, understanding that all children progress at different rates and in their own way. Older children independently move around their play room, accessing different collage materials, supporting their creative skills or use the sand to fill and empty containers. Children show excellent concentration skills in self chosen activities and large group play, enjoying joining in with familiar rhymes or listening to stories. Children are encouraged to label their pictures and have varied opportunities to make marks with different mediums, showing some familiarity with letters and sounds as they identify the initial letter of their name.

Children become fully engaged in imaginative play outside searching for polar bears in the snow or looking for hedgehogs that might be hibernating. They explore their environment learning about the world in which they live and extend this knowledge to learn about their community through visits from the local road safety officer and dental nurse to visits to the local library. Children develop skills they can use in the future such as the use of technology. They show confidence and a good understanding about the computer, using the mouse to progress through the games. They show excellent communication skills talking to each other and the staff, and use their speech to talk about home experiences in the past and future. Children are confident individuals who are encouraged to solve problems and use their numeracy skills in everyday activities and routines, for example how many shells are in the sand or how many chairs around the table. Children use simple

mathematical language in their play, for example 'I have a large piece of ice' or 'we found a long worm' and are able to identify shapes in their environment, such as the round bucket.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle. They have choices of healthy snacks and meals, with their dietary needs being taken into account. Babies are weaned according to parental wishes and staff always ensure babies have tried the different foods at home before offering them at nursery, to prevent the risk of unknown allergies. Drinking water is freely available throughout the day, with the older children being able to independently help themselves. Children are encouraged to follow hygiene routines, such as washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet, including encouraging children to wash their hands after nappy changing. This helps children to develop an understanding about personal care routines and why they are important. Staff follow excellent hygiene procedures, especially during nappy changing helping to prevent cross infection and promoting children's health. Children have daily opportunities to benefit from fresh air and exercise through play times in the garden to walks along the road to see the horses or feed the ducks. Staff talk to the children about why exercise is good for them and to be aware of changes to their body after exercise, such as feeling their heart beating.

Children feel extremely safe within the nursery and approach staff for support or reassurance reflecting the strong relationships formed with their key person. Staff implement systems such as thorough risk assessments, and ensure visitors sign in and out of the visitors book and ensure all children wear wrist bands when on outings to support their safety. Extensive safety procedures are in place such as the outings log, risk assessment for outings and fire drills to further protect children whilst in the care of the nursery staff. Children learn about using tools safely, such as not walking around with the scissors and learn about risks outside, such as climbing the small tree, thus helping children know their own limits and help to keep themselves safe.

All children are included within the setting. Staff treat each child with respect and have a good understanding about each child's personality. This enables children to feel valued and confident thus raising their self esteem. Children's works is displayed around the rooms, together with the planning sheets and a summary of each rooms activities is displayed in the entrance area to keep parents informed about what their children will be doing. Children behave exceptionally well, with staff supporting children to solve little disputes occasionally. Children learn about sharing the toys and taking turns and show great patience when waiting to play with a certain toy or waiting to have their turn on the computer.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met