

The Old Fire Station Children's Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sally Smith

Setting address 69 Albion Street, BIRMINGHAM, West Midlands, B1 3EA

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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 Old Fire Station Children's Nursery opened in 1992. It operates from 11 rooms in a grade II listed building in the Jewellery Quarter, Hockley, Birmingham. The nursery does not have access to an outside play area. There are currently 58 children from eight months to four years on roll. This includes 11 funded three-and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6.30pm. There are 10 members of staff working with the children. All staff have appropriate early years qualifications. Four members of staff have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Studies. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery provides a welcoming and stimulating environment where children make good progress in their learning and development. Most policies and procedures are effective in ensuring that children's welfare is promoted. Partnerships with parents and other agencies ensure that children are generally well supported and their individual needs met. The manager and staff reflect on and evaluate their practice and have effective systems to record the improvement they make. They are committed to identifying priorities for further development and acting on these issues.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review and improve systems to ensure information on children's starting points is consistently obtained from parents
- support children's understanding of how hygiene promotes good health in relation to hand washing
- provide further opportunities for children to see and use their home language in their play and learning in order to value linguistic diversity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff receive regular up-to-date training regarding safeguarding and know what action to take in the event of any child protection concerns. They are clear in their responsibility to protect children from harm and who to contact should the need

arise. Recruitment procedures ensure staff who work with the children are safe and suitable to do so, for example, references and Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are sought before staff commence their duties. Written risk assessments and daily checks ensure hazards are identified and minimised to keep children safe in their environment. Staff ensure resources are well-organised and their vigilance ensures that children play safely. In addition, fire drills are regularly practised to ensure that children and staff can exit the nursery quickly and safely.

Effective relationships are established with parents ensuring they are kept fully informed of what is happening on a day-to-day basis within the nursery. Notice boards, questionnaires and consultation meetings are just some of the ways in which information is relayed. Parents' views are clearly valued and staff readily respond to any suggestions in order to improve information sharing, for example, daily menus are now displayed. In addition, staff also share the learning that has taken place as a result of the activities children have been involved in. The nursery is currently completing a quality assurance scheme and is keen for parents' input. As a result, comment books are placed at the entrance so that parents can contribute to this process. Parents are warmly welcomed into the nursery and are encouraged to support children's learning. For example, they read stories to the children and help them develop their early mark-making skills. From the beginning of a child's placement at nursery, learning journals are shared with parents. Systems are in place for parents to share their child's starting points although this information is not consistently obtained by staff. However, parents are encouraged to contribute to learning journals once children are settled. Positive links are established with a wide range of outside agencies. This means that all children receive the necessary support to promote their learning and development, therefore ensuring an inclusive service.

The management team and staff continually evaluate the service they provide. A record identifies what they have achieved and the impact this has had for the nursery. There are clear targets for the future, outlining what further action is required to make improvements within the nursery. There is a clear sense of purpose about what they want to achieve and how this will benefit children. Training is fundamental to the continuing improvement of the nursery, enabling staff to enhance their knowledge and skills to enhance outcomes for all children.

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

Children are provided with a calm, bright, stimulating environment where they enjoy themselves and are helped to achieve. Staff spend the majority of their time at their level, for example, they sit alongside babies on the floor or at child-sized tables giving lots of eye contact, reassurance and encouragement. Children are confident to join in the activities, for example, babies develop their physical and coordination skills as they crawl to staff, pull themselves up and are assisted as they attempt to walk. As a result, children are happy, confident and well settled. Displays of their artwork are prominently displayed, often demonstrating their observational skills. For example, children record through drawings what they can see when out and about in their environment.

There is a good balance between adult and child-led activities. Staff give high priority in enabling children to have time to complete tasks and practise skills in order to make effective links to their learning. Therefore, through play, children can repeat and refine their skills needed for future learning. For example, children learn to manipulate scissors and quickly become adept at cutting out shapes following the outline carefully. Children work out their own solutions to problems, for example, they ask staff for more glue when they realise they have not got enough to make the paper stick together.

Children thoroughly enjoy stories and well known tales. These are used to great effect to promote all areas of their learning. For example, they listen to Little Red Riding Hood and discuss the significance of stranger danger. They discuss the route that Little Red Riding Hood takes to her grandma's house and then compare this to their own journey to nursery. Children experiment with water, ice and steam. They observe how a kettle makes steam when boiling, which in turn creates movement and learn this is how steam engines work. They learn that water turns to ice when frozen but melts and reverts back to water when warm. They predict and then test out theories to see which items will sink or float. Children's independence is fostered well as they select resources, lifting trays from shelves and then carefully sliding them back again when finished.

Whilst starting points for children's learning is not consistently sought from parents at the beginning of the placement, staff use regular observations to complete an accurate assessment of children's abilities. They identify further lines for development so that children are provided with activities that are suited to their level of understanding. Next steps informs the following week's planning, ensuring there is a balance across the six areas of learning. Children for whom English is an additional language and who have specific individual needs are supported well. Staff work with parents well to obtain key information regarding children's home languages although this is still in the early stages for those children who have only recently started their placement. Bilingual workers are able to support many children's developing use of English. The manager and staff are also learning additional languages so that all children can be fully supported in their play and learning. Resources, posters and visual displays reflect cultural diversity but do not consistently reflect the languages spoken by all children attending the nursery.

Children enjoy a range of freshly prepared meals and snacks and heartily tuck into their food. Older children wash hands and attend to their own care needs, with sensitive support when necessary from staff. However, whilst young children are encouraged to wipe their hands after eating, they share a flannel which potentially compromises effective hygiene procedures. Space is well organised to provide regular opportunities for physical play. Children perfect their ball skills, catching, throwing and controlling the ball with their feet. They move over, under and through equipment as they negotiate obstacle courses. These pursuits help children develop control and coordination. They go out and about on a regular basis to visit parks and shops, therefore getting plenty of fresh air. Children are very skilled in using the computer, often declining help from staff in carrying out operations, preferring to do this for themselves. They select programs and move

the mouse very precisely. Children are courteous, polite and well prepared for their future learning.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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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