

Western Elms Nursery School

Western Elms Nursery, 59 Western Elms Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2AL

Inspection date	24/07/2013
Previous inspection date	10/12/2008

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

- A strong key person system helps nursery staff form secure trusting relationships with children and parents. Partnerships with parents are successful so children attending are happy and confident.
- Staff focus on meeting individual children's needs and happily adapt their work to achieve this. This makes smooth children's moves between rooms at the nursery and on to school.
- Children are making generally good progress as the nursery provides a wide variety of stimulating and challenging experiences across all area of learning. Parents are supported well by the nursery in relation to their children's learning.
- The nursery staff place high importance on providing children with nutritional home-cooked food helping children to be healthy.
- Staff are all highly motivated to help children enjoy their time at nursery. This is driven by the enthusiasm of the skilled senior leaders resulting in an environment where children like to be.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The recording of observations, assessments and children's next steps for learning are inconsistent and not always effectively monitored.

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 children's activities in all playrooms and outdoors.
- The inspector observed staff interaction with the children and spoke with most of the staff.
- The inspector held discussions with the nursery manager and talked with the owner.
- The inspector examined a range of relevant documentation including a sample of children's records.

Inspector

Caron Lubin

Full Report

Information about the setting

Western Elms Nursery School first opened in 1962 and has been under the current ownership since 2004. The nursery operates from a large Victorian house in West Reading. There is level access to the nursery and children use a number of rooms on the ground and first floor. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery operates each weekday between 8am and 6pm, all year round. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 67 children on roll in the early years age range. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is funded to provide free early education to children aged two, three and four years. The setting supports children with special educational needs as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 14 staff employed to work directly with the children. Of these, nine hold relevant early years qualifications to at least level 3 and four are undertaking training. Additional staff are employed to carry out kitchen and administration responsibilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review how the recording of observations, assessments and next steps of learning and their links into planning is monitored to ensure appropriate challenge for every child.

Inspection judgements

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

Western Elms Nursery offers a friendly and stimulating environment for children. Children are accommodated in three distinct groups each with their own playroom, quiet room and toileting facilities. There is an enclosed garden area designed to inspire children. It incorporates places for children to climb and hide and includes a dedicated area for babies to use and enjoy safe play in the outdoors. The doors are open allowing children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor play areas. Staff and children extend many activities into the outdoor area which children enjoy. Space is used well enabling a wide variety of exploratory play and activities to be available to all children. This enables them

to consolidate their learning through a variety of ways. The high number of staff are effectively deployed so children get lots of one-to-one attention. They give children a great deal of praise and encouragement, which helps children develop their skills and self-confidence. For example, parents comment that since starting at the nursery their children, who speak English as additional language, are making good progress in learning and communicating in English.

Children are able to make choices about what to play with as staff use their knowledge well to provide a good range and variety of resources and experiences. Staff take every opportunity to extend learning and follow children's interests. For example, when a spider was found this led to staff and children discussing and planning how they could move it into the garden. This develops children's problem solving skills and their awareness of the natural world. The nursery staff are committed to getting to know children really well and there is an effective key person system in place to help with this. When children start at the nursery a comprehensive introduction and settling in period is followed. During this time staff take time to find out a great deal about children's routines and home life. They use this information to meet individual children's needs. For example, babies' sleep habits are carefully replicated for continuity and a party for children who were soon going to school was planned around their keen interest in 'under the sea'.

Staff use their knowledge of children to plan challenges and opportunities which will stretch and interest them. Children take delight at singing rhymes and join in with familiar words. Older children demonstrate they can capably follow the rules of a game of hide and seek. The daily routines provide children with learning opportunities as well. Staff encourage children to count during activities to develop their awareness of numbers and counting. Staff promote children's language and literacy skills by encouraging children to find their place cards for lunch and children then carefully spell out their names.

Staff undertake observations and assessments on the children and use these generally well to identify their next steps in learning. Overall they use these records well to help them be sure children are making good progress. However, staff are not consistent in how they use this information to identify children's next steps in learning and do not always incorporate this effectively into their planning. In addition, management is not fully effective at monitoring this aspect to ensure that all children make as good progress as they might. Parents feel they are kept well informed about their children's development. They are happy with the balance of informal daily updates and a formal meeting held every four months. Staff help children who are soon to move to the next room or on to school. They make sure that children demonstrate the skills needed for their next steps in learning. For example, staff help babies to feed themselves and by developing young children's table manners. Older children are prepared for school as they select their own breakfast and help clear up afterwards. Staff have high expectations of children and throughout the nursery allow children to try things out for themselves. For example, children select and put on dressing-up costumes by themselves before assisting them.

Overall, children's progress is monitored well; the required progress check for two-year-old children is completed and shared with parents. Staff know that this check may help them identify any additional support needed.

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

The nursery team strives to ensure children feel secure, happy and confident. The key person system works well. This enables all children and their families to build close relationships with the staff they work most closely with. Staff talk to babies and children about their home and families and this builds their self-esteem and develops their sense of belonging in the nursery. Even new children to the nursery are confident and happily engaged in their play. This shows how secure they feel with staff. Relationships are strong across the whole nursery between children, parents and staff and time is taken to chat and share information. Children are confident at holding conversations with staff and with each other, which helps their developing communication skills and builds friendships. When children are collected staff share information about what their children have done that day and the other children call 'goodbye'. Behaviour is good. Staff encourage good behaviour by using appropriate and positive strategies. For example, with babies they use the distraction of a sound game during meal time to keep them settled. For older children, they involve them in answering questions when they begin to fidget in a group session.

The nursery management has recently focused on developing support for children when they are facing any changes, such as changes at home or moving between rooms or to other settings. They recognise that changes in children's lives can cause them anxiety and so a programme has been developed to help prepare children for these. For example, staff devise individual plans for children to help them become familiar with what will happen next. These include visits to the new setting, looking at photographs and reading them stories that help them to understand and talk about what might happen. When children move to school the nursery staff help parents understand the new routine and what they can expect from school life. This helps parents to understand how they can support their children at this time. Parents report that they feel both they and their children are really well prepared for moving on.

The nursery environment helps children gain independence as toilets and wash basins are child height and coat hooks are low allowing them to manage self-care skills for themselves. Care practices are carried out sensitively to respond to children's needs. The changing areas are hygienic and care is taken to make them pleasant with pictures and wall displays. Gloves and aprons are always used to prevent the spread of infection. The nursery provides all the nappies and wipes as part of their service and these are readily available for staff to use. Staff supervise children closely and when needed there are sufficient staff to provide one-to-one supervision. For example, when babies are learning to pull themselves up to a tray in the garden staff are nearby to help and encourage this. The daily routine runs smoothly and keeps children exceptionally well cared for and safe.

The nursery is keen to promote healthy lifestyles with children. They pride themselves in their commitment to healthy home-cooked food and a carefully planned menu is followed to provide children with balanced and nutritious meals. The cook prepares these daily and

children's individual dietary requirements are well catered for. There is plenty of opportunity for physical exercise and the outdoor area is used by children every day. The setup of the garden allows for babies to crawl safely while older children are running and jumping; therefore, meeting the needs of all the children.

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

The nursery has a strong management team that provides clear guidance to the staff. They are continuously driving improvements. They identify priorities and then, with careful consideration, put these into place to benefit children. For example, the recent changes made to support children as they move to new experiences have been successful. An ongoing weekly action record is used to keep a focus on the improvements being made and how they are working.

The management team has rigorous processes in place for keeping children safe. They complete a thorough risk assessment process which identifies and minimises risks to children. All staff are trained and kept updated in their knowledge of safeguarding, first aid and the use of an Epipen. Every member of staff understands their responsibility to safeguarding and what to do if they have a concern about a child in their care. New staff cover this as part of their induction to ensure that they are aware of how to keep children safe. The manager carries out daily room checks to monitor children's safety and that staff are following all the required procedures. These include, keeping the environment safe, maintaining staff ratios and that dietary requirements are being met. The front door is kept locked to prevent unauthorised visitors gaining access to the children. In addition, children are prevented from going into the office and kitchen to help keep them safe.

The manager encourages all staff to undertake training. The nursery has recently taken on an apprentice, who will be studying while working, and a mentor within the staff team has been allocated to support them. When staff attend training they are encouraged to share their knowledge and ideas with the rest of the staff team to help drive improvements. The management team reflects on its practice as well as that of the nursery as a whole. The recruitment and induction process is rigorous to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with the children and are aware of their roles. Senior staff lead by example and there is a culture of team work throughout the nursery. Weekly room meetings enhance this team approach. All members of staff have regular supervision and are monitored by management. However, management has not effectively identified the inconsistency in how staff complete and use their observational assessments.

Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents report that staff are responsive to their individual queries and concerns and that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Wider partnerships are evident and the nursery has links with several schools, advisors and other professionals.

The special educational needs coordinator has a clear view of her role to support all children with identified needs. There is a range of individual support strategies that shows a clear commitment to help all children make as much progress as possible. The nursery has many children where English is not their first language. Management have devised strategies that help staff, children and parents overcome any difficulties presented by language barriers. For example, they have redesigned forms and ask parents to provide key words in their home language to support children in the nursery.

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	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
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 inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. 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	EY295050
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	833900
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	67
Name of provider	Western Elms Nursery School Partnership
Date of previous inspection	10/12/2008
Telephone number	0118 9572146

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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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