

Springlands Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	650129
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Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
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Registered person	Catherine House
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Springlands Day Nursery is privately owned and is one of three settings run by the same owner. It opened in 1985 and operates from a converted house situated in Colchester. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 59 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week for 48 weeks of the year. Opening times are from 07:30 until 18:00.

There are currently 92 children aged from 16 months to eight years on roll. Of these, 44 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions, full day care or out of school care. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 27 staff, of whom 20 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are seven staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The nursery also employs an administrator. The setting receives support

from the local authority, the Essex Day Nurseries' Association (EDNA) and the Springlands Cluster Group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because their individual health requirements are extremely well met. Exceptionally effective policies and procedures are in place for managing sickness and administering medication and first aid. This ensures that children are superbly cared for. All staff attend first aid and food hygiene courses every three years. Scrupulous attention is given to the staff's health and hygiene routines. Tables are frequently cleaned with anti-bacterial cleanser, hand sanitising solution is used effectively and playrooms and the garden are checked thoroughly each day for cleanliness. Children have an extremely strong understanding of simple health and hygiene practices. They independently, spontaneously and consistently follow hygiene routines. Children know the importance of washing their hands to remove germs and prevent the spread of infection. They always dispose of used tissues in the bin. Toothbrushes are provided so that children can clean their teeth after breakfast. Children easily manage their personal care as toilet facilities are easily accessible. They use mealtimes as an extension to their formal learning activities by discussing what they are eating and helping staff to set up and clear away equipment.

Children benefit from a highly nutritious diet. They thoroughly enjoy washing and preparing a variety of fruit for their snack. Children talk about the food that is good for you and learn about the vitamins in fruit and the calcium in milk. Meals are cooked by an outside catering provider and meet strict standards to ensure children receive a balanced diet and develop good eating habits. Menus are varied and includes food from other countries, which educates the taste buds and adds to topics of conversation. The children's range of dietary needs and requirements are meticulously catered for and the youngest children in the nursery are fed according to their individual routine. Mealtimes are very happy social occasions where the older children independently serve their food and younger children are encouraged to feed themselves. Parents are invited to food tasting sessions so that they can try the menus offered to the children.

Children learn about healthy living through planned and everyday discussions and routines. There are excellent opportunities for indoor and outdoor physical activities, which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Children ride bicycles, scooters and wheeled toys carefully so that they can manoeuvre around obstacles. They confidently climb, balance on and crawl through apparatus. Children enthusiastically develop control of their bodies and improve physical abilities and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities such as practising ball skills. Excellent use is made of the garden throughout the year. Children enjoy running energetically and playing racing and chasing games such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' They develop their imagination by going on 'bear hunts', which produces a great deal of laughter, screams and interaction with their friends and they build dens under the trees.

Children are protected and stay healthy in warm weather. Staff are extremely mindful of the effects of the hot sun. All children wear sun hats when they go outside to play and each child has a named bottle of sunscreen, which staff apply frequently. Shaded areas are provided in the garden and staff ensure that children drink plenty of fluids so that they do not become thirsty or dehydrated.

Children rest or sleep peacefully according to their needs. Cosy areas with cushions or bean bags are provided within each playroom so that children are comfortable as they read or play quietly. Younger children sleep peacefully and undisturbed in cool, darkened areas of the playrooms. Staff recognise the signs of tiredness in babies and children, they act on this knowledge to plan and support appropriate periods of rest and activity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very safe, vibrant and welcoming indoor and outdoor environment that successfully combines natural resources, such as mature trees and gardens. A wealth of posters, photographs and examples of children's work relating to recent learning experiences are displayed. Children display an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They can explain why it is important to take turns on the outdoor climbing equipment or why water needs to be mopped up quickly from the floor. Regular fire drills are practised so that children know what to do if they need to evacuate the premises in an emergency. Children develop a strong sense of responsibility as they learn about road safety and this is always incorporated into the planning for outings. Children who attend the out of school club are closely supervised as they walk to and from school. They wear fluorescent jackets to aid visibility and demonstrate sensible road sense.

Children are protected extremely well by the frequent checks taken by staff to identify any potential safety hazards. Thorough, formal risk assessment is undertaken with each member of staff having a responsibility for checking a section of the nursery. The staff are extremely vigilant about the security of the children. There is a secure door entry system and parents have to answer security questions through the intercom before they enter. All visitors are rigorously monitored and reminded of the staff's responsibilities to protect the children.

Children use an excellent range of toys and play materials, including Montessori resources. All equipment is frequently checked for damage and cleanliness. Good quality and well maintained furniture is available to enable young children to eat, sleep and play in comfort and safety, for example, cots and low-level feeding chairs. Play resources are appealingly displayed for children to explore. They are also able to help themselves to items of their choice from open fronted shelves, storage units and drawers. Children learn to use tools such as scissors carefully and in safety and they know to tuck their chairs under the table to prevent tripping hazards.

Children are safeguarded because the nursery has a thorough child protection policy and clear flowcharts detailing the procedures to take if there are concerns regarding a child's well-being. Regular child protection training is offered to staff and the child protection handbook from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is easily accessible. This ensures that staff are secure in their knowledge of current information regarding child protection, which makes certain that they always act in the best interests of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and thoroughly enjoy their day at the nursery. Activities are stimulating and exciting and enable children to be actively engaged. Staff have high expectations for each child and the children rise exceptionally well to the challenges presented to them. Children show high levels of curiosity as they plunge into new experiences and also demonstrate a great deal of pleasure playing with well-loved favourites such as sand and water play. The

staff's interaction with the children is warm, caring and always positive. They make time to listen to the children and develop their conversation, such as encouraging them to recall past events in their lives. Younger children are able to contribute to secure relationships with staff who give them their full attention when they try to communicate.

The careful planning of activities for all age groups ensures that children are offered a superb variety of play and learning experiences. For example, children take part in cookery sessions and they knead dough to make cheese scones. They are offered a wealth of other sensory, tactile experiences such as exploring jelly, corn flour and water or paint. An extensive range of natural objects or household items are provided so that young children can investigate through heuristic play and make sense of objects in their own time and in their own way. Staff frequently attend additional training and have an excellent understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The key worker system, where every child is attached to a specific member of staff is highly effective in ensuring that the personal and developmental needs of each child are very successfully met. The nursery undertakes detailed analysis of each child's needs and interests and the way in which they best learn. The curriculum is then tailored individually for each child.

Children attending the out of school scheme are joyful and busy as they take part in fun activities. Their contributions are valued as they play a lead role in planning tasks and projects. For example, they use fabric paints to design a decorative banner that will create a private, cosy corner for the 'coral cavers' group. Children talk animatedly to staff about their school day and they sometimes choose to sit with the younger children for stories or musical activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children have excellent opportunities to learn and demonstrate an exceedingly positive attitude towards learning. The atmosphere within the 'dolphin pool' is charged with positive energy as each child is purposefully engaged throughout the day. Children become extremely confident, self assured and self disciplined as they work effectively on their own and with others. They play a dynamic role in their learning, as they offer ideas to staff with great enthusiasm and excitement. The staff are very skilled at responding imaginatively and quickly to their ideas. For example, when the children and staff find a frog in the shed, this event sparks the children's interest in the natural world and results in a great deal of discussion about the life cycle of the frog. The staff then quickly organise creative activities and problem solving tasks such as sequencing pictures to consolidate the children's knowledge.

Children are making rapid progress towards the early learning goals. Assessment is outstandingly good and staff maintain detailed informative records of progress. Clear targets are set for improvements based on regular assessments and observations of individual children. These include specific targets for those with learning difficulties or disabilities or English as an additional language. Children benefit immensely from the exceptional knowledge and understanding the staff have of the Foundation Stage and how to deliver it effectively. Planning takes account of each child's interests and abilities and provides a broad and balanced range of activities across the six areas of learning. The older and more able children do very well and develop their capacity for more in-depth thinking. Children benefit because the staff make excellent use of the available resources. They understand that by setting out the room appealingly, children will be enticed into exploring and creating their own fun and games. The outdoor environment is unique and exceptionally well used to provide a stimulating resource through which all aspects of the curriculum are taught.

Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They quickly become fiercely independent and self-sufficient through undertaking tasks such as laying the table, serving food, pouring drinks or washing up. They flourish because staff emphasise their achievements and say how proud they are and this boosts children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff skilfully incorporate into the curriculum daily opportunities that develop the attitudes and abilities, which enable children to concentrate and achieve well in their future learning.

Children are extremely confident communicators. They chat animatedly to staff and show a high level of curiosity by asking questions about visitors. Children can recognise words on flash cards, understand visual prompts in the environment and display high levels of interest in books and stories. They recognise the initial letters of words, know that print carries meaning and show their enjoyment of rhyme and rhyming words. Plenty of opportunities are provided for children to write or explore mark making both indoors and outside and children enjoy showing visitors how they adeptly write their names on artwork.

Children relish taking part in problem solving activities that develop their mathematical skills. They can count to high numbers and proficiently sort and categorise items according to shape, size or colour. Mathematics is effectively incorporated into the routine of the day as plates, cutlery and chairs are counted and mathematical language such as 'one more' or 'one less' is used when children calculate items they need. Children record information on graphs and measure size and capacity as they play. They delight in exploring patterns and symmetry and sing number rhymes and songs, immediately working out how many current buns or speckled frogs are left if one is removed.

Children are given excellent opportunities to develop their scientific, exploratory and investigative skills. They experiment with string and saltwater and observe what happens when salt crystals form. They learn about animals and pets and show great fascination in the millipedes and African land snails. Discussions and activities about different types of houses lead to children to learning their addresses. Children adeptly use the computer and skilfully click and drag the mouse to control movements on the screen. Other activities offered to enhance hand-eye coordination include weaving paper strips, making woollen pom-poms and moving small cubes with tongs. Children use the Montessori equipment to practise opening and closing a range of fastenings such as buckles, buttons, press studs and Velcro.

Children are offered a wealth of opportunities to foster their creative skills, either through art and craft work or imaginative play at the vet's surgery. Children make appointments, use a laptop and telephone, record conversations and take care of the pets. They are encouraged to use all of their senses when playing, for example, when they hunt for items in the sawdust. There are daily opportunities to explore music and learn how sounds can be changed. During music sessions they clap beats, try different instruments and note the different sounds and changes in tempo.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very settled because the nursery fosters a strong sense of community and belonging. The younger children in the nursery are nurtured in a warm and comfortable environment where they are relaxed and contented. The affectionate and gentle care given by staff enables them to develop a sense of belonging and trust. Good eye contact is given and plenty of cuddles so that each child understands that they are valued by and important to their carer. Children are

encouraged to bring things from home to carry, suck or play with because the staff recognise and understand that this may help young children move between home and the nursery. Staff recognise that children need a predictable environment in which to feel safe which encourages independence. Staff are also very aware that changes of staff or moving to another room may temporarily affect confidence. Therefore, superb attention has been given to the transition process as children move up into the next room and they are given excellent opportunities to get to know their new play environment and carers.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children show fascination, awe and wonder as they observe animals and living things. Children behave extremely well and understand what constitutes right and wrong. They strive to do their best and to be nice and care for others. Staff explain how it makes you feel happy inside if someone says something kind to you. The songs and action rhymes that the children sing with gusto, link to important social skills such as sharing or offering friendship. Children take care of their environment and are extremely willing to help tidy up or sweep up the sawdust. They learn about the need for recycling and discuss with staff which bin they need to put their waste paper in.

Children learn about the wider world as they play with a culturally rich variety of play materials, musical instruments and books. Notices and labels in the play environment reflect different languages and scripts from around the world. Children of all ages confidently use Makaton sign language to convey messages to staff at snack times. An extensive range of cultural festivals and traditional events are celebrated with the children. Children also develop self-esteem and respect for others as they celebrate each others' birthdays. Children of all abilities are helped to reach their potential because the experienced staff team are quick to recognise any developmental delay. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are respected and fully integrated within the nursery. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has a very good understanding of her role and is effective in meeting children's needs, through liaising with parents and with other agencies.

Children benefit from the very strong links with the nearby schools and the local community. They are taken on outings to visit reception classes for story time or to use the computer suites. Teachers come into the nursery to meet the children. As a result there is a smooth transition when children enter the reception year. Other educational visits and visitors are frequent and enhance the curriculum exceptionally well. For example, an artist came into the nursery to show the children how to make pots from clay. Children then had great fun as they made their own creations using a potter's wheel.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff and parents work together to benefit the whole family as well as the individual child. Excellent systems are in place to ensure parents are kept fully informed of the progress their child is making. The high quality displays and exceptional feedback by staff at the end of the day informs parents about activities and teaching methods. This enables them to confidently support their child's learning at home. Children take home resources such as reading books, maths packs and language and literacy sacks to extend and enhance children's learning. Parents of younger children receive detailed daily diary sheets indicating sleep times, nappy changes and food eaten. Advice sheets with useful hints and tips have been devised by the nursery specifically to share with parents. Regular social events are held, training events for parents are organised and written reports are frequently shared. The management and staff recognise the value and importance of fully including the parents in all aspects of nursery life as it is integral to the well-being of the children in their care. Parents views are actively sought through questionnaires and discussions.

All parents spoken to were delighted with the care and education their children receive and a wealth of written complementary comments were viewed. The parents recently nominated the nursery for a national award.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. There is a strong ethos of reflective practice which leads to continuous innovation and improvement. This ensures that children flourish as staff consistently monitor and evaluate what they do. The manager has a very clear vision and strong commitment to providing the best possible outcomes for children. Through regular meetings and staff appraisals, the manager is aware of the individual skills and particular interests of each member of staff. They are deployed extremely effectively around the nursery to benefit the children. The setting has achieved a number of awards including recognised safety and healthy eating awards, Investors in People and recently achieved the second highest place in the United Kingdom at the Nursery of the Year awards.

Organisation of the nursery is exceptional. Ample space is provided for children to explore in hygienic and safe conditions and a great deal of care and thought is put into the provision of resources and equipment. On site training facilities are provided. The staff team is extremely motivated and attend regular 'quality of teaching' training evenings. Robust recruitment and comprehensive induction procedures are in place for new staff.

Documentation is meticulously organised and promotes the efficient and safe management of the nursery. Policies and procedures that are individual to the setting are robust and fully support the practice of the staff team. A very high regard is given to confidentiality and all paperwork relating to the children is securely stored.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to continue to develop the high quality evaluative structures for the management and organisation of the nursery to include new initiatives as they become available. Evaluation is now directly linked to Every Child Matters and is exceedingly comprehensive. As a result outstanding outcomes for children are achieved.

At the last inspection for nursery education there were no key issues raised. The provider was asked to consider building on existing professionalism within the team structure to enable less experienced staff to evolve and develop their practice through continued support and mentoring. All staff receive frequent training. Innovative induction, mentoring, appraisal and evaluation systems ensure that every practitioner is empowered to provide the best possible care and education for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk