

The Cherries Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY278288
Inspection date 18/06/2010
Inspector Martyn Richards

Setting address Cherry Tree Primary School and Speech and Language
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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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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 Cherries Nursery is privately owned and is one of three provisions run by the same owner. It opened in 2003 and operates from a demountable classroom within the grounds of Cherry Tree Primary School and Speech and Language Centre, situated on the outskirts of Colchester. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area and also make use of the school playgrounds and the school hall for additional physical play. A maximum of 22 children aged from two to five may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five mornings a week during school term times. Session times are from 8.45am until 11.45pm. Children may attend for a variety of sessions during the week. The facilities are also available for the nursery to open in the afternoons.

There are currently 25 children on roll and 19 were present on the day of the inspection. The nursery receives funding for nursery education in respect of some children. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who have English as an additional language. It has suitable access and resources for children with disabilities.

The nursery employs four staff, of whom two staff, including the team leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two other staff members are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. Staff from the sister provisions provide cover in the event of staff sickness or holidays. There are close links with the adjacent primary school, to which most children transfer and with a local Children's Centre. The setting receives support from the local authority, Essex Day Nurseries' Association (EDNA) and Springlands Cluster Group and has been awarded Investor in People Award.

The Cherries Nursery is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The nursery has built on the many strengths noted at its last inspection and now makes excellent provision for its children. The high quality of its leadership and management has resulted in a setting where every child is known and valued as an individual. Each child's needs are identified and met through the programme staff offer. It is a warm, welcoming and inclusive community, where children thoroughly enjoy the exciting and challenging activities provided, grow in confidence and make excellent headway in their learning. It is a self critical organisation, always alert to ways of making its provision even better. It is highly valued by the parents, one of whom comments: "It's brilliant. We've moved away but we keep him here because it's so one-to-one. They really care about every child and he loves coming. He's got on so well!" The nursery has an outstanding capacity to continue improving in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- encouraging parents to input in the self evaluation process and ensure that it has a strong focus on the impact provision makes on the learning and development of the children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are right to give top priority to keeping the children safe. Safeguarding levels are excellent. The suitability and experience of all adults working with the children are carefully checked, visitors must register on arrival and departure and there are stringent procedures for circumstances in which a child might not be collected at the right time, or might be collected by an unrecognised person. The site and accommodation are secure from intrusion, or from children slipping out unseen. Staff hold frequent fire drills and emergency exits are clearly marked and kept free from clutter. All the staff have training in child protection and understand their responsibilities in this regard. An annual risk assessment of the accommodation and outdoor facilities is carried out, to make sure there are no unseen hazards for the children. Similarly, wherever new activities or equipment is introduced, staff carefully check its safety.

Staff have an excellent relationship with the children. They enjoy the children's company, listen to their anecdotes and concerns and play alongside them without removing the essential element of choice from them. They are patient, calm and appreciative of the children's efforts. As a result the behaviour of the children is excellent and this reinforces the gentle but purposeful tone of the nursery. The nursery's 'Key Person' scheme is invaluable in identifying the progress and welfare of each individual child and in creating a close links with parents so they are able to work together in promoting their child's development. All children have full access to the activities the nursery provides and to activities which build on their interests and skills. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have individual programmes and are helped by staff who have taken time to acquire special skills in order to meet their needs. Children for whom English is an additional language feel at home in the activity room, where instances of their home language are prominent. Even the setting's fish has a Russian name.

Staff commitment is shown by the regular and substantial programme of additional training they undertake to further their skills in areas, such as, first aid, safeguarding and early years provision. The recommendations of their last inspection have been carried out rigorously and an excellent process for periodic self evaluation has been established. This allows the staff to critically examine the nursery's strengths and areas where it might improve and to agree priorities for future development. They are keen to continue refining this highly effective

process and to find ways of involving parents in it. Since their last inspection they have improved outdoor education provision, built stronger links with parents and set in place an outstanding system for tracking the learning and development of every child, so that each day's learning can build on what has gone before.

The nursery has good links with parents and with its adjacent school. This is seen when children leave the nursery and enter the reception class. It also makes excellent use of the advice and support it receives through the local authority and from the specialist agencies which support children with particular needs. It provides parents with exceptionally high quality information every three months on the achievements of their children and on the next steps planned for their learning. This means parents and staff can work together to promote the children's welfare and development. The outstanding quality of its leadership, management and teamwork underpin the success of Cherries Nursery.

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

Some of the children bound into the room on arrival and settle within minutes to play at a self chosen activity. Others take longer to decide which activity to choose, but all are happy, friendly to staff and calm when mothers leave them. One child plays confidently on one of the nursery's laptop computers, moving the figures around the screen with great skill until the dog gets to the tins of dog food - a triumph greeted with "I've done it!". Another child plays in the role play area, temporarily transformed into a Garden Centre because many nursery activities at present focus on the natural world. He plays with the telephone and the cash register and sorts out his stock. He successfully sells a visitor a toy plastic rake for ten pence. He has some receipts to issue and knows where to make his marks on them. A third child is eager to show off the nursery's tortoises. He remembers their names - Martha and Arthur and comments that their names rhyme. He finds it curious that Martha is so much bigger than Arthur and wonders why this is so. Two children head for the writing corner where there is a display of writing equipment and papers. They find objects labelled with words in English and in other languages too, recognising that not everyone speaks in the same way.

Staff play alongside the children at their activities. They have a very clear understanding of the range of different learning that might result from the activity and they chat with the children, ask questions and raise new possibilities. They note the kinds of interest and ideas the children show and areas of misunderstanding they might have. Later in the week, staff pull all their notes together and discuss the best next steps for the children's programmes in the following week. These comprehensive notes, accumulated over time, give a clear picture of the excellent progress the children make while in the nursery. The life cycle of frogs is a current fascination. They notice how the tadpoles are growing legs, but that they still do not look like the mature frog in the books alongside their aquarium. They make pictures of the tadpoles as they develop. The World Cup of football has been a great interest. The children have made flags, played games of marble football and decorated paper team shirts. They have taken their enthusiasm outside to try playing football and counting the goals.

There is an outstandingly rich variety of activity, capturing children's interest and enthusiasm and providing opportunities for learning in all areas of the early years programme. The children become very involved in their play and this involvement means they learn quickly and very well. Most children can hold a book the right way, distinguish the print from the text and identify some letters and their sounds. Most can select their own name from a pile of name tags and use their knowledge of initial sounds to decide which day of the week to enter on the weather chart. They improve their manual skills, holding pencils correctly and learning to keep within the lines of the frame of a page, or to copy given letters accurately. Most recognise some written numbers and nearly all can count to ten or above. They point out simple regular shapes like squares and circles, and they understand words, such as, "more" and "less", "larger" and "smaller". They know how seeds germinate, how to operate a simple computer programme and how to improve their bubble blowing skills by adjusting their lips as they blow. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and wash their hands regularly, while commenting that this "washes away germs". They enjoy vigorous outdoor games, as well as more delicate indoor physical activities, such as, using scissors accurately and safely. They enjoy singing and making sounds on home made instruments. Photographs of them painting mugs as Fathers' day gifts show rapt attention and effort. Over their time in the nursery the children become more self reliant, and socially skilled. They are helpful to staff, in tidying up unbidden, for example, prepared to take turns and to listen quietly and politely when adults are talking to them. From their very varied starting points the children make excellent progress in learning. The skills, knowledge and person qualities they acquire will stand them in good stead for the next stage of their education.

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	1
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	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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	2
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