

Toad Hall Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Jane Mount

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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*.

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

Toad Hall Nursery registered in 2002 and is part of a chain of nurseries owned by Careroom Limited. It is situated in Hitchin, Hertfordshire and operates from a large two storey building. A secure garden area is also available for outdoor play.

The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered to care for 75 children under eight years. There are currently 91 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group, including 21 children who receive government funding for early years education. Toad Hall Nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm all year round, excluding bank holidays and a week between Christmas and New Year. The provision employs 21 members of staff including the cook and over half of the staff team hold early years qualifications to Level 3 or above.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

An inclusive and welcoming environment is provided to all with a committed staff team who effectively implement the setting's policies and procedures to ensure children are safe and their welfare is protected. Highly effective partnerships between the nursery and parents significantly contribute to the setting's knowledge of individual children to ensure their needs are fully met. Children's learning and development are fully promoted and they are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Strong leadership and a positive attitude to improvement demonstrate the setting's commitment to continuous improvement. Processes to effectively monitor the quality of the service offered are in place and a system, such as, self-evaluation to ensure continued improvement has been introduced.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further a quality improvement process, such as self-evaluation, to monitor and extend effective practice to ensure continued improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are secure and children's welfare is protected. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure staff are suitable to

work with children. They regularly update their child protection knowledge through training and clear management responsibilities in relation to child protection have been established, including having a named designated person. Children's safety is paramount and positive steps are taken to keep children safe. Staff supervise children closely and the security of the premises ensures no unauthorised person can gain access and that children cannot leave unsupervised. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff are vigilant and detailed written risk assessments, including daily checks and assessments for outings, ensure the environment remains safe at all times.

The setting is committed to fully implementing the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and they have been working extremely hard to develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the framework. Continuous professional development is positively encouraged and staff regularly attend appropriate early years courses and workshops to ensure they are well-informed and their childcare knowledge is kept up-to-date. Effective communication ensures staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and consequently, they work well-together as a team which has a positive impact on all outcomes for children. Staff are guided by a strong management team who strive to provide a high quality service. They are aware of their key strengths and have systems in place to monitor and assess the quality of the provision. One way this is successfully achieved is through seeking feedback from parents and the setting have recently introduced an online parent questionnaire to more effectively and efficiently assist in obtaining parents views. A nursery development plan is in place and individual monthly room action plans ensure staff learn how to be reflective in their practice and are pro-active in identifying areas they wish to change or improve. A self-evaluation system to systematically identify the setting's strengths and areas they wish to enhance further has also been introduced and the setting aims to actively use this as another way of ensuring continuous improvement. One area identified for further development is the children's outdoor play area and this is in the process of being addressed.

Good use of space, resources and effective staff deployment ensures an enabling, child centred environment that is safe and fully inclusive. Highly visual wall displays provide a welcoming and stimulating environment throughout the nursery. All children and their families are valued and included with staff who are approachable and friendly. Excellent partnerships with parents significantly contributes to children's well-being and ensures their care and learning needs are fully supported. Parents receive a wealth of good quality information about the nursery and their children. An open-door policy and frequent opportunities for parents to get involved in their children's care, learning and development, strengthens relationships and ensures children's individual needs are met. The nursery works in partnership with others and have developed close links with the local children's centre and the local authority development team. Partnerships with other early years providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage are in place with effective links being forged with local schools, thereby, supporting children's transition to school.

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

Children's learning and development are promoted. A key person system is used and staff closely monitor children's learning through regularly observing and assessing their key children to identify their achievements and progress over time. Children's individual development books clearly show how they are progressing and this information is then used when planning future play experiences. Consequently, activities and play experiences are planned which identify the developmental needs of individual children to ensure they make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff work hard to provide a child-centred environment where the daily routine has a balance of child-initiated and adult-led. Children enjoy their surroundings and show a keen interest in what they do. They arrive happy and quickly settle and engage in activities. Their independence skills are encouraged as they can freely access the environment and make individual choices in their play. Older children take an active role in mealtimes and a rolling snack-time enables them to choose for themselves when they wish to have their snack. Younger children's self-help skills are fully promoted with staff encouraging them to try things for themselves and supporting them while they try to succeed.

Children have regular opportunities to express themselves creatively and can freely access a varied range of art and writing materials. They enjoy investigating the changes to colours when painting or exploring the different textures when making models. Children use their imaginations to express themselves and confidently share ideas and thoughts. They regularly experience music and listen and respond with great excitement when looking at books and listening to stories. Children have regular opportunities to become familiar with the written word. They confidently match and sort objects, learn about volume through filling containers when playing with sand or water and enjoy singing songs which incorporate the use of numbers. Children learn about the wider world and about other cultures and religions and staff promote a positive awareness of diversity through discussion and many activities. Children have opportunities to talk about their families, home life and about the local community. They learn about the environment through activities, such as, planting and growing and regularly talk about the weather and seasons.

Staff are proactive in implementing some effective strategies to promote and safeguard children's health. Good hygiene procedures are applied at mealtimes with staff ensuring tables are cleaned and hand washing takes priority before children eat. Also, staff wear tabards when serving or handling food and a no-shoe policy is adhered to in the baby room which helps to prevent infections and keeps the area clean for less mobile children. Through discussion and some activities children are learning how to stay healthy and about personal care routines. They are aware of the need to wash their hands before they eat and after visiting the toilet and when asked, older children are able to confidently say the reasons for doing so. Healthy eating is fully promoted and a new menu has just been introduced which is nutritionally balanced. All food is freshly prepared on the premises and menus are shared with parents. Children are encouraged to try new foods and participate in activities where they learn about the benefits of healthy eating.

Children develop self-confidence in their physical skills as they use a varied range of indoor and outdoor equipment and activities on a daily basis. They demonstrate a strong sense of security and are confident and self-assured in the setting. Positive relationships between staff, children and parents enable children to feel secure. The environment is safe and children are learning how to keep themselves and others safe. They learn how to safely hold scissors when cutting out and staff sensitively remind children not to run when indoors in case they fall and hurt themselves or others. Children behave well with behaviour managed in a positive manner with clear boundaries set by staff. Praise and encouragement ensure children develop high levels of self-esteem. Staff reinforce sharing and taking turns and discuss how children's behaviour can have an impact on others. Children are valued as individuals and in turn are learning to respect each others differences and feelings and to manage their own behaviour.

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	1

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