

Saffron Walden Nursery School

ShireHill Industrial Estate, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3AQ

Inspection date	26/04/2013
Previous inspection date	20/11/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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

- Children benefit from an imaginatively resourced, exciting and stimulating outdoor area which encourages them to explore and investigate their environment, make choices, persevere to solve problems and gain independence.
- Children develop strong bonds and attachments to the adults caring for them, and consequently grow in confidence, as the key person system is strong and effective in meeting their individual needs.
- The management team is very forward looking and demonstrates an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses, and how to prioritise improvements.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Tracking is not yet in place for all groups of children, therefore their progress is not yet fully monitored to identify any variations in achievement.
- There is scope to encourage further ways of engaging parents in their children's learning by sharing resources, with ideas for their use at home, to further aid children's progress.

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 activities and routine care in the three main playrooms and the outside area.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the acting manager of a group of children engaged in spontaneous play in the outside area.
- The inspector checked evidence of staff suitability and qualifications.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment documents and records of achievement.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day as well as information received in advance on questionnaires and surveys.

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full Report

Information about the setting

Saffron Walden Nursery School was registered in 1993. It is a registered charity and managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents of children who attend the setting. The nursery school operates from three rooms within purpose-built premises, situated on Shire Hill Industrial Estate in Saffron Walden, Essex. A large enclosed outdoor area is used by all children for outdoor activities. The nursery is open each week day from 8am to 4pm, during school term times. A play scheme is offered during school holidays, with sessions from 9am to 3pm. Children attend either on a full-time or part-time basis.

The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 90 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage age range. Children live in the local area and surrounding villages. The nursery provides funded places for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The staff currently support a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who are learning English as an additional language.

There are nine members of staff who work regularly with the children. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications including one with Early Years Professional Status and one with Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- introduce ways of monitoring the progress of different groups of children so that any variations in achievement are identified

- seek further ways of engaging and encouraging parents to become involved in educational programmes for children, for example, by introducing story sacks and other resources with ideas for their use at home, to strengthen links between home and the nursery and aid children's progress.

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy an exciting and stimulating range of play and learning activities at this very child-centred setting. The ethos of open-ended, discovery-based play for children is well executed in the free-flow style of sessions which allows children to play indoors or outside as they wish; this is an outstanding feature of the setting. All rooms open onto the shared outside area which provides a variety of surfaces including grassy slopes, hard standing, mud pits, trees and dens. These areas are all intelligently and imaginatively resourced with equipment selected to aid children in making choices and solving problems. For example, children decide to recreate the story about three billy goats and choose planks and crates to build bridges, complete with an imaginary troll. They cooperate, listen to one another and work collectively and individually to develop the game. They show sustained concentration, perseverance and determination and demonstrate their creative thinking as they select and try different combinations of materials. Practitioners support this level of engagement by being on hand, keeping an eye on safety while allowing children to take calculated risks and challenge their own limits. The nursery actively embraces the 'Forest Schools' philosophy and provides experiences, such as trips to local woodland where children experience outdoor learning and a largely natural environment. Here they can extend and challenge themselves and use their in-built ingenuity and creativity to full effect, which is shown to have a positive influence on how children then learn in a classroom situation.

Other children are engaged in play, such as digging and exploring the 'mud kitchen', where they can learn about weight and volume as they fill and empty containers while cooking up a mud feast. A practitioner sits close by, and joins in, clearly showing that she values the children's play, and demonstrating her understanding that they are learning well. The rain does not deter children, in fact they relish the puddles to stomp and splash in, learning how to take care on slippery surfaces. Children who prefer to remain indoors can choose from the wide range of equipment provided. A young toddler builds a fantasy 'school' and garden, complete with children, from a construction kit, supported by a practitioner who stimulates his vocabulary and extends the play with ideas and story lines, sensitively introduced. All areas of learning are catered for well, with role-play and imaginative play resources available for children to self-select. Books and puzzles abound, and are stored and displayed in clear, labelled containers at low level. Musical instruments allow impromptu exploration of sounds and spark spontaneous singing and dancing moments. Children can make marks using chinks, water and brushes, paint or coloured pens and crayons, all readily available. Their emergent writing is utilised in colourful wall displays so they can celebrate their achievements. Festivals and cultural events are regularly enjoyed; bringing richness and depth to the curriculum and helping children develop their understanding of the world around them.

Staff closely monitor each child's development and chart their progress within a profile or 'learning journey'. These are accurate and based on detailed and evaluative observations, and include details of what children need to do next. Some parents also contribute to these records with photographs and descriptions of what children do at home or away from the setting, and this information enriches the record and informs the key persons so that a complete picture of each child's learning needs can be established. Parents are also invited to take home 'Eddie Teddy' and report back on what he gets up to with their child, for example, visiting places of interest or going for a hospital appointment. Children really value this link and enthusiastically point out their photographs with Eddie, recalling what

they did. There is however, scope to further extend such opportunities by sharing story sacks and other resources, and ideas for their use, to strengthen links between the nursery and home.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who speak English as an additional language are very well supported and where appropriate, outside professional help is sought to ensure all children are included and aided to achieve to their full potential. Dual language books are displayed at low level and used as part of the daily routine for children learning English.

Transitions at every stage are well thought through. Between rooms, children have gradually extending visits, so that they understand what to expect when they make the final move. Similarly, for children starting school, practitioners introduce ideas and activities to help children become independent in self-care and confident and enthusiastic about the changes ahead of them.

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

Children's individual care needs are well met. All necessary information is gathered before children start and a home visit is programmed in to build the effective partnership with parents from the earliest days. Children become familiar with the adults caring for them and show that they have a close bond with their key person as they freely approach them for help and to express their needs and feelings. For example, if they need assistance in getting boots and coats on for outdoor play, or for help with an item from their lunch box.

Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children's well-being is given high priority and therefore is well supported. Children who may have additional needs or are experiencing challenging family circumstances are equally given very nurturing consideration and supported to ensure they do not miss out on any learning and fun opportunities.

Because the practitioners communicate and reflect on every session, they ensure that all children are considered and included in activities, which are focused and well thought out. All planning is based on current observations, and takes account of children's expressed interests and ideas, so children are always stimulated and engaged and the sessions are well-paced and dynamic.

The environment is structured to provide children with the widest range of stimulating and intriguing play materials and activities, both indoors and outside, to challenge and inspire children to think creatively and use their imagination and skills in meaningful ways, addressing their all-round development well.

Practitioners effectively support children's growing understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Children are reminded about hand washing and using a tissue at appropriate times. They enjoy plenty of exercise and fresh air, and positive messages are given about healthy eating. Snacks include healthy choices and allow children to be in control of how much and when they wish to eat or drink. Children are involved and

engaged in self-chosen activities and as a result, they show deep engagement, perseverance and concentration, developing their skills and understanding. This prepares them for future learning by giving them the confidence in their ability as learners and achievers and preparing them for future learning well.

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

The nursery benefits from a well-qualified and motivated staff team, with strong leadership from the committee and senior staff. The nursery has undergone changes in management recently and are currently seeking to appoint a new manager. In the meantime an acting manager has taken on the role and is working closely with the committee and all staff to maintain continuity for the children and families served by the nursery.

The management team demonstrate a strong ability to organise the environment and plan activities to include all children and promote their progress. All aspects of the welfare requirements are well understood and incorporated in the day to day operation of the sessions. Planning and assessment is monitored to ensure it is consistent, precise and accurately reflects children's skills and progress. However, to date no tracking of different groups of children has been attempted to help identify any variations in achievement. Staff constantly review and reflect on their practice and share their in-depth knowledge of individual children's care and learning needs to ensure these are of paramount consideration. They are very outward looking and go to varied sources for inspiration and advice, including from a range of outside professionals. They are encouraged to absorb and demonstrate best practice examples and as a result, constantly seek ways to enhance the children's learning by embracing developments in the childcare field.

Training is valued and all staff are fully encouraged to pursue their professional development with regular updates including external and in-house training sessions and courses. As a result, children's needs are met by a well-trained and motivated staff team. By considering the views of parents and children the setting ensures that areas for development are prioritised to bring about improvements.

The nursery ensures children are fully safeguarded at all times. Staff are knowledgeable with regard to child protection matters and all concerns are followed up and would be referred if necessary to the appropriate authority. Policies and procedures in place ensure staff suitability, including very rigorous induction for any new staff joining. Comprehensive risk assessments pertaining to all areas, and outings, ensure the environment, equipment and activities are safe and suitable for children.

The partnership with parents is highly valued and efforts are made to ensure that parents are well informed at all stages regarding their child's welfare and education. Information is displayed on notice boards, in newsletters and verbally when children arrive and depart sessions. For example, details of planned activities, forthcoming events and appeals for resources, such as recyclables are displayed outside each room. The children's development profiles, or 'learning journeys', are shared openly with families and in many

cases children decide which pieces of work or photographs they would like included. Parents are positively encouraged to contribute photographs, comments and ideas which in turn inform the child's unique planning, and many choose to do so.

The nursery is well established and a full set of policies and procedures, regularly reviewed and updated, underpins daily practice and supports children's welfare; the setting benefits from safe and efficient management as a result. The open door policy welcomes parents and carers at any time and parents say they feel their views are valued and they are listened to as they find staff approachable and friendly. They enjoy the flexibility of care, such as the extended sessions, that enable them to meet work and other family commitments. Links with other settings are established and constantly reviewed as some children attend elsewhere at times during the week. The nursery practitioners fully understand the need for confidentiality and why it is important to share some information to ensure continuity of care and learning for children.

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	650123
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	916674
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	90
Name of provider	Saffron Walden Nursery School Committee
Date of previous inspection	20/11/2009
Telephone number	01799 522108

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

