

The Nursery at St Margaret's School

St Margaret's School, Gosfield Hall Park, Halstead, CO9 1SE

Inspection date	18/06/2014
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	1 Not Applicable
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- All children make excellent progress in all areas and develop the skills for their future learning. This is because they benefit from a highly stimulating, well-planned and consistently dynamic approach to teaching and learning, delivered by experienced and dedicated staff.
- Children develop exceptionally high self-esteem and a very strong sense of self, enabling them to make effective relationships and build the confidence they need to become successful learners.
- Partnership working, including use of external agencies, is fully embedded so interventions to aid children who need additional support are rapidly put in place, ensuring inclusion and helping every child make the best possible progress.
- A very firm and well-established ethos underpins the early years provision, so every child's unique needs are met with consistently high quality of teaching and meticulous monitoring.
- Safeguarding is given paramount priority at all times and trained staff ensure children are kept safe and free from harm. The partnership with parents is strengthened by the high quality and frequency of information they are given, including details of approaches to child protection.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to and interacted with children in the classrooms, in the dining hall at lunchtime and in the outside area.
- The inspector held discussions with the provider and the head of early years and carried out a joint observation with the head of early years.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation including evidence of staff checks, some policies and children's development profiles.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection.

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full report

Information about the setting

The Nursery at St Margaret's School was registered in 2013 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in classrooms within St Margaret's school in Gosfield, Essex and is managed by a private company. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four interconnecting rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. Children also receive specialist teaching in French, music and physical education. The nursery opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 31 children on roll. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review the use of text and signage in the outdoor areas, to enhance the already excellent programme for literacy and aid children's broad understanding of the uses of print in different environments.

Inspection judgements

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

Children attain exceptionally well in all areas of learning. This is because staff have a clear, precise understanding of how children learn and have high expectations to ensure that each child makes the best possible progress. The prime areas are recognised as key to laying the foundation for children's future learning, therefore, the emphasis is squarely on these areas of development in the early days and months. Children benefit from a stimulating programme of rich, varied and imaginative activities, covering all the key areas in depth. The quality of teaching is consistently high, with innovative initiatives to extend the excellent range of activities offered to children. For example, to help children develop fine motor control, as a pre-requisite to writing, they use the 'fit fingers' equipment. This is specially selected and invites children to enjoy tasks, through active play, which promote precise movements and strengthen those muscles, which will in-turn help them hold a pencil and form letters and numerals. The educational programme is structured around well-set-up playrooms and resource areas where children can choose what they wish to do and persevere, uninterrupted, at their chosen tasks. Morning sessions are more structured and include specialist teaching, such as music, French and physical education with an instructor, as well as the phonics and mathematics focused work delivered in the transition room. Afternoon sessions incorporate planned activities, such as cooking as well as children's free flow play indoors and outside. Children select role play with costumes and

props, or small world play with animals, vehicles and construction blocks, to develop their imaginative thinking and help them make sense of real world situations. The week also includes walks around the school grounds, when children are encouraged to use their senses to explore and investigate the environment. They may be listening carefully, or finding insects and observing them at close hand. Children demonstrate their eagerness and enjoyment by reflecting and talking about what they have done. The walls in every room display children's artwork and their written work, as well as photographs of their models and visitors they have learned from. By displaying children's work they know that their efforts are valued and they are inspired to try different things. For example, a child likes a paper robot that is pinned to a display. He uses his own initiative to gather the materials he needs to make one and enlists the help of an older child. They work together and produce a version of the robot, which he proudly shows to staff. He has a glow of pride and a palpable sense of achievement, making a very satisfying contribution to his learning. It demonstrates creative thinking, high self-esteem and problem solving, all skills and attributes he needs for future learning. The outside area is currently less of a print-rich environment for children and does not match the outstanding indoor classrooms in promoting children's literacy and the use of print in different environments.

Children's progress is accurately and precisely assessed and recorded from the earliest days. Staff use information provided by parents, alongside their own observations to form a baseline assessment. From there they tailor a programme to the child's unique needs. Regular reviews and updates ensure that parents are fully informed at every stage and have plenty of ideas and options to continue the learning at home. Children who start with achievement levels below those for their expected age soon make sufficient progress and raise their achievement levels significantly. This is because staff plan fun, engaging and stimulating activities that help the children learn through active participation. They record and track every child's progress meticulously and involve parents fully at every stage. Many children achieve levels over and above their expected levels, approaching and in some cases achieving the early learning goals. For these children, staff skilfully extend the breadth of tasks and activities to keep pace with the child and ensure they are challenged. For example, many children quickly learn letter sounds through targeted phonics sessions using a variety of approaches. Those who show readiness are helped to start to form simple words and sound blends. Many are confidently using basic reading books when they reach the end of their time in the nursery. They are ready to face the new challenges in reception.

The very effective partnership with parents is a strong feature of the nursery. Key persons work closely with parents and know every child very well. This enables them to spot any gaps in children's learning and address them swiftly. Intervention or additional support for any child who needs it is readily available. For example, children who speak English as an additional language, or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully supported to ensure they are not disadvantaged. Parents report that their children make excellent progress when they work together with, for example, a speech therapist. A progress check for children between the ages of two and three years is routinely carried out. The results are shared with parents, enabling any additional support required to be put in place promptly.

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

Children develop very sound emotional well-being. They demonstrate their strong sense of belonging and firm attachments and friendships, both with staff and with their peers. The efficient settling-in process gives children a chance to find their feet with a supportive parent close at hand and begin to build a relationship with their key person from the start. This enables them to become independent, active learners; they use their innate curiosity about the world around them to explore and challenge themselves. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They show an understanding of the needs of others and begin to be able to control their impulses and play and work cooperatively alongside their peers. Taking turns and waiting for staff's attention are taught, as is politeness and good manners, through discussion, small group activities and stories. Children see these values and behaviour styles further reinforced when older children come to visit them in the nursery, or when interacting at lunch time in the dining hall with children of other age groups. Staff are excellent role models, listening carefully and responding fairly to allow children to understand social situations and how to interact and behave.

The light and airy, child-centred environment is carefully planned to stimulate and engage every child. The resources are high quality and provide purposeful, creative opportunities for children to think creatively and explore their own ideas. Role play helps children make sense of real life situations. Visitors, such as police personnel and ambulance crews bring real world scenarios to them in a non-threatening way. Children's personal safety and an understanding of risks and challenges are taught through films, discussions and stories. This includes internet safety alongside an understanding of the positive uses of technology as a learning tool. Safeguarding is central to the nursery practice and embraced fully by all adults caring for the children. As well as child protection and awareness of immediate hazards, which are minimised through through risk assessment and prompt action, children take part in regular fire drills. This teaches them what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation. Children's physical well-being is promoted through daily routines. They choose what they would like for lunch each day from a menu and have this served to them, supplemented with salads and raw food choices to make a healthy balanced meal. Children access fresh drinking water at any time and learn to respond to their own body's signals to stay hydrated. For very young children, who may become tired, a cosy space is available for a rest or nap and staff ensure they remain undisturbed. Outdoor play and free movement feature daily. As well as the attached enclosed outdoor area, the school's extensive grounds and play areas are used for exuberant ball play, climbing and balancing and planned walks and outings.

Transitions at every stage are very carefully managed. This includes children's initial introduction to the nursery and continues as they progress to the next room. At various times of the day they naturally mingle and spend time with children a stage above. Those children due to move to the reception class have planned, gradual visits and sessions in the new environment. This way, children are emotionally prepared and able to address any anxieties or questions they may have by talking to familiar staff. For children who attend other settings, or who may be moving to different primary schools, liaison with staff and exchanging of information ensures continuity for every child.

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

The success of the nursery is due to inspirational leadership and a firm belief in high quality early years education as the basis for all future learning and achievement. Children attending the nursery benefit from the school's strongly embedded ethos for excellence. This ensures every possible means to help children sustain high levels of achievement throughout their educational lives, starting with the earliest days in the nursery. All aspects of the safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met. Specially trained, designated persons are in place to ensure that all staff have a full awareness and ability to respond to any signs or symptoms of abuse. This protects children from harm or neglect. The nursery environment is very secure and safe for children, meaning they cannot leave unseen and are protected from unwanted individuals entering the premises. All adults who come into contact with children are subject to stringent security checks and vetted to ensure their suitability. This includes students as well as regular staff.

Induction procedures are in place to clearly inform new staff and students on placement, of their roles and responsibilities and ensure they understand these. All staff have regular, sharply-focused supervision and appraisals. Extensive monitoring of staff performance, the quality of teaching and record keeping, alongside the tracking of every child's progress, as well as the progress of groups of children, is embedded in practice. This gives a clear indication of any areas where performance is less well developed and enables staff to implement changes of focus. For example, new initiatives in information and communication technology have raised children's achievements above previous levels. The interactive white board and personal laptops have added value to children's understanding in this area of learning. The well-qualified staff team possess a wealth of broad experience and are highly motivated. They provide children with a sense of stability and constantly praise and encourage them for their efforts and achievements. Professional development is addressed through whole school training days, individually attended courses and cascaded knowledge. Staff make good use of all sources of information, such as reading specialist journals, scouring the internet for ideas and visiting other settings for cluster meetings and to share practice ideas. This keeps a dynamic feel and ensures children benefit from new ideas and well-paced sessions.

The partnership with parents is seen as essential and forms a cornerstone for every child's learning. By seeking information from parents before children start and basing activities on children's interests and experiences away from nursery, the educational programme meets children's needs fully. Partnership working with external agencies is fully established. The area special educational needs coordinator and other specialist professionals are all available to provide support and influence the individual programmes for children. By working together, parents, staff and outside professionals give children the best start and help them bridge any gaps in learning due to their individual or special educational needs. Parents report their complete satisfaction and unfailingly praise staff for how well their children are progressing. They find staff approachable and appreciate the efforts made in keeping them informed. This includes weekly newsletters, a website, open days and regular parent consultations to discuss progress in detail. All parents contribute their comments to the children's development profiles and say they enjoy continuing learning

with their child at home. Professional quality displays and photographs help parents share children's activities and provide discussion points for children to recall what they have done. As well as these, space is devoted to providing parents with detailed explanations and rationales for all types of activity, to help them understand how children learn through being active, playing and exploring purposefully as they engage in a wide range of tasks.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY472693
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	948235
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	31
Name of provider	Cognita LTD
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01787472134

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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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