

Queen Mary's School Early Years Department

Inspection report for early years provision

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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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Description of the setting

Queen Mary's is an independent girls' school for day and boarding pupils from two years through to sixteen years, with co-educational nursery and pre-prep departments for children between two and seven years. Only the provision for children aged under three years is registered with Ofsted early years as a requirement by legislation; they are not registered to care for children under two years. Children aged under three years are cared for in the school's Early Years Department alongside children aged three to five years. They are registered on the Early Years Register and may care for up to eight two year olds. There is currently one child attending in this age group.

The Early Years department has its own toilet and outdoor play facilities, although children have use of facilities within the school, such as the gym, and the eat in the school dining room. Children also have supervised access to the grounds. The early years department is open term time only; daily opening hours are from 8.30am until 5pm but these can be arranged flexibly by arrangement with the head of early years. The head of department is a qualified teacher and has Early Years Professional Status. There are a further five staff working with the children, all of whom have relevant qualifications and experience appropriate to their role.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Inspirational leadership together with a highly committed and motivated staff team share a clear vision for the service they provide within a fully inclusive environment. Excellent self-evaluation and a very clear focus on continuous improvement maintains the outstanding level of care and education provided. The nursery works extremely well with parents who are fully involved in the learning partnership. This ensures all children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals in relation to their starting points. Children are extremely confident in the environment and clearly enjoy their time at the nursery.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continuing to develop partnerships with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to ensure continuity of care and learning
- continuing the development of the outdoor learning environment to reflect all areas of learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and welfare is given highest priority. Safeguarding procedures are robust, regularly reviewed and staff are fully aware of their responsibility to protect the children in their care. All staff receive basic safeguarding training with the head of early years undertaking advanced training. Clear and thorough vetting procedures are highly effective in ensuring that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. Extensive and rigorous risk assessments covering all areas of the provision and outings ensure risks to children are successfully recognised and minimised. A designated member of staff with responsibility for health and safety ensures children's safety is extremely well considered in the daily routines and staffs detailed knowledge is kept up to date.

An extremely knowledgeable and highly committed staff team work exceptionally well together and benefit from strong, inspirational leadership. The highly motivated and experienced head of early years very ably supports staff and they have a shared vision for future developments. Weekly staff meetings, an effective staff appraisal system and peer observations ensures individual strengths and development needs are identified. As a result, staff keep up to date with changes and continually expand their knowledge and skills. Clear, comprehensive policies and procedures, which are shared with parents, and consistently implemented underpin the smooth day to day running of the nursery and staff are very clear in their roles and responsibilities. The management fully recognise the importance of self-evaluation in driving continuous improvement and this is embedded throughout the nursery and fully embraced by staff through reflective practice. Feedback from parents and children is well considered and used to inform the nursery's comprehensive self-evaluation process. A parents forum has been established providing further opportunities for parents to express their views on current practice and make a meaningful contribution to future developments to successfully improve outcomes for children,

Excellent relationships are developed and maintained with parents. They are given a detailed prospectus when children start, which includes copies of key policies and are invited to make pre-start visits. Verbal information is shared daily as children are delivered and collected and the key worker system provides them with a point of contact. News letters, weekly planning sheets, questionnaires, very regular parent/teacher consultations and access to the children's development records ensures they are kept fully informed. The nursery values greatly the input of parents and respects their role as their child's first educator. Very detailed information is sought from parents when children start to ensure staff are fully aware of their interests, dislikes and home routines. Parents are effectively encouraged to contribute to their children's learning and parental observations are valued and regularly included in the children achievement records. The nursery also works in partnership with other providers to ensure a consistent approach in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and smooth transition both within the school and to local schools. However, systems to share on going information with other settings children attend continue to be developed and are not yet fully effective. Parents state they very pleased with the service they receive, feel they

are kept fully informed and their children enjoy attending and make very good progress in their learning and development. The setting actively promotes equality of opportunity. All children and families are valued and staff work very closely with parents and other agencies to ensure all children have the opportunity to achieve as well as they possibly can in relation to their individual starting points.

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

Staff have an exemplary understanding of the EYFS of learning and an highly effective key worker system fully supports all children in making rapid progress towards the early learning goals. Staff make regular, sensitive observations of the children as they play. These are used to inform to planning which is highly effective in identifying individual children's next steps and maximises their progress. As a result, each child receives an highly enjoyable and challenging experience across all areas of learning and their learning styles and interests are exceptionally well considered. This is supported by an excellent balance of child-led and adult initiated activities. The local authority 'On Track' system and profile statements are used with great effect to closely monitor children's progress. The needs of gifted and talented children are extremely well considered and a clear and detailed policy ensures they receive sufficient challenge. Effective systems are also in place to ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they require to maximise their progress and for them to access all activities. To do this the nursery works very closely with parents and demonstrates a clear commitment to working with outside agencies.

The nursery environment is very well organised with defined areas of learning. An excellent range of resources which are well maintained, age appropriate and cover all areas of learning are made accessible to the children for self-selection. As a result, children are eager to explore all that is offered, initiate their own play and learn extremely well and remain actively engaged. Children have daily access to outdoor play, here they delight in physical activity and fresh air. The recent development of a safe surface play area provides very good opportunities for children to develop physical skills as they learn to pedal and manoeuvre wheel toys or take their dolls for a walk. They play co-operatively together with older children supporting the little ones as they play outdoors taking it in turns to run under the parachute. The extensive school grounds provide excellent opportunities for children to learn about the world around them as go for walks, monitor the changing seasons and see the farm animals in neighbouring fields. To better meet the requirements of the EYFS the outdoor classroom is being re-developed. As this remains work in progress it does not yet fully reflect all areas of learning and children's access is limited.

Children develop excellent communication, language and literacy skills as they access a wide range of books and listen to stories which are carefully chosen by staff to support learning. They constantly interact with staff who are very skilful at supporting and extending children's play and learning as they play alongside them and use highly effective questioning and dialogue. They also demonstrate great skill at knowing when not to intervene and allow children time and space to work

things out for themselves. In everyday activities children have many opportunities to mark make, for example, as they tick their name when they have snack. They count and learn their colours as they use building blocks to build a tower or select which colour plate and cup to use for their snack. Exceptionally good use of labelling and number lines successfully aids children's letter and number recognition. Access to interactive toys and computers successfully increases their understanding of information technology providing them with a wide range of skills for their future success. Children enjoy sand and water play and explore volume and capacity as they empty and fill containers. They enjoy role play, expressing themselves through the creative area, playing imaginatively with small world resources and exploring texture and form through access to a very broad range of malleable materials.

Very attentive staff develop extremely positive relationships with the children, as a result, children are relaxed; new starters settle quickly and form strong attachments. A consistent and sensitive approach to behaviour management ensures all children are fully aware of expectations and are very well behaved. Staff are excellent role models who talk to each other and the children with great respect. This creates a very happy and harmonious environment where children enjoy the constant praise they receive for all their achievements great and small. Children demonstrate a strong sense of security, they quickly become aware of the daily routines and develop their independence to a very high level. They confidently choose when to have snack and wash their plate and bowl when they have finished. They learn the importance of good personal hygiene with appropriate support from staff. They wash their hands regularly, access tissues and know to dispose of them in the bin. Meals and snacks are varied and highly nutritious, prepared and cooked in the school kitchens using fresh ingredients. Snacks are enjoyed in the nursery setting and include fresh and dried fruit. Posters, displays and discussions with staff increase children's understanding of healthy eating. For lunch the children go to the school dining room, where they enjoy their food and make choices in what they eat. High chairs enable the two year olds to sit at the table with the other children and staff enjoy a very pleasant social occasion.

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	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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