

Earls Hall Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119472
Inspection date	14 March 2007
Inspector	Anne Daly
Setting Address	120 Hobleythick Lane, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, SS0 0RJ
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Registered person	Earls Hall Pre School Committee
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Earls Hall Pre-School is a Committee run setting. It opened in 1969 and operates from three rooms within the church hall attached to Earls Hall Baptist Church in Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 until 11:45 and on Monday afternoons from 12:30 until 15:00.

There are currently 39 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 36 receive funding for early education. Children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting can support children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a clean and hygienic environment, where staff follow appropriate measures to reduce the risk of cross-infection. Children effectively learn about their own personal hygiene and care through enjoyable daily routines. They are developing good levels of personal independence and older ones understand the need to wash their hands to prevent illness from germs, especially before eating snacks and after using the toilet. A poster illustrating how to wash hands is displayed outside the cloakroom area. All the required documentation, policies and procedures to promote children's good health are freely available, including the recording of allergies and a sick child exclusion policy. A qualified first aider is always present to ensure that any medical emergencies are appropriately handled.

Children enjoy a range of healthy snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, to promote their good health. Children and staff discuss how nutritious foods, such as vegetables, fruit and milk, promote their healthy growth and development. They learn about healthy eating through good, practical activities, for example planting mustard and cress seeds to help them to understand how food grows. They take part in cooking and food tasting activities to help them to discover a wider range of foods and which they like and dislike. Their independence is encouraged by being able to freely pour beaker of waters at any time to avoid becoming dehydrated.

Children have daily opportunities to gain confidence in what they can do to enable them to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active. They use a large room specifically for 'outdoor' play, although only at set times, meaning that they cannot freely choose when they wish to be energetic. They are developing co-ordination and control over their bodies by throwing and catching balls. They are able to balance on beams, crawl through tunnels and climb ladders to promote good muscle development. They can successfully negotiate space when peddling, pushing or scooting the wheeled toys, adjusting speed or changing direction to avoid obstacles and each other. Staff's good understanding of the needs of younger children and the provision of appropriate activities and resources support their physical and emotional development. They are able to relax and to sit quietly in the comfortable book and quiet areas.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the well-organised and lively learning environment, with a good range of resources and equipment suitable for their ages. They eagerly take part in worthwhile and well-presented activities because of sufficient space to be creative. There are separate areas within the core room for different activities, such as writing, role play and messy play. Children's artwork, letters, numbers and colourful pictures and posters decorate the core room to provide sources of interesting information and to stimulate their conversation and learning. Toys and resources are maintained to a good standard, with staff monitoring and immediately removing any broken toys or other hazardous items to fully safeguard children.

Children move freely in a child-friendly, stimulating environment to enable them to explore and to take 'risks' while being appropriately supervised. The safety and security of children are priority, with daily written risk assessments undertaken by staff to fully safeguard them. Staff remain vigilant in their supervision of children and minimise risks by locking the main entrance door and by fitting a security pad to the other door leading from the Church. However, when

children go on their regular outings to the Church and to an adjacent garden, there are no written risk assessments undertaken prior to the visits to fully protect children's welfare and parents have not given their written consents for such outings.

Children are developing a good awareness of their own personal safety through regular fire drills to ensure that they know what to do if they need to evacuate the premises in an emergency. They are learning to keep themselves safe through everyday routines and planned experiences. They understand that they must not walk around with scissors and are learning about road safety through planned topics.

Children are safeguarded by staff only allowing their collection by authorised persons. They are well protected because the Committee and staff have a good understanding of their child protection roles and adhere to appropriate procedures. They share their child protection statement with parents and carers to ensure that they know what actions will be taken to fully safeguard their children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy in the setting and are purposefully engaged in their activities. All arrive happy and eager to participate, playing together well and developing warm and trusting relationships with the caring staff. Staff evidence a positive attitude and a calm approach to caring for children, resulting in confident and independent learners, who thoroughly enjoy their time at pre-school. Children can freely choose from the activities on offer and show enthusiasm in their approach to learning new things and in practising more familiar skills. They are developing good independence skills as they are learning to meet their own needs by putting on their coats. They have ample time to engage in their own play as well as undertaking adult-led activities.

They are building on their natural curiosity as learners by playing and discovering new ideas and experiences through both planned and spontaneous activities. For example, they investigate what happens when water is added to dry sand and comment on the changes observed in the 'life cycle of frogs'. Children had great fun being creative when throwing cotton wool balls dipped in paint to create a firework display on the wall.

Children aged under three years are becoming confident learners, because they are supported in their play through staff planning and implementing the 'Birth to three matters' framework. All children enjoy and share stories, songs and rhymes and they are becoming more skilful communicators by staff encouraging their language skills and providing opportunities for them to play and chat together. Children have many opportunities to join in and staff help them to recognise the rules for being together with others, for example, by helping them to label their emotions and by talking to them about the feelings of others.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage, which enables them to effectively use both planned and spontaneous experiences to develop children's understanding. Sessions are organised to allow children to learn effectively in different sized groups, although the written planning does not show how the less and more able children will be supported or continually challenged in their learning to ensure that all children reach their full potential. Children's interest is captured because staff provide many

varied and exciting experiences, such as planting grass seed and painting still life flowers. Children understand what is expected of them in terms of acceptable behaviour, for example, they know that they have to wait their turn with some focused activities. Staff regularly observe children at play and these observations contribute to their record of progress. These observations and children's developmental records help staff to identify children's achievements or any learning difficulties to ensure that all children make good progress over time. All staff contribute to the curriculum through regular planning meetings to ensure the inclusion of activities to help their key children make progress. Staff's ideas are included in both the medium and short term planning.

Children are well-motivated and concentrate on the wide range of activities capturing their interest and imagination. Older children spend considerable time matching shapes when playing games and children work well individually or in small groups when playing in the sand. They know the consequences of their words and actions and, when they are not kind to each other, they are encouraged to say sorry to one another. Children share their news from home, telling their friends and staff about experiences and special events in their lives, such as birthday parties.

Children's competencies are developing well across the four aspects of communication, speaking/listening, reading and writing. They are given many opportunities to enjoy looking at books on their own or in both small and large groups. They are holding books the right way up and turning the pages to tell a story. They listen to stories with increasing attention and confidently recall or anticipate what may happen next. They are learning to recognise their names, with older children writing or tracing their names, while younger children have opportunities to make their own marks on their creations. More able children are confidently linking the sounds to letters by naming and sounding letters. Older children are able to hear and say initial sounds and know that letters have different sounds.

Children are developing a good understanding of mathematical ideas and concepts. They can recognise numbers and count in their everyday play, such as how many scoops of compost, while also exploring capacity when filling their seed tray. More able children can recognise numbers up to ten and some can count much higher. Children can skilfully instruct a programmable toy as it maps out the journey from the Church to the local Hospital. They are developing a good awareness of space by handling shapes and fitting them together, while others can create sequencing patterns on wooden rods. Children are learning about simple addition and subtraction by calculating when saying number rhymes and when launching a pretend rocket.

Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first-hand experiences, such as learning how to care for living things by making bird cake. Children learn from staff offering them opportunities to safely use a range of tools in real-life situations, such as hammering nails into wood. They are developing a good understanding of technology by using cameras, telephones and remote controlled cars, while having regular opportunities to use the computer. Children are showing an awareness of changes, for example, when discussing regular events experienced, such as seasonal patterns and celebrations.

Children have plenty of opportunities to improve their co-ordination, control, manipulation and movements. They successfully gain confidence in what they can do to develop a positive sense of well-being, such as when rolling out play dough and using pencils and scissors.

Children have many opportunities to explore and experiment with ideas, materials and activities. They engage and act out real experiences and imaginary scenarios in the role play area, which is changed regularly to provide them with different experiences reflecting real life situations, such as a hospital. Children work creatively on large scale models when creating an ambulance from a very large cardboard box. They are able to communicate their own ideas as to what they should use for wheels and how it should be painted to look like an ambulance. They have good opportunities to explore their senses as they feel, smell and taste during activities, such as cooking and food tasting.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals, with staff using systems to record and assess, although sometimes these observations are not being used to develop short planning to show how the less and more able children will be supported or challenged in focused activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children, including those with learning difficulties, and their families receive good support from staff to enable children to thrive and to make progress. Staff know all children well and ensure that they are provided with equality of opportunities. The appointed co-ordinators are enthusiastic about their roles to support children with identified needs and to seek advice from professionals to maximise each child's developmental progress and to ensure that they receive appropriate support.

Children's behaviour is good and they play well together, quickly displaying a good understanding of what is considered to be acceptable behaviour to keep themselves safe. They are fully aware of what staff expect of them through consistent routines, for example, when staff put up their hands, they know that they have to stop what they are doing. Staff are helping children to understand the affect of their behaviour on others, while reinforcing and praising their good behaviour.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are learning about diversity through playing with a good range of toys showing people's similarities and differences, for example, by having small world play people, including those with disabilities, in the sand. Children's families' customs and religious beliefs are shared through celebrating their Christmas, Easter and Harvest festivals in the Church. Children are developing a good understanding of other cultural festivals, for example by celebrating Diwali and the Chinese New Year, as well as by tasting different cultural foods. They are developing an understanding of helping other children, for example, by donating 'Christmas Shoe Boxes' to children who are not as fortunate as them and by raising funds for Comic Relief.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. They receive clear information about their children's care and education through a prospectus, newsletters and notice boards. The settling in process enables staff to talk to parents to establish children's starting points and any specific needs to ensure that they meet their requirements. Parents and carers have access to the policies and procedures, including procedures to be followed if staff have any concerns for a child. Staff are eager to discuss concerns at an early stage, so that any difficulties do not become obstacles to maintaining good relationships. Children visit an adjacent garden to collect 'mini beasts' and the Church Sanctuary for musical sessions and to celebrate festivals. However, whilst parents and carers know that their children make such visits, they have not given their written permission for these regular outings to fully safeguard their children.

The partnership of parents and carers of funded children is good. They are informed about the Foundation Stage and how the stepping stones promote their child's learning in the pre-school. They are encouraged to become involved in their learning through activity plans, detailed newsletters and words of new songs to learn at home. Staff maintain ongoing contact to share any relevant information about children's achievements and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are protected and their welfare well-promoted through suitable arrangements to ensure that adults working with them are appropriately vetted and well qualified. Staff show a commitment to ongoing training to develop and maintain their skills through appraisals, including future professional development plans. This ensures that children are well cared for and supported by staff knowledgeable and motivated by new ideas to promote positive outcomes for all children.

The high staff:child ratio and the organisation of the core room and resources successfully enables children to engage in both adult-led and child-initiated activities. However, due to the structure of the sessions, children have their free play disrupted by snack time and cannot freely access the 'outdoor' room.

The majority of the required documentation is maintained to ensure the efficient day-to-day management of the provision. The operational plan is continually being reviewed and includes a range of policies to enable the setting to operate safely on a day to day basis and to promote the children's safety, care and learning.

Leadership and management is good. Staff and Committee members work well together and are supportive of each other's roles. Roles and tasks are delegated and shared amongst the staff team to ensure that all feel important and motivated and that sessions run smoothly. However, planning does not consistently fully support more able children to maximize their potential. Staff develop links with both local schools and outside agencies to promote an inclusive environment in which every child matters. The management team regularly reviews working practises in the pre-school and evaluates the impact on children to ensure identification of areas for ongoing improvement.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the registered provider was asked to consider reviewing hand washing procedures to minimise the risk of spread of infection and to extend the range of resources to include images and items reflecting positive views of persons with disabilities.

A washbasin has been installed in the core playroom to ensure that children always wash their hands with clean water and dry with paper towels to prevent cross-infection. Children now play with a wide range of positive images and objects reflecting racial and cultural diversity and disabilities.

At the last nursery education inspection, there were no key issues to report, although the registered provider was asked to extend opportunities for children showing readiness or understanding to record to display their findings in a variety of different ways when investigating objects, materials or living things. Children have been introduced to the concept of charts,

block graphs or sets, for example, recording their findings after establishing which items floated and which sank in water.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- undertake risk assessments before taking children on local outings
- request parental written permission for taking children on local outings.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop curriculum planning to show how the less and more able children will be supported or challenged in their learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk