

# The Fledgelings Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 203782

**Inspection date** 18 June 2007

**Inspector** Anne Daly

**Setting Address** Fledgelings Pre-School, Tile Kiln Church, Robin Way, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8AU

**Telephone number** 01245 269691

**E-mail**

**Registered person** The Elders of Tile Kiln Church

**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](http://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?

The Fledgelings Pre-school is managed by the Elders of the Tile Kiln Church in Chelmsford. It opened in 1965 and was registered in the name of the Elders in 1998. It operates from three rooms within the Church situated on the Tile Kiln Estate. A maximum of 38 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group opens on five days a week during school term times. Session times are: Mondays to Fridays from 09:00 to 12:00, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12:30 to 15:00 and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 13:00 to 14:50. All children are able to share an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 90 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 57 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and surrounding areas. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and has experience of supporting children who have English as a second language.

The pre-school employs 13 staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and from the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA).

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is being well promoted to enable three and four-year-olds to be very independent in their personal care. They understand the need to wash their hands to prevent illness from germs before eating food and after using the toilet. They are reminded how to wash their hands thoroughly by pictorial symbols being displayed in the toilet area. However, younger children are not fully protected from cross-infection during nappy changing as staff do not always disinfect the changing mat after each child or introduce hand washing after changing them. Children can freely access tissues to wipe their noses and know that used tissues must be put in the bin to stop germs spreading.

Children's good health is being well fostered through the efficient maintenance of all required documentation and the implementation of clear policies and procedures. An exclusion sickness policy minimises the risk of cross-infection to children by ensuring that parents and carers know when to keep their unwell children at home. Children's accidental injuries are treated by qualified staff and accident records are signed by parents or carers to ensure that they are fully informed of any treatment given.

Children enjoy eating a range of healthy snacks, such as apples, grapes, bananas and pineapples. They are able to choose the fruit for their 'kebabs', although some prefer to still eat with their fingers. Snack times are social occasions when children and their key worker can talk about the food they are eating, their day and any other personal experiences. Children are learning about other cultures by sampling different types of food, such as rice salad. They do not become dehydrated as staff ensure that jugs of water and beakers are readily available throughout sessions to enable children to have a drink whenever they are thirsty. Staff follow good hygiene routines to reduce the risk of infection when preparing snacks, such as by wearing disposable aprons and gloves and by ensuring that the tables are clean by wiping over with sterilized cloths.

Children are given good opportunities for exercise and physical play to contribute to their good health. The small garden is utilised in all but the worst weather to enable them to benefit from fresh air. They competently demonstrate their co-ordination and control over their bodies when throwing balls into a netball net and balancing when walking up a plank onto a large tyre. They use their muscles and are developing control of their bodies when stretching to 'paint' the fence or crouching down to 'paint' the paving slabs with water. They are able to skilfully use wheeled toys when pedalling or scooting around the indoor playroom, moving around obstacles by going backwards and forwards.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are being very well cared for in premises that are safe, secure and suitable for purpose. Their security is enhanced by a security camera monitoring the entrance to the church and by all visitors being carefully screened by being asked to sign in and out of a visitors book. There are good, well-practiced routines and procedures for the movement of children around the premises, with an extra staff member escorting them when going either upstairs or downstairs. There is an effective communication system to enable staff to call for help when outside with children. Therefore, if a child requires the toilet, staff are able to use a walkie-talkie to call for a supernumerary member of staff to assist. Children's work and posters being displayed at eye

level creates a welcoming environment for them. They can freely select from a wide range of toys and equipment in the main playroom to successfully promote their individual developmental needs.

The risk of accidental injury to children is minimised by the exercise of good procedures, including staff undertaking daily written risk assessments to safeguard them from potential hazards. Children's awareness of personal safety and accidents is well promoted through staff reminding them of the need to hold onto the banister when going up and down stairs. Their safety is enhanced by knowing that only adults must open the gate at the top of the stairs.

Staff plan activities for children to learn about safety awareness. Special visitors, for example the school crossing patrol person, maintain children's interest in learning how to keep themselves safe when crossing roads. They are learning about fire safety through visits from fire persons with a fire engine. However, whilst staff plan and some children undertake a twice-yearly fire drill, this is insufficient to ensure that all children are fully safeguarded by being completely aware of evacuation procedures and knowing what to do in the event of an emergency.

Children's safety is well promoted on outings as no children are allowed to leave the premises without their parents' or carers' written permission. On outings to the zoo, the adult:child ratio is greatly increased as all children have an individual carer, for example their parent or a vetted staff member. Procedures are in place in case a child should become 'lost' as they all wear a tag identifying which group they belong to and a mobile contact number. Children know that they must wear a seat belt to keep themselves safe when being transported in a vehicle.

Staff have a good awareness of their child protection responsibilities and there is a named person responsible for ensuring that any concerns are dealt with promptly and sensitively. The named member of staff responsible for safeguarding children has attended a number of training courses to ensure that her practice is underpinned by good, up to date knowledge of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. She follows correct procedures if she has any concerns, while all staff make notes of any existing injuries and discusses these with parents to ensure that children's safety is always a priority. The child protection statement is shared with parents and carers before children attend the pre-school to ensure that they are aware of staff's responsibilities.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children have a very busy time at pre-school, amicably playing and learning alongside their peers through the provision of a good range of stimulating and worthwhile activities to help their developmental progress. Staff use both 'Birth to three matters' and Foundation Stage frameworks to ensure that all children are provided with age and stage-appropriate play opportunities by organising varying activities in different areas of the premises.

Children are very sensitively settled into the pre-school according to their individual needs, with plenty of cuddles and reassurance from a caring staff team. They are purposefully engaged throughout sessions, working and playing enthusiastically, either alone or with others. They are well behaved and are developing a clear awareness of right and wrong.

Children are developing their confidence by having plenty of fun while learning in a lively setting. Their self-esteem is being very effectively promoted through appropriate praise and encouragement from supportive staff, who actively encourage them to try new things. For

example, children learning how to control a 'mouse' to enable them to complete simple educational programmes on a computer. Children are acquiring new knowledge and skills through their daily play routines. For example, while painting, they talk about colours and how they change when mixing different paints together and they ask for their favourite coloured plates at snack time. They are given many first hand experiences to develop their curiosity as learners, such as what happens when they walk on a dry paving slab after the soles of their shoes have got wet. They use their imagination during role play activities, such as when putting bandages on their pets, listening to their beating hearts and giving injections to make them better. They freely explore by feeling and smelling play dough and paint to develop sensory awareness during their play. Older children are developing confidence and self-esteem at assembly time by singing the school song and saying the school prayer and motto. At this time, a child waves the Union flag while their friends stand at attention to confidently sing the National Anthem.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff team have a firm knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. They all attend regular meetings to plan a good varied range of both indoor and outdoor activities to ensure the delivery of a curriculum focusing on the stepping stones in all six areas of learning. They complete baseline assessments to ensure that they are aware of each child's starting point. They have a good rapport and warm relationships with children, resulting in them being eager to learn new concepts. For example, when retelling stories, able three-year-olds are beginning to understand the concept of small, medium and large. Staff pitch questions at the right level for individual children to encourage their thought, communication and progression to the next steps of learning. They make regular constructive observations of children at play to contribute significantly to progress records. These records provide children's key workers with a clear picture of what a child is able to do in each area of learning, while helping staff to plan for their next steps. However, such planning does not consistently include sufficient differential to extend children who already understand the intended learning aim of particular activities. Staff have a good knowledge of how young children learn, allowing them to develop at their own pace by providing a good balance between adult and child-led activities. All children receive individual attention in the Rainbow room to further develop their mathematical, communication, language, literacy and information and technology skills.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported by all staff being involved and aware of the procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for them, particularly through Early Years Action and Early Years Action Plus. Children with learning difficulties are well supported by their key worker and are beginning to understand the need for self-discipline and consideration for others when playing.

Children thoroughly enjoy their range of activities to ensure that their interest is sustained. They are beginning to take the initiative to be independent in their learning, such as by accessing the range of equipment stored at their level. They can freely access a chest of drawers without adult intervention storing all the necessary resources needed to cut, draw and stick. They are becoming increasingly independent when dealing with their physical needs, confidently wiping their feet on the mat before entering the premises from outdoor play. They understand the boundaries by knowing the need for simple rules and to respond well to staff's expectations. They take some responsibility for implementation of rules by knowing that they have to help to tidy away their toys before snack time.

Children are developing their competencies across all aspects of communication by speaking, listening, reading and writing. Older children are able to communicate with confidence and to listen to one another describing the different animals that they have seen at the zoo. They have many opportunities to share books, while enjoying stories and non-fiction books. More able children are beginning to read and to recognise simple words. Younger children are beginning to recognise their names, while more able children can confidently link sounds to letters, naming and sounding letters linked to their names. Children are experimenting with rhyming sounds and words when choosing and singing simple rhymes. They are able to write freely with a range of materials, making marks with water on paving slabs, writing their names on their 'work' and using different objects to make patterns in dry sand.

Children are enjoying mathematical learning by staff using both planned and everyday opportunities to ensure that it is purposeful and fun. Children count readily in their everyday play, with more able children confidently counting into double figures. They show that they understand the concept of number by using their fingers to represent how many items they have, with some children recognising numerals up to 10. Children are exploring simple addition and subtraction when counting how many cookies they have made with play dough before giving away two of them. They are learning about capacity and volume when filling a container with sand and when understanding that their buckets of water are empty, requiring refilling to finish 'painting' the fence.

Children are learning about the world they live in through staff planning a varied range of practical experiences. They examine snails they find in the garden, understanding that they will eat their growing plants. They therefore carefully remove the snails and place them in the long grass near the shed. They are learning about the passage of time when talking about the days of the week and yesterday's activities. Their early science skills are being developed by taking part in simple experiments, such as learning what sinks or floats in the water tray. Inquisitive children take pleasure in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world of technology by confidently demonstrating how to use a mouse to complete a simple computer programme. They confidently demonstrate their co-ordination when dialling a number on a pretend telephone.

Children are given good opportunities to develop their creativity and to explore a wide range of mediums and materials. They paint different sized textured balls and marbles before rolling them on a tray to create a picture, while recalling experiences when designing animal masks. They have many opportunities to understand the purpose of tools, such as why glue and a spreader are used to make items stick on their masks and that scissors can cut tissue paper into different sizes and shapes. They are able to be creative by expressing their ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance and both role and imaginative play.

Children are developing fine movement with their fingers and hands when meaningfully gripping, twisting and banging with handling tools and materials during imaginative play. They are able to bang nails into the work bench and to screw tops onto bottles. They are gaining a variety of skills to manipulate materials and objects, such as threading objects and fastening and unfastening dressing up clothing.

Children are making good progress towards their learning goals through staff using effective systems to observe, assess and record their achievements to inform short planning for their next steps of learning.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children enter the setting with confidence and feel a good sense of belonging. They are able to settle quickly into pre-school life through the provision of good procedures to support them when moving from their home environment. Children and their parents or carers can visit to familiarise themselves with staff and the environment before starting at the setting. In addition, once children start at the setting, parents and carers can stay as long as they wish until they and their children feel ready to say goodbye. Children are sometimes happy to stay within their group as long as they know that their trusted adult is helping another group in a different room. They are able to attend age-appropriate sessions, for example the under threes attending shortened afternoon sessions.

Children are developing a good sense of belonging by seeing some of their own work and photographs of themselves and families being displayed on walls. They are benefiting from working very closely with their key worker, who knows them very well and is able to treat them as individuals. At daily specific times, key workers take their children into the garden for outdoor play and also have snack and small group times with them.

An effective system promotes the welfare and development of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) liaises with parents and carers, while other professionals are able to work with children to effectively meet their individual needs. She also co-ordinates the sharing of information to enable key workers to meet their children's individual needs and to plan for their ongoing progress.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are developing an understanding of their own needs and of the needs of others by listening to one another and by sharing and taking turns at circle time and when playing games. They are encouraged to talk about their emotions and how their actions may make others feel. Children aged three plus are learning about religion through attending assemblies during which a bible story is read and by the Pastor reading stories during his weekly visits. They are developing a good understanding of other cultural festivals, such as Hanukkah, the Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Children's behaviour is good when playing happily together. They are rapidly displaying a good understanding of what is considered to be acceptable behaviour and why restrictions are imposed on them, such as standing on the circles when lining up to wash their hands before snacks. They are encouraged by staff and enjoy taking responsibility for tasks within the setting to increase their self-esteem and independence. They are helpful and well behaved as a result of staff giving them plenty of praise and encouragement.

There is a good partnership with parents and carers, who receive an informative pre-school prospectus and a welcome pack prior to children being received into the setting. This information contributes significantly to their children's well-being, development and progress. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to be on the helpers' rota and there are good procedures to ensure that no child is released to individuals without their prior written consent as to who can collect their child. Parents and carers send in items from home to link into their children's colour or letter of the week. Staff are freely available at any time to discuss concerns with parents and carers. If their child is moving into the next group, they are welcome to visit to ensure that they know what will be available to their children. Parents and carers expressed their delight with the progress being made by their children and were very complimentary about the care provided by staff.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early years education is good. They are well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and how it promotes their children's learning at the pre-school. Written weekly plans are displayed to ensure that they receive clear information about how and what their children are learning. They have opportunities to attend termly consultations with their child's key worker, who shows them their child's profile folders of what they have achieved at pre-school. There is a sound two-way system for recording children's targeted next steps by staff completing a communication book of what they are currently learning, although parents and carers are not always informing key workers about what their children are learning at home. Parents and carers are able to be involved with their children's learning activities at home, with all children having a bag to take home books to look at and to read together. More able children are also taking home simple flash cards of words to read and learn.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are protected and their welfare promoted through appropriate systems ensuring that all adults working with them are suitable for the purpose. However, the manager and committee are planning to ensure that their recruitment and vetting procedures are made more rigorous to fully safeguard children. There are good procedures to ensure that children do not have access to persons who have not been vetted, with staff always accompanying children from the ground and first floor rooms used by the pre-school. Children are benefiting from staff being interested and motivated in their professional development by attending regular training to keep up to date with current childcare issues and to gain the skills and knowledge for their individual roles and responsibilities.

Children are cared for in three different age groups during the 10 sessions that the pre-school is in operation. Older children attend morning sessions, two afternoons are designated for children under three years of age, with the other afternoon sessions being specifically for children of rising three and aged up to three and half years approximately. All but the youngest children move rooms, for example small groups of children from the two older sessions spend time with a qualified teacher in the Rainbow room gaining specific pre-school knowledge in relation to mathematical concepts and language, literacy, writing and computer skills. The large upstairs room is divided after assembly to enable children to spend time learning skills from their individual play plans with their key workers.

The required documentation is in place for the safe day-to-day management of the pre-school and to promote children's welfare and safety. The continually reviewed operational plan includes a range of policies to enable the setting to operate safely on a daily basis and to promote children's safety, care and learning.

The leadership and management is good. The manager and committee are positive and are working hard to consistently make improvements for the benefit of children. Staff are working extremely well as a team and are all actively involved in the planning and delivery of the curriculum. They are aware of their responsibilities and ensure that sessions run particularly smoothly. The manager regularly reviews working practices through staff appraisals and constant evaluations of activities to ensure the effective monitoring and evaluating of their provision for nursery education.

Overall children's needs are met.



### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the registered provider was asked to consider, identify and access relevant child protection training for staff; to review arrangements to share child protection procedures with parents; to review and update policies for Standards 7: Health and 13: Child Protection and to include a procedure for a lost child in the operational plan.

Since the last inspection, some staff have attended external safeguarding children training, the child protection statement has been reviewed and all parents and carers now receive the statement in their welcome pack to ensure that they know what actions staff will take to fully protect their children if concerned for their welfare. The health policies and lost child procedures have been updated and included in the operational plan to ensure that staff act in children's best interests.

At the last nursery education inspection, there were no key issues to report, although the registered provider was asked to consider further extending the assessment and record keeping system and the evaluation process used to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. The Manager and staff have changed the format of the planning, which is now linked to the six areas of learning. Staff now regularly evaluate the quality of teaching by assessing the progress made by children towards these early learning goals.

### **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.

## **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 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):

- ensure steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection during nappy changing
- conduct more regular fire drills taking account of the attendance of all children and staff.

#### **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):

- extend the differentials within short term planning to ensure sufficient challenge for more able children
- provide further opportunities for parents and carers to make written comments and observations about their children's targeted next steps of 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)