

Newlands Spring Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	650109
Inspection date	16/10/2008
Inspector	John Messer
Setting address	Dickens Place, CHELMSFORD, CM1 4UU
Telephone number	01245 442505 or 07855 949615
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Newlands Spring Pre-School opened in 1982. In September 2005 the pre-school moved into a purpose built early years unit within the grounds of Newland Spring Primary School. It has a tarmac outdoor play space and grassy areas. There are close links with the local primary school and the pre-school has access to the school's grounds for physical activities. The single storey building is secure yet allows ready access for children and adults, including any who may be disabled. It is situated in a residential area of Chelmsford and serves the local and surrounding area.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide care for a maximum of 25 children at any one time and offers care for children aged from two to five years. There are currently 51 children on roll. This includes 40 funded children. Staff have strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are Monday to Friday 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00.

There are 10 part-time staff working with the children. Six members of staff, including the manager, hold relevant early years qualifications and two are currently working to National Vocational Level 3. The setting works closely with the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

This is a good playgroup that meets the needs of all the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage well. Children's welfare and safety are given top priority and staff pay close attention to hygiene, for example, cleaning tables and insisting on thorough hand washing before snack time. The pre-school is fully inclusive. All children are included in a good range of stimulating activities to interest them, such as playing with construction kits and dressing-up clothes. One particularly strong feature is the way that communication and language are developed through role play. The outdoor area is used appropriately to promote physical development and there is a good balance between quiet, reflective times and vigorous activities. The manager is keen to promote continuous improvement through staff development and training and the playgroup has good capacity to improve further.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- refurbish the book corner to provide a cosy, stimulating area that encourages children to enjoy books.
- develop the outside area in order to maximise learning opportunities.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The supervisor provides good leadership and makes sure that each session offers a safe environment where children can enjoy a good range of purposeful activities. Good attention is paid to links with parents. Discussions with a group of parents showed that they are very pleased with the way their children are looked after and how much they enjoy pre-school. Staff send home newsletters frequently and let parents know what mathematical shape they are focusing on or what colour they are highlighting, so that parents can support learning at home. The pre-school employs a part-time administrative officer who makes sure that all documentation is up to date and filed systematically to ensure that paperwork is readily accessible. This helps to underpin the orderly environment and business-like ethos that has been established. Training opportunities are good and training in first aid, safety and child protection receive top priority. Staff evaluate the provision well and fully appreciate that they could make learning even more exciting and purposeful. They are bursting with ideas about how to extend provision further and leaders are keen that staff should receive further training to help them fulfil their ambitions.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at pre-school. They scamper into the classroom on arrival, hang up their coats and select their name cards before happily joining in activities with their friends. They wave a cheerful goodbye to parents and carers before getting on with the important business of playing imaginary games, inventing things with construction kits or pedalling furiously around the playground, only stopping briefly to fill up with 'petrol'. There is a wide range of stimulating activities available for them to choose from. Activities include sharing books, sometimes with staff and sometimes with parents who help voluntarily. However, the book corner is not sufficiently well organised to provide a cosy, inviting area that encourages children to browse. Children love singing together and had great fun making up new verses for the song 'The Wheels on the Bus.' Staff plan each day thoroughly and include adult-led activities which often concentrate on learning through role play, such as booking a holiday at the 'travel agents'.

Children are good at playing collaboratively. Four boys piled into a toy car to take them on an imaginary long journey to the seaside and three were very happy to be passengers while the other drove. Staff join in imaginary play and are good at encouraging children to pretend by, for example, asking searching questions that challenge children to think. 'Why do I need to take sun cream in my suitcase?' 'How do arm bands work?' The immediate locality is used well to extend learning. Children take it in turns to visit the nearby supermarket to buy provisions for snack time. They take a purse, a shopping basket and a member of staff with them. They learn how to cross the road safely at the zebra crossing, spend their money wisely on fruit and bread and butter and make sure they get a receipt. They also visit the library, which is part of the primary school complex. They become familiar with the local environment and this boosts their confidence.

Staff have good plans to remodel the outside learning environment by, for example, creating a vegetable garden. This area is not fully developed at present and therefore opportunities to extend learning are missed. Children are growing a good variety of flowering plants alongside the boundary fence. This is enhancing the environment and making it much more attractive for both the pre-school and for passers by. Thus, the pre-school is making a good contribution to the local community.

The building is modern, bright and attractive and is kept neat and tidy. Staff make sure that all children are kept safe at all times. A few minor accidents occur occasionally. These are carefully recorded and reported to parents. Good attention is paid to hygiene. Toilets, wash basins, floors and surfaces are clean. Staff wear protective clothing in food preparation areas and when helping children who need assistance with toileting. Children themselves understand hand washing routines although some find it difficult to explain why hand washing is important. Good welfare procedures help children to stay safe and healthy. Their good personal development and the good range of skills they develop prepare them well for the future.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection

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.