

# Castle Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY378932  
**Inspection date** 26/02/2009  
**Inspector** Anne Gunston

**Setting address** Court Lane Junior School, Hilary Avenue, PORTSMOUTH,  
PO6 2PP

**Telephone number** 07724 110966

**Email**

**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

Castle Pre-School is a privately owned, established pre-school that has been in its current ownership since 1997; the pre-school was required to re-register in 2008 because of a change of premises. It is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 16 children at any one time; currently there are 37 children on roll. The pre-school operates from accessible, purpose built premises in the grounds of Court Lane Junior School, Cosham, Portsmouth. It is the pre-school's practice to accept children once they reach two years of age; children are able to attend for the whole or part of the session, which runs from 08:30 until 15:00 Monday to Friday during term time. Children have access to their own secure garden for outside play and occasional use of part of the school playground. The manager is qualified to Level four; she and a team of five staff work directly with the children. The majority of staff hold relevant childcare qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Children enjoy attending the pre-school and their learning is progressing well; children instigate activities and make decisions about their play so are actively involved at all times. The staff team value each child's unique characteristics and provide an inclusive, welcoming environment for every child who wishes to attend. Children's welfare is assured as staff maintain close working relationships with parents.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to develop the use of the local area and outdoor environment to encourage children's curiosity and raise awareness of their community
- develop children's individual learning journey records to ensure parents are aware of the setting's plans for promoting children's progress and provide increased opportunities for parents to have first hand experience of activities their child is involved in.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- keep a record of risk assessment clearly stating when it was carried out, by whom, the date of review and any action taken following a review of incident  
(Documentation)

16/03/2009

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

The setting's management team is established and experienced; both the owner and manager demonstrate commitment to continual improvement of the care, learning and development opportunities they provide for children. They value the skills and knowledge of their staff team, who take personal responsibility for their role at the setting. The manager and practitioners share the task of monitoring that the resources, activities and their practice is effective for each child. There are good systems in place to share information between practitioners, at regular staff meetings and in daily discussion. Children are safeguarded at all times as practitioners are all thoroughly vetted and effectively implement the safety measures needed at the setting. Children take part in regular evacuation from the premises to prepare them for dealing with emergencies in a calm manner; practitioners keep records of this to ensure that all children have the opportunity to take part and minimise any concerns noted. Practitioners complete visual checks of the premises and resources each day and implement the pre-school's health and safety policy. However, the pre-school do not maintain a written record of the checks they make, which is a specific legal requirement.

The manager of the pre-school is designated to take overall responsibility for child protection issues; all practitioners demonstrate confidence in implementing the procedures should they have concerns about a child in their care or feel that the practice of any adult that has contact with children is inappropriate. Children receive consistency of care as parents are asked for detailed information when their child first attends, concerning medical or dietary needs. The pre-school ask that parents let them know which name their child prefers to be called, recognising that children and parents' preferences should be respected. Parents are also asked to provide information for the setting about their child's achievements and abilities. Children settle quickly into the pre-school's routine, as practitioners are able to meet each child's individual needs from the outset. The pre-school recognise the benefits to children of involving parents in their child's learning and acknowledge that parents' other commitments sometimes mean this is difficult to achieve. They provide a detailed parent pack containing all pre-school policies; a newsletter is prepared regularly and practitioners are happy to speak to staff without the need of a booked appointment, if staffing levels and space allows. However, parents' access to the pre-school room is not easy at the beginning of the session and little time exists at the end of the session as the space is shared with other childcare providers. Parents are not completely aware of activities and experiences their children enjoy. Practitioners do share detailed information with parents on their child's progress towards the early learning goals. They send home the learning journey record each term, although these records do not include any comment from the child's key worker on their plans to encourage parents to be involved in agreeing the next steps for their child's development.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children's health and well-being is promoted well by staff who provide a safe, secure environment, which allows children to explore, play and learn. Children are

really familiar with the structure of the day and happily assist with the tidying away of toys, ready to come together quietly for activities in a large group. Children are becoming good listeners, encouraged by practitioners who suggest they are 'so quiet we can hear the clock tick'; all children relish listening to their favourite story and often add comments of their own. At the morning and afternoon registration time, children pay attention to one another if important news needs to be passed on and look with interest at the treasured items which some may have brought from home. The practitioners' secure understanding of each child's home circumstances enables them to be sensitive to children's mood. They give children quiet support, encouraging them to speak up and share any 'news', raising children's confidence and self-esteem. Children spend the majority of the day initiating their own play; when group times are over they are immediately busy and make good use of the resources that practitioners organise for them. The resources are within reach of the children and the pre-school environment is colourfully and imaginatively used. For example, children can see a pictorial time line so they feel secure with the daily routine; Makaton signing is displayed and at times practitioners use this method of communication with all children. They actively implement the pre-school's equal opportunities policy. All children are also able to refer to the pre-school rules, which are displayed in picture and word form, though they rarely need reminding of these. Children are very conscious of behaviour boundaries and will remind each other of the need to 'take turns'; they wait patiently for toys to become available and ask their peers 'can I join in?'

The pre-school does a great deal to increase children's understanding of health and safety. Children enjoy nutritious snacks of fruit or a savoury biscuit and practitioners use the lunchtime as an opportunity to discuss the health benefits of food provided by parents in a lunch box. They are pro-active in reminding parents to inform them if items need refrigeration. Children realise the importance of simple rules, such as not running down the slope outdoors, to keep them safe. They have regular opportunities to use part of the school grounds for active, energetic play with a range of wheeled toys. Children can move freely between the indoor space and enclosed outdoor area, although do not do so. Practitioners currently plan for use of this space to provide children with fresh air and opportunities to develop physical skills using equipment, such as the climbing frame, balls or beanbags. However, they do not use the outdoor space fully to promote all aspects of children's development, such as activities to raise their awareness of the natural world. The pre-school were previously in the habit of inviting visitors from the community to speak to the children, such as police officers or health workers, although this has lapsed. Practitioners know the children very well and use this knowledge to support children's learning. For example, they challenge children during role-play to decide if it is possible to cook food in the freezer, they guide children playing boisterous Spiderman games towards drawing the figure instead. Children are very confident in their surroundings; they are becoming inquisitive and independent yet have secure relationships with practitioners.

## 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

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

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	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](http://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 registration.

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.