

Circles Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY378967
Inspection date	08/01/2009
Inspector	Maura Pigram
Setting address	Christ The King Church Hall, Haldens, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 1DH
Telephone number	0800 695 1515
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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Circles Montessori Nursery School is one of three provisions which are privately owned by the provider. It operates from Christ The King Church Hall in Welwyn Garden City. The nursery is open from 08:30 until 14:30 every weekday during term time. A play scheme for children aged from two to five years also operates in the school holidays. Full-time and sessional care is offered and children can attend for a variety of sessions. There is an enclosed outdoor play area which has two small steps leading from the hall. The premises is accessed via a ramp.

It is registered for no more than 24 children aged under five years at any one time. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register, the compulsory part of the Childcare Register and the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. They receive support from the local authority.

There are three members of staff, including the owner who is also the manager. Of these, two members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and all staff members are working towards further qualifications including a Foundation degree.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Circles Montessori Nursery School is a friendly and welcoming provision where there are some efficient practices to ensure all children are valued and included. Children enjoy their time at the nursery taking part in a good balance of activities. However, the outdoor area is currently not always used effectively. The partnership with parents is a key strength of the setting contributing to all children's needs being met, systems are in place for additional support. The provider/manager is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable, she and the staff have skilfully incorporated the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) alongside the Montessori principles. Self-evaluation regularly takes place taking views of the team and parents into consideration.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the organisation of large group activities so that all children including those learning English as an additional language are fully challenged and engaged
- ensure there is effective daily access to the outdoor area.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider and her staff are very pro-active and value the contribution parents make to ensure individual needs are met. For example, there is a good two-way flow of information. Daily discussions, a suggestion box, open sessions, the

detailed informative welcome pack and regular newsletters ensure parents are able to express their views. In addition, they are effectively informed about the EYFS, their children's progress and how they can support learning and development. There are informal links with other professionals and external agencies to ensure there is a continuity of care and learning.

The provider is in the process of developing systems to enhance the systems for inclusion. She has recently purchased a wide range of resources including role play clothes to reflect various cultures. In addition, parents and carers are invited to share their knowledge and skills about food enjoyed on special occasions. Key words alongside pronunciations from home languages are obtained and staff are beginning to use these. Systems such as the creation of pictures are being developed so that all children can easily identify their needs. However, the organisation of some aspects of the day means that occasionally some children are not fully engaged.

Staff are able to protect children from harm as they demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. In addition, there are robust procedures for recruitment and vetting. Records, policies and good practices contribute to effective management of the provision and to the children's progress and development. The manager and her staff have started to implement systems to monitor and evaluate the provision. Targets such as access to the outdoor area have been identified for development, it is evident that they are keen to implement improvements thus improve outcomes for children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are involved in a good range of opportunities to help them make good progress across most areas of learning and development. Strong relationships with parents and carers ensure children are helped to succeed. Children are confident, they are motivated and eagerly participate in a broad range of adult-led and child-initiated activities such as construction, cooking and dancing to 'sticky kids music'. Personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority so that children develop a strong sense of belonging and security. For example, new children are helped to feel settled as the events and the routine of the day is explained to them as the day unfolds. As a result, they quickly help themselves to the Montessori resources and are actively engaged in exploring the Montessori learning materials including puzzles, books, number and word games. Older children are encouraged to assist their younger peers and a helper of the day is routinely chosen, thus children's self-esteem is effectively promoted. During fine weather children enjoy a visit from a puppeteer and outings to a nearby park. However, their own outdoor area is not fully utilised or routinely included in planning, potentially minimising play opportunities and learning in this area.

An appreciation of music is actively encouraged through regular music sessions with a classical music teacher. Children are encouraged to discover and learn at their own pace with the adults intervening as necessary to extend or support their learning. Generally, this is effective, however, occasionally potential learning opportunities and challenges are missed when children take part in large group

activities such as snack time and large story group sessions. During this time some children become uninterested and their joy in learning and discovery is interrupted to suit the routine of the day. Staff observe the children as they play, using these to assess and plan for the next stage of children's learning, thus, children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Learning journals and individual targets ensure children's learning and development are appropriately monitored.

Children's welfare is effectively promoted through everyday routines and imaginative teaching. For example, knowledge about germs and safety are promoted through stories such as 'Elmer' and 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. They learn about healthy eating through projects and discussions. Arrangements to ensure children's safety is well managed. For example, risk assessments are regularly reviewed. Children are helped to develop good levels of self-esteem and positive behaviour through good adult interaction, thus, children learn to understand right from wrong.

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?	3
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 B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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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.