

The Children's Garden

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY380063

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Inspector

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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 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).

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

The Children's Garden opened at the current premises in 2008. The setting is certified by the Steiner Association and follows the Steiner Waldorf philosophy of education. It is committee run and operates from a former chapel in Richmond in the London Borough of Richmond-Upon-Thames. An enclosed outdoor area at the front of the chapel is available for outdoor activities. The building is set in parkland and the children use the park for play and nature study. The setting is registered to care for 20 children, aged from three years to seven years, at any one time. There are currently 18 children on roll, of whom, 16 are in the early years age group. Children who reach statutory school age while attending the setting are home educated and their parents make up the required hours of education at home or in other learning groups. The sessions run from 09:30 to 13:00 every weekday during school term times. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The setting employs three members of staff including the manager and two members of staff are suitably qualified. The setting supports children with additional needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. All children are welcomed into the setting and staff work hard to recognise the uniqueness of each and every child. Staff are beginning to use self-evaluation to effectively identify the strengths of the provision and any areas for development. Quality checks are carried out on a daily basis. The manager is keen to continually maintain a successful Steiner Waldorf provision where all children enjoy valuable experiences.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- assess the risks to children in relation to daily activities and take action to minimise these.

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

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

09/06/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The suitably qualified, small staff team work well together to provide an authentic Steiner Waldorf experience for all children. All policies and procedures are in place, well maintained and regularly updated.

Resources are efficiently utilised to achieve the settings planned goals in learning and development and children thrive. Regular meetings ensure all staff contribute their observations of children's progress to the planning process. Staff regularly evaluate what has been successful and any areas for development and the manager reviews the children's activities throughout the week. Staff attend training whenever they can and the group is currently working on improvements to the children's outdoor provision. The manager works hard to communicate her plans for the future. She regularly liaises with staff, parents and the local community to continually develop the provision.

The partnership with parents and children is excellent. Parents are fully integrated into the work of the setting and they help out regularly. Parents are provided with very good information about the provision and they are invited to meet with staff to discuss their children's progress. The holistic approach to children's welfare ensures parents and extended family are well supported and that children's individual needs are very well catered for. The setting encourages a community spirit where parents sign up to a rota to support each other. Staff are very skilled at acknowledging the children and gathering their views and this is a real strength of the provision. Very good links are developed with children's next settings. They work together to share good practice.

Staff regularly update their knowledge of safeguarding to ensure they are able to take appropriate action if they have concerns about a child in their care. Overall, staff ensure children can play happily and safely, indoors and outdoors, throughout the session.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children arrive at the setting ready to play and learn. Staff allow children to develop their own play and encourage them to use their imagination effectively. Overall, children make good progress in respect of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. Staff spend all their time with the children either supporting them with planned activities or talking to them about their play. Staff are very good role models helping the children to play calmly.

The provision is set up in accordance with the Steiner Waldorf philosophy to be 'gentle on the eye, ear and all the senses'. Children play with natural materials such as wood and fabric and they store their belongings in baskets. Activity planning is based on the observations of children's interests and staff meet regularly to plan for children's next steps. This ensures that children make good progress.

The children's week is consistent and predictable so that children feel 'held and safe'. Each day children prepare healthy snacks of millet, lentils, barley and vegetables and they engage in activities such as baking bread, making felt and turning it into butterflies, drawing, eurhythmy therapy, building dens and cleaning. Children play enthusiastically outdoors, in all weathers, to develop their understanding of nature and their creative and physical skills. Birthdays are a very special time when the birthday child is the focus of attention and forming good relationships is a strength of the provision.

Staff plan a range of activities that meet all six areas of learning as far as a Steiner Waldorf curriculum allows. The setting are waiting for exemptions to be granted from certain aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements for Communication, Language and Literacy, Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy and Knowledge and Understanding of the World. For example, children do not have access to any information, communication and technology equipment such as calculators, remote control toys, telephones or computers.

The setting offers very good support for children with additional needs. There is an holistic approach to children's care and education. Staff and parents make good use of external agencies, such as the setting's doctor and speech therapists, to meet the children's needs.

Staff carry out regular risk assessments of the premises and outings to contribute to children's safety and the premises are very secure. However, a complete record of when risk assessments were carried out, by whom, the date of review and any action taken following a review or incident is not maintained and this is a breach of requirements. Children learn to keep themselves safe when using tools such as scissors and hammers and staff do their best to remind children how to play safely. However, some daily free play construction activities have not been risk assessed and, at times, children are at risk of harm during these activities. For example, children pretend to sleep above each other in bunk beds made from planks and a clothes horse, young children put their fingers under a plank as another slides it down the steps and children jump from apparatus over each other.

Children learn about healthy practices when they wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet. Children eat together in a family group making it a social event and they benefit from a healthy diet. They learn about healthy foods as they cook their snacks and fresh drinks are accessible at all times.

Staff work hard to maintain a tranquil atmosphere and children learn to share, take turns and recognise each other's needs. Children celebrate the cultures represented by children in the setting to develop their knowledge of today's diverse society. All children are welcomed into the setting. Children are encouraged to have 'gentle hands and feet' and staff use suitable behaviour management techniques at all times. Overall, children have a very happy time. The setting successfully fosters a family atmosphere where younger and older children learn to play productively together.

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?	1
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?	3
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?	3

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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