

Habitat Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY378237
Inspection date	27/04/2009
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow

Setting address	Transfiguration Church Hall, Bedford Road, Kempston, Bedfordshire, MK42 8DW
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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).

Description of the setting

Habitat Pre-school Limited opened under its present management in 2008 and is privately owned by the two play managers. It operates from two rooms within the church hall of the Transfiguration Church in Kempston, Bedfordshire. There is a level entrance surface which means that the premise is easily accessible. Children have access to the fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting receives funding for early education. It is open each weekday during term-time and sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:00, except on Tuesdays when a morning session only takes place. Lunchtime sessions are also available. A maximum of 40 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are 40 places for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and there are currently 50 children attending who are within this age group. Most of the children live locally or travel in from the surrounding areas.

There are 11 staff members of whom six hold relevant childcare qualifications and four are completing training to achieve a recognised qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of provision is satisfactory. The organised approach to planning takes account of each child's individual needs and their developmental abilities, which ensures that they can fully participate in all the stimulating activities provided. Their learning is monitored through ongoing observations from key workers, who plan for and individually identify each child's next area of learning. Staff build positive relationships with parents and carers who are routinely involved in the children's learning. The play managers work alongside a dedicated staff reviewing practice, identifying strengths and weaknesses to improve play and learning opportunities for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that activity planning includes how this can be extended to provide challenge for the less and more-abled child
- ensure that the observational assessment system is routinely updated and is detailed enough to ascertain all children's achievements and gain an overview of their learning
- ensure that hazards to children, both indoors and outside, are kept to a minimum; this refers to the hazardous items in accessible cupboards such as brooms, leaning tables, step ladders and the kitchen area which has bleach and glassware in low cupboards
- ensure that all policies and procedures are regularly updated and available to parents. This refers to the complaints policy
- ensure that all medication entries are countersigned by parents or carers.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Effective safeguarding policies ensure that children are well-protected. For example, the vetting procedures and induction processes are soundly adhered to with staff being supported over a three month probationary period to learn the setting's practices and procedures. Policies and procedures are in place but some are not updated with the most recent information or made readily available which could lead to misunderstandings with parents. The provider has implemented some systems to monitor and evaluate the provision such as risk assessments of the building and outings and discusses with staff any improvements. For example, the group have new resources and storage units which enable children to self-select their own play materials. However, the children's safety could be affected as the daily safety check does not always include the hazardous items in the kitchen and accessible wall cupboards. The setting runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis where resources are well used, of good quality, stimulating and meets the needs of the children attending.

The play managers are committed to improving their and the staff's knowledge base. The staff have recently undertaken training, some of which have been identified through the appraisal system, on subjects such as phonics, 'looked after children', equal opportunities and observations which are routinely shared with other staff members. Relationships with parents are good, with newsletters, the learning programme, open days and notices being made readily available to them. For example, during the settling-in period, parents are asked to fill in areas their child has achieved linked to the early learning goals. This enables the setting to plan appropriately for the children in the early stages of their placement and parents to gain knowledge of the EYFS. Staff know the children well and organise many opportunities for them to learn and enjoy. These include a focus activity relating to themes and particular areas of learning such as gaining an understanding of their senses, recognising shapes or writing their name on their craft work. However, the observational assessment system is not always routinely updated or monitored and the focus activity planning does not consistently record how children's learning could be extended for the more and less-abled child. This could prevent the children's learning plans being fully promoted on an ongoing basis.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are consistently offered a stimulating range of activities and play opportunities which enable them to make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Staff plan activities based around themes such as 'Colour', 'Spring in the Garden' and 'Senses'. Key worker staff know the children well, identifying their next areas of learning, basing this on clear observations which are used when planning future activities. Staff support the children well through discussion and spontaneous explanations as well as focused activities to extend their learning. These include describing smelly pots of cocoa, vinegar or tomato sauce, listening to the nature sounds in the garden, making patterns and toy baskets out of craft

sticks or weighing out ingredients at cooking time gaining an appreciation of volume and capacity.

Children gain an appreciation of a community as they visit the local park for climbing and balancing activities or to the library to choose books. Children enjoy themes and projects such as those related to Diwali, Pancake Day and St Patrick's Day. Staff further develop themes through pretend scenarios such as shops, a café or homes. For example, children go fishing to bring home their catch to cook in the oven or investigating number when using the shop's cash registers or dialling 999 in an emergency. Children develop their physical skills through weekly Physical Exercise (PE) sessions and their manipulative skills when using craft implements. The comprehensive planning of the environment and the presentation of resources encourage children to self-select and initiate their own learning. For example, children improve their confidence and independence through activities such as using programmable machines with proficiency, pouring their own drinks and co-operatively packing away the play activities when asked. Children enjoy a circle session discussing how frog spawn grows into frogs, caterpillars into butterflies and building their vocabulary when using words such as cocoon, buckle, hygiene, and texture as well as opposites such as wet, dry, hot, cold, hard and soft.

The staff have a sound understanding of creating a welcoming and generally welcoming environment in which risk is minimised and children learn to take care of themselves. For example, they practice road safety on their walks, discuss stranger danger and carry out regular fire drills. Staff know what action to take should they have a child protection concern and where to find appropriate information and contact details. Staff have a clear understanding of healthy eating and operate a snack bar system and lunch time session. Staff use these opportunity to discuss healthy options, and the setting has increased children's understanding of healthy lifestyles through themes and projects. All necessary paperwork is in place to support children's well-being such as permission and medication consent forms but children's health could be affected as not all entries in the medication book have been countersigned by parents.

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?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	3

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?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
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

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