

Cherubs at St Thomas'

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY266815
Inspection date	10/06/2009
Inspector	Lynda Walker
Setting address	St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School, Commonside East, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 1YG
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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

Cherubs at St Thomas' wrap around care opened in 2003 and is on the Early years Register, the Compulsory and Voluntary Childcare Registers. It may care for no more than 80 children under eight years, not more than 80 may be in the early years age group, and of these no more than 12 may be under one year at any time. There are currently 80 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens five days per week all year round. They offer a wrap around service that includes breakfast club, day care and out of school care, that includes a play scheme service. A total of Ten full time and 18 part-time staff work with the children. The majority of the staff have qualifications to NVQ at level 2 or 3. Two staff members are working towards a higher recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The overall effectiveness of the childcare provision at Cherubs at St Thomas is outstanding.

Cherubs at St Thomas' provides an outstanding variety of interesting learning experiences for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The children really enjoy their time at the centre as they play happily together in a safe, welcoming and attractive environment, where a strong emphasis is placed on their care and safety. These activities effectively develop the children's knowledge and skills and enable them to make excellent progress in their learning. The partnership with parents, the school and other agencies is a key strength and contributes significantly to ensuring children's individual needs are met to a high standard. The capacity for continuous improvement is excellent as practitioners show an outstanding commitment to self-evaluation. They have identified the need to ensure that children have daily access to outdoor play areas.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- ensure all children have daily access to outdoor play facilities

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff work extremely well together as a team, and are clearly committed to ensuring that all children in their care are well looked after and enjoy the excellent range of choices on offer. There is a detailed range of policies and procedures in place that are used effectively by all practitioners. Safeguarding procedures within the centre are robust. All staff are aware of their responsibilities and roles in relation to keeping children safe and the clear systems for staff recruitment,

training, risk assessment and evaluation support this. Children's welfare is promoted extremely well. Risk assessments are fully in place, used effectively and are implemented consistently.

The provision is extremely well organised, with an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities to encourage the children's independent learning and the development of their self-care skills. All legally required documentation is carefully maintained and always easily available to those entitled to see them. Staff are effectively deployed, ensuring that children are extremely well supervised and supported at all times. A key worker system ensures links with home are consolidated as effectively as possible. The staff act as very positive role models. They know the children extremely well, appreciate their differing needs and understand their varying abilities. Every child is valued and treated as an individual.

Toys and play materials are very well organised to enable all children to access them safely and independently. However access to the outdoor areas is restricted at times limiting 'free flow' between indoor and outdoor activities.

Staff demonstrate a great commitment to the setting through their frequent attendance at internal and external meetings and at training events which support their professional development. Many staff are working towards, or have just achieved, a higher level of qualification. Staff meetings are used to review practices and procedures so that all staff contribute to the continual improvement of the provision. There are very effective links with other organisations which are also used to self-evaluate their effectiveness. The setting actively seeks and responds to support and advice from other professionals which has a positive impact on the overall quality of the early years provision and the outcomes for all children.

Parents are made to feel very welcome and speak highly of the provision. They are also able to access easily all policies and procedures and so are clear on how the setting operates. Staff gather appropriate information relating to children's needs at the outset so that these can be met. The setting has established effective links and works closely with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that appropriate information is shared about children's care and well-being.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The highly competent, enthusiastic staffing team are consistently well deployed to support the children's welfare and learning. They have an extremely positive relationship with the children, know them very well, treat each child as a valued individual and have a clear understanding of their differing abilities and interests.

Children are provided with a range of opportunities to help them make excellent progress across all areas of learning and development. Staff are consistently observing and assessing the children, using their written observational evidence together with photographs of the children engaged in activities in order to complete individual profiles. This information is also used very well to plan further

work for the children.

The key person spends time with new children, reassuring them and helping them to settle quickly to new routines. This means that young children do not feel overwhelmed and quickly gain in confidence. The planning is flexible, responding to children's interests and ideas and takes account of their starting points to ensure all children can participate successfully. Information is gathered from staff observations, children, parents and other settings that the children attend, such as their school, to ensure that children are suitably challenged by activities that excite them.

Activities are evaluated to a high standard and practitioners make accurate observations of the children and use them to identify the next steps in learning. This enables children's learning to develop according to their own needs and abilities. There is effective coverage of all areas of learning, and a strong emphasis is placed upon the development of personal and social development. The designated early years coordinator liaises with the school staff in order to ensure that continuity of learning and development for children in the early years age group is promoted fully.

The well-organised environment enables children to become independent learners, which develops their confidence effectively. They make many choices, initiate their own activities and play imaginatively with the resources available. Children show a good level of interest in what they do. They play for long periods of time with the toys and resources and are fully engaged. Staff present activities in an enjoyable and motivating way, they make links between the activities and children's own ideas and play interests and extend these through talk. As a result, their imagination and creativity is well supported and promoted. Children are confident, as they freely access a good supply of writing materials and resources, which enables them to practise their early writing skills. For example, children confidently use scissors, tape, card, stencils and a variety of pens and papers to mark-make, which develops their pencil control and hand to eye coordination skills.

Comprehensive systems are in place to promote children's safety within the setting. Visitors are monitored and staff deploy themselves effectively to ensure that children are appropriately supervised. Risk assessments for each activity are carried out and the centre manager ensures that the premises and equipment are safe prior to children's arrival at each session.

All staff hold current first aid certificates and systems are in place to ensure they can respond swiftly and effectively in the event of an accident or emergency. Through routines and discussion, children learn about and practice good personal hygiene. Since the last inspection the setting has developed the promotion of healthy eating and children are able to help themselves to snacks during the session where age appropriate. Water is freely available throughout the session. The staff promote a safe and healthy environment where appropriate facilities are in place to meet the children's personal needs and support their independence. There is a comfortable accessible place where babies and toddlers can rest or sleep when they want to. There are alternative activities for babies and toddlers who do not need sleep at the same time. Risk assessments are reviewed and updated to ensure the safety of the children. Children successfully learn about the wider world through everyday play and

discussion. They have superb opportunities to enhance their skills for the future as they use the computer, play games together and visit the local shops and amenities. Children are happy and settled in the provision. The sessions are exceptionally well planned with a good balance of adult-led activities which introduce them to new experiences, and child-initiated play which enables them to freely express themselves. Staff are skilled in supporting children's learning, providing support to those who need it, enabling them to participate in their chosen activity and allowing others the space and opportunities to explore, investigate and create; alone or with their peers.

Staff have formed good relationships with the children who confidently state their views and opinions. Children state that their favourite activities are playing together and skipping outside and they like the staff very much. Parents spoken to during the inspection were all unanimous in their praise of the provision and spoke highly of the staff and their commitment to ensuring that the children had fun and enjoyed themselves.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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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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