

Southminster Pre-School Learning Alliance

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique reference number | EY379229 |
| Inspection date | 11/06/2009 |
| Inspector | Cheryl Thompson |
| Setting address | Southminster Primary School, Burnham Road, SOUTHMINSTER, Essex, CM0 7ES |
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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

Southminster Pre-School Learning Alliance is committee run and managed by a supervisor. It serves the local community and was established in 1966. It registered in the current premises in 2008. The pre-school is placed on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The facilities and access are suitable for those with mobility difficulties or disabilities. It operates from a classroom and adjacent outdoor area within the grounds of Southminster Primary School; occasional use is also made of the school hall. A maximum of 26 children in the early years age group may attend the pre-school at any one time, of whom none may be under two years. Currently, there are 39 children on roll. The pre-school is open five days a week during term time. Morning sessions are from 09:00 until 11:45. Afternoon sessions are offered on a Tuesday and Thursday from 13:00 until 15:30. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school currently employs four members of staff all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting works in partnership with the school and receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Provision at Southminster Pre-School Learning Alliance is good. It meets the needs of the early years children well. They make good progress in their learning and in their personal development. Effective leadership ensures that well trained members of staff evaluate provision regularly. As a result improvements needed are recognised quickly and they successfully promote all aspects of children's welfare and learning, particularly in making sure all children are included in all that the setting offers. The strong teamwork and commitment to doing the best for the children demonstrates that capacity for further improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide more detail in planning to show what it is children are expected to learn from taking part in an activity
- improve the skills of staff in understanding how to develop children's knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics)

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of this setting are good. Children's safety and welfare are high priorities and the leadership ensures that systems and processes are followed consistently by all members of staff. The policies and practice for child protection, for dealing with accidents and illness and for checking the suitability of all adults who work with the children meet current requirements. Checks of

equipment, the building and outside areas ensure that they are safe for children to use.

Staff work together as an effective team to promote children's learning and well-being. Skills in relation to evaluation of custom and practice is developing well and while outcomes are not recorded in a formal document the approach is already thorough enough to give staff a clear picture of strengths and areas to develop further. For example, staff have rightly identified the need to refine the system for assessing and observing children's progress and making better use of these assessments when planning the next steps in learning for individual children.

Links with the primary school are sound and ensure that the approaches used to meet children's needs are consistent. For example, the way in which teaching and learning of letter sounds and mathematical concepts is approached is done in a similar manner. This ensures that children are not confused or muddled in their learning. However, the staff recognise that they need more training in this area so that more can be done to help children develop their early literacy and numeracy skills at an even better rate. Links with parents and carers are good; there are many formal and informal opportunities for parents to discuss their child's accomplishments. Parents are appreciative of the care and support provided for their children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make good progress because the good range of activities on offer helps them to thrive and learn well. They develop their basic skills successfully and in particular, the staff's expertise in the use of computers has a very positive impact in helping children develop these skills at a good rate. Children demonstrate great confidence in the use of a mouse and key board.

In the main, children make good progress because staff make learning fun and use questioning effectively to help children think and develop their vocabulary. They promote a love of books and stories very effectively by having a daily story-time session and allowing children to choose and take home books to share with their families and discuss with staff. The use of the outside area, together with the good range of recently improved resources, supports children's learning well.

Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because they have plenty of opportunities to make choices, are guided sensitively and always encouraged to 'have a go' and be independent. Rhythms and routines are well established so that children know what to do when they come in to the setting and also what to do when their parent or carer comes to collect them. Relationships are good. Staff provide good role models and help children to respect each other. They enable children to sort out any disagreements that occur sensitively so that children learn to share and get on with each other. Staff promote healthy lifestyles well and children understand the need to wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet.

Staff make detailed observations while children are undertaking particular tasks.

Currently, however, planning for the next steps in children's learning is not based precisely enough on these observations. Consequently, some activities do not always promote the best possible progress by building systematically on what children already know, understand and can do.

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

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| 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

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| 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

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| 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 |

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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

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