

Hillside Playcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY219751
Inspection date	19/08/2009
Inspector	Lynn Denise Smith
Setting address	Hall Road, Southminster, Essex, CM0 7EH
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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

Hillside Playcare Centre is privately owned and managed. It opened in 1982 and operates from a purpose-built building in Southminster. A ramp to the hall entrance means that the premises are easily accessible. A secure enclosed outdoor area is used for outdoor play activities. A maximum of 58 children aged from birth to five years may attend the setting at any one time. The group is open five days a week from 7:00am to 7:00pm all year.

There are currently 86 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) years. They live in the local and surrounding areas.

There are 25 members of staff, including the owner, cooks and administrative staff. One of the staff, is working towards Early Years Professional Status and 18 staff hold other appropriate early years qualifications.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children's individual needs are very effectively met as staff clearly know the children well and work closely with their parents to develop ongoing knowledge about any changes in their lives. The setting caters for all children's needs within a fully inclusive and welcoming environment, appropriately adapted to meet the requirements of all users. Children's welfare needs are effectively met through the staff's caring practices and the setting's clear procedures. They learn and develop in a fun and exciting setting whereby their individual interests and learning styles are given due consideration. The setting is beginning to develop a culture of self-evaluation to identify areas for further improvements for children and is beginning to explore links with other settings working within the EYFS

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide opportunities for children to make choice over their learning space through free flow play
- review the organisation of mealtimes to ensure children have opportunities to promote their independence through serving themselves.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting is run and organised by an owner and established management team, some of whom have worked together for over twenty years. The setting prides itself on its low staff turnover which has enabled it to provide families with stability and consistency over many years. Staff are provided with good opportunities to further their knowledge and expertise through training courses. They are also

encouraged to bring their individual skills into the setting and to share their knowledge with their colleagues.

Children are effectively safeguarded as staff demonstrate clear knowledge about safeguarding procedures and how to protect the children in their care. Good security ensures that all adults and visitors are monitored and new visitors are asked to show identification before entering. The provision has robust procedures in place for ensuring that all staff are vetted and cleared and that appropriate references have been obtained for new staff.

Effective records and written policies ensures that the setting operates to a high standard and the management structure demonstrates good organisational skills. The setting has a procedure for reviewing and evaluating its provision by asking parents, staff and students for feedback on its service and ideas and thoughts for the future. The setting is beginning to use information gained through the self-evaluation process to identify areas for improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children's welfare, learning and development needs are very well-met through the setting's clear policies, procedures and practices. Staff are professional and confident and demonstrate sound knowledge about the children in their care and their implementation of the EYFS. Children develop a good understanding about keeping themselves safe and healthy as they follow the staff's directions; for example, they understand why they wash their hands after using the toilet and why they need to have sun cream applied. Children are very fit and active and thoroughly enjoy participating in physical activities in the superbly presented outdoor area. They have access to a wide range of outdoor experiences; however, at present, they do not have opportunities to make free choices over their play and learning space through free flow play. Children's nutritional needs are expertly met as they enjoy a range of meals and snacks throughout the day which include breakfast, lunch, tea and mid-session snacks. They are provided with healthy and nutritious meals and sit with their friends to enjoy this special time of the day in a calm and relaxed atmosphere. Few opportunities are currently provided for children to develop independence at meal times, for example, by serving their own meals or making choices over the foods they eat.

Children play, learn and have fun in a beautifully presented building set in extensive grounds and a very rural landscape. They are cared for in base rooms according to their age and stages of development and move through the nursery at appropriate times. Every room and hallway is made welcoming and attractive as staff effectively present examples of the children's creative work and photographs of their activities on the walls. All toys and resources are effectively presented to provide children with safe and easy access. The nursery gardens are sectioned off to provide separate areas for different types of play, for example, a safe surface area is used for dancing and games, a large field is used for bikes, cars and large scale equipment. All areas are provided with very effective sun screens and an undercover outdoor classroom provides good opportunities for a large group to play outdoors whilst being protected from the sun.

Children are very settled, content and comfortable at the setting. They part from their parents and carers with ease and quickly become actively engrossed in play and learning opportunities. The staff clearly know the children well and use their knowledge of each child's needs to promote their learning and welfare requirements effectively. Parents play an active role in their children's care and learning as they share relevant information about their children with their key workers. Information about the children's home backgrounds and cultures is used effectively to provide all children with an inclusive and welcoming provision. The setting has good links with other settings within two cluster groups and is developing their connections with other settings providing for the EYFS to enable them to share relevant information about children's learning and development needs in a more effective way.

Children actively participate in an interesting range of adult-led and child-led activities which enable them to explore all six areas of learning. Effective planning is in place which provides opportunities for staff to follow and develop children's individual interests using the information gained through observations. Children enjoy mark making with a wide range of materials; older children's emergent writing is well-developed with many of the children forming clear recognisable letters and writing their own names. Children converse effectively with each other and staff using verbal and non-verbal communication, their questions and comments are effectively extended by staff listening and responding to them appropriately. Children's self-esteem and confidence is actively promoted by staff offering constant praise and providing children with appropriate challenges. Children explore nature as they hunt for bugs in the effectively positioned logs pile, watch and feed the birds which fly into the garden and observe the mole hills which often appear in the grass. They plant and tend vegetables and enjoy collecting their produce. Children enjoy being creative and expressing themselves in a wide range of ways. They are imaginative and thoroughly enjoy the confident, spontaneity of staff who respond and join in with their games. For example, a trip to the role play area which is currently presented as a library provides an excellent opportunity for staff to ask children how they are getting home; 'by bus' is the answer. This prompts the driver of the local bus to get into character and to bring the bus up alongside the bus stop to collect them. Whilst travelling around the room in their bus they explore areas they will visit and things they will see. The bus driver carefully stops at appropriate places for the passengers to get off.

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?	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

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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