

Caterpillars Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

110465

Inspection date

09/10/2009

Inspector

Eira Gill

Setting address

Calmore Infant School, Calmore Drive, Totton,
Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 2ZZ

Telephone number

07748 934932.

Email

Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Caterpillars Preschool was first registered in 1999. It operates from a suite of rooms within Calmore Infants School in the Calmore district of Totton, Southampton. It is a community preschool managed by a voluntary committee and has good links with the host school and other providers for Early Years Foundation Stage children.

The accommodation consists of a very large playroom with adjoining toilets and changing facilities, a fitted kitchen, an adult toilet and an office as well as a welcome area. The children have easy access to a secure outdoor area which leads out directly from the playroom. The preschool supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children whose first language is not English. There is good access for wheelchair users.

The preschool is on the Early Years Register, the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 36 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 82 children from two to five years on roll and the preschool is in receipt of funding for the provision of early years education for children aged two, three and four. The preschool is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The preschool is open each weekday from 08:30 to 11:30 and 12:15 to 14:45 during school term times with a lunch club available. However, on Thursdays, it is only open until 11:30 because a session for parents and toddlers is available in the afternoon. Children are able to use the school field and playground for additional outside play. The nursery employs nine members of staff including the supervisor. The supervisor has a level four qualification and six assistants have level three. Two assistants are working towards a level three qualification.

Last summer the preschool organised care in the summer holidays for two weeks and intend to repeat that initiative next summer if there is a need.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Provision is good with effective partnerships with parents, the host school and excellent links with local agencies. Children's individual needs and interests are highly valued and responded to through observations and a very good understanding of the needs of Early Years Foundation Stage children. Good systems are in place, particularly the very wide range of resources for learning and development, ensure the children to enjoy exciting and challenging activities. They make good progress. The supervisor has effectively addressed the issues from the previous inspection and capacity for continuous improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve planning and assessment by identifying the next small steps of learning each child needs to make in order to make first rate progress
- ensure that appraisals of staff are organised at regular intervals.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The supervisor has high expectations and is keen to improve several aspects of the setting. Priorities for future developments have been identified by the formal self-evaluation process as well as ensuring the setting meets the criteria to be awarded Stage three of the Pre-School Learning Alliance accreditation. Required policies and procedures, including safeguarding, are effectively and regularly reviewed and updated. Staff are carefully vetted for their suitability and are very alert to any healthy and safety issues. Protection of the children is exemplary.

All staff totally respect the different backgrounds and any specific needs of the children. For example, local agencies visit the preschool and give the staff very useful practical advice which is put into practice. As a result, all groups of children thrive and rapidly move forward in their learning. Leaders and managers are aware that appraisals of staff are not always carried out at regular intervals and this is an area for improvement.

Staff have developed a good understanding of how to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage and children's progress is good. Observations, planning and assessment are good and key workers record the children's progress in all areas of learning diligently. Assistants note the progress of all children, not just those in their key worker group, on small notelets. They then post them into the key workers' personal wall files. As yet, however, only a few key workers plan those very small steps in learning that children need to make to ensure first rate progress. Nevertheless, all staff know the children's needs well but the process is not yet sufficiently formalised for planning to be considered exemplary.

Resources are plentiful and easily accessible. Equipment and accommodation are very safe and suitable. They are used very efficiently to ensure that all children can explore freely and dictate their own pace and focus of activity.

Partnerships with parents, childminders and the host school are good. Parents are enthusiastic and say, for example, 'He loves it here', 'What they have learned really helps them when they move into the reception classes' and 'She's safe and learning to speak English'. Links with the host school are effective and enable children to feel confident when they transfer. Staff work hard to liaise with all schools the children transfer to. Links with the several agencies locally to support children with specific needs are excellent.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Staff arrive early to prepare the preschool for the children's arrival. Their teamwork is excellent. The supervisor and assistants greet the children and parents warmly. They listen and make notes carefully about any new information regarding the children. The children make a bee line for their favourite piece of equipment or for the different bays of the very spacious playroom where there is a huge selection of toys and apparatus to explore. Parents of new children stay for a while to settle the children down and chat to each other or to the assistants. There is a close feeling of community.

The free flow of activities both inside and outside gives children total freedom of choice. The host school is happy for the children to take their wheeled vehicles into the adjoining playground. Practically all children are able to ride a bike, a scooter or other vehicles. Some of the children are very adventurous and love speeding along together while others are more cautious and still learning how to press hard on the pedals to make the bikes move along. The children have been able to plant seeds to grow herbs and relish searching in the soil for worms and other creatures. Safety is paramount during these sessions and the assistants are very vigilant ensuring all gates are secure and hands washed. Risk assessments take place daily.

Inside there are excellent opportunities for children to challenge themselves. For example, children enjoy clambering up and over the climbing apparatus and coming down the chute. This is surrounded by safety mats. Others enjoy quieter occupations and control the mouse colouring in outlines on the computer screen or playing with the farm animals or other numerous resources. Some of the very young children experiment and learn how to hold large paint brushes while one of the assistants sits nearby with children in her key worker group helping them to learn English words for eyes, nose, etc. All these skills are contributing very well to the next stage of children's education. Excellent resources are used during teaching sessions and all children make good progress. Their behaviour is exemplary.

Fruit, milk and water are provided at snack times which is organised as a rolling programme with children sitting in small groups to enjoy their snack. Children are independent in many routines such as pouring their own drink and washing their hands before they eat. They make an excellent contribution to the preschool by helping to clear away all the equipment before lunchtime. Sometimes, children suggest what they would like included in the planning for the following week and this is immediately acted upon by staff who say, 'If a child asks for something – we do it!' Children are very happy and enjoy themselves hugely.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
------------------------------------------------------------------	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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

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