

The Marmalade Caterpillar

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

20/01/2010

Inspector

Linda Close

Setting address

Caterpillar Nursery, 14a Boundaries Road, LONDON, SW12
8EX

Telephone number

0208 265 5224

Email

Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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

The Marmalade Caterpillar nursery school operates from a single storey building which consists of a large hall area, a small room at the rear, a kitchen and toilet facilities for staff and children. There is an enclosed outdoor play area at the rear of the building. The building is located on a residential road within walking distance of Balham underground station in southwest London. The local authority is Wandsworth. The school is one of a small group of two settings owned by the same provider. Children attend from the local and surrounding areas for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 30 children in the early years age group may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 50 children on roll aged from two to four years.

The group offers support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of children attending are learning English as an additional language. The nursery is open during term time only. The opening hours are 9am to 12 noon and 12.30pm to 3.30pm. Older children may bring a packed lunch from home and stay all day.

There are seven members of staff and an administrative assistant who sometimes works with the children. Almost all of the staff hold a relevant early years qualification. Peripatetic staff visit weekly to lead activities in ballet and music. The nursery school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The provision meets the needs of children exceptionally well. Every member of staff is fully focussed on meeting every child's individual needs. They have high expectations for the children whose achievements are consistently good and often excellent. Children are safe, happy and relaxed and they enjoy learning about the local area and the world around them. Partnerships with parents are very strong and the adults work together harmoniously to meet the individual needs of the children. The provider and manager evaluate the service to children very effectively and they work closely with the whole staff team to make sure that the setting continues to develop and improve.

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 that the organisation of art and craft activities consistently enables children to choose and use resources in their own way.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding is given a high priority in the setting. Well informed staff ensure that the children are safe in the setting and on outings. Staff attend regular training to keep their knowledge up to date and the information gained is discussed and shared by the staff team. Keeping children safe is mentioned on the agenda for weekly staff meetings which keeps the policies and procedures for safeguarding fresh in the minds of all staff. Parents and carers are made aware of the setting's responsibilities in relation to child protection at the time of registration and the policies and procedures are kept in the entrance area for easy access.

The nursery staff are constantly thinking of ways to improve the provision for children. The staff team members all have opportunities to reflect on their work and to contribute to the self evaluation document and children are also consulted about their likes, dislikes and interests. Close links with parents and carers ensure that they too can contribute to evaluation and development planning.

The provider, the manager and the staff are keen to maintain the ongoing improvement of the setting. They seek ways to develop and move forward through training and adopting new initiatives. This includes taking part in the 'Every Child a Talker' (ECAT) project which gives staff and parents opportunities to work together to develop children's communication skills. Every member of staff takes part in a range of training courses and they feedback their learning to the rest of the team at staff meetings.

The nursery is exceptionally well resourced with good quality clean furniture, ample toys and games and a range of traditional Montessori resources. The majority of toys, games and resources are stored for children to access independently.

Respect and understanding for a range of people and cultures is promoted very well. Staff invite parents to share their language and culture with the children. Staff learn important vocabulary in children's home languages to assist them when they are settling in and learning English. Staff liaise effectively with outside agencies when there is a need. They have well established links with the local area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and they invite a speech therapist to give advice and support for children who find verbal communication a struggle.

The level of engagement with parents and carers is excellent. Parents say they are delighted with the way that the staff enable them to be involved in their child's learning. Some parents say that the weekly email sent out to them by the setting is a really helpful way of sharing plans for the week ahead and they enjoy reading it and finding ways that they can support their child's learning. Parents can access their own child's progress file at any time. They see for themselves how children are progressing and share the plans that staff make to help the children to move forward in their learning. Consequently the children are supported at home and at school which contributes to their rapid progress.

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

Children show by their smiles and eagerness to enter the setting that they are happy and feel safe in their nursery school. They are relaxed, keen to take part in their activities and eager to learn. Staff arrive early to prepare the setting and resources which means that the children are welcomed into a bright, well organised environment. Staff check the indoor and outdoor areas at the setting daily to ensure children's safety. They involve the children in fire evacuation on a regular basis so that they will not be afraid in an emergency situation. Children always have an adult to turn to for advice, guidance and support because the staff are attentive and well deployed.

The guidance provided for the children in relation to their behaviour is excellent. Staff are good role models for the children. They demonstrate good manners and politeness in their own pleasant ways of speaking to the children and they help them to understand why they must share and take turns fairly. Staff successfully manage minor disagreements with a mixture of charm, firmness and kindness although they keep the children so busy with worthwhile activities that they have no time to become bored or fractious. Staff ensure that the range of activities reflects the background of the children attending. Children have learnt about Hanukkah and Divali and they will soon enjoy an international food day which will involve their parents. They are actively involved in charitable fund raising events which helps them to learn to help others.

Children are developing very useful skills for their future learning. They are making excellent progress in all areas of communication, language and literacy. They are learning to recognise the letters of the alphabet and the sounds that the letters make. Some children are able to blend letter sounds together to make whole words and many can recognise and write their own names. Skilful story telling holds the children's attention well at group time. They delight in the story of The Three Billy Goats Gruff and learn vocabulary such as big, medium sized and small without realising that they are learning. The comfortable reading area attracts children to look at books alone or with staff. They often snuggle up together on the soft cushions and become fully immersed in well told stories.

Children are gaining good problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills through discussion over free play and through well planned, purposeful play activities. They play table top games with patient, supportive staff that involve them in counting, sorting, making pairs and matching. Block play and construction play involves them in finding the right sized pieces for their models. Children demonstrate a mature command of their computer software. They manipulate the computer mouse exceptionally well and are content to take turns using a large sand timer to measure their time at the keyboard. They also benefit from having a wide range of battery operated toys and materials to use to extend their learning.

Children learn about the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. They wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet facilities and they are able to explain why this is important. Children enjoy their healthy snacks of fresh fruit at

the nursery and they eat well. They can help themselves to drinks of water at any time and they pour out their own drinks at snack time with the minimum of assistance. Children take part in energetic games and activities which include ballet and 'fit and fun' activities as well as taking regular walks and outings to the park and a local play area. They have access to a small outdoor play area at the setting which is well organised and well resourced with wheeled toys and small apparatus for games.

Children can access various tables which are set out with painting and printing activities and they take part with pleasure although the size of paper and the selection of printing resources is a little limited. They have tables where they can play with dough, sand or water and a large easel for free painting. Some creative activities, such as those which involve making bridges and models with wood and waste materials, give children a wider choice of resources and media with which to explore and experiment. Easily accessible dressing up clothes, musical instruments and a home corner that is changed on a regular basis provide children with further opportunities to be creative and use their imagination.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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