

Little Pals Childrens Centre Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sarah Williams

Setting address Bishops Park College, Jaywick Lane, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
Essex, CO16 8BE
Telephone number 01255 687144
Email gilliansmith@bishospark.essex.sch.uk
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.

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Description of the setting

Little Pals Children's Centre Nursery Limited opened in 2009. This setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is situated near Clacton-on-Sea, Essex and is accessed via a level surface. A maximum of 75 children may attend this facility at anyone time. There are currently 67 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. The setting also offers care to children aged over five, after school and during the holidays.

The nursery is open from 08.00am to 06.00pm all year round, although some children attend term-time only. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 17 staff, all have appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children attending this setting benefit from excellent opportunities to make maximum progress in both their learning and development. Every child's uniqueness is recognised, and the extremely high quality of leadership and management ensures that every child is fully included and receives exemplary support for their individual welfare and learning needs. The setting demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve due to a strong commitment from all involved. An emphasis on team work and the thorough and searching evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses result in the ability to take action, where areas for development are identified, in order to bring about improvements for the benefit of parents and children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reviewing the arrangements for sleeping children in buggies to ensure that any hazards are minimised and children are safe at all times, for example, during an emergency evacuation
- broadening the range of activities designed to raise children's understanding and awareness of world cultures and incorporating themes into the planned programme to extend their curiosity as learners.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management is exceptional. The manager and all concerned with this setting have high aspirations for quality through continuous improvement and a very strong commitment to equality and diversity. A clear and achievable strategy, detailed within the development plan, with realistic aims and objectives is identified within the well thought out self-evaluation and is shared by all staff. Children's individual needs are met exceptionally well, through strong and highly effective partnerships with parents and other agencies involved in the care of the children. All resources, including the highly committed and dedicated staff team, are very well-utilised to ensure a seamless session for the children, whether a whole day or shorter period of attendance. Staff development is positively encouraged and well-supported. Staff seek out and make good use of training opportunities whenever possible, as they work toward and sustain ambitious targets. Additionally, the appraisal system is thorough and effective in addressing individuals' professional development needs with the result that the nursery boasts a very high level of qualified staff and supports and encourages those seeking to gain further qualifications.

Children benefit from the excellent, well thought out working practices and robust systems which are in place with regard to partnership working. Those children for whom attendance would otherwise be difficult are provided with safe, reliable transport; an example of how the nursery serves the local community very well. Every child receives a consistent and high level of individual support throughout their attendance. Clear, robust policies and procedures in place underpin the setting's practices with regard to safeguarding. Training in the area of child protection is fully maintained, and a successful induction programme ensures new staff are well-informed from their first days. No member of staff is left unsupervised with children until all checks have been completed. Comprehensive recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are thorough and effective, and the low staff turnover suggests a high level of satisfaction within the nursery's workforce. The strong emphasis on keeping children safe and secure is also evidenced through the thorough risk assessments in place for all areas of the building, as well as when on outings. The current arrangement for sleeping babies in buggies may compromise some aspects of safety and needs to be reviewed.

Each member of staff demonstrates high expectations for the setting's success, motivated by the manager and those in charge, and as a result outcomes for the children are positive, helping them to reach their potential with appropriate support. Progress and development since the new management took over has been remarkable. The setting has implemented changes and systems to ensure inclusion of all users and provide parents with a wealth of information about general child care related issues as well as specific nursery routines and activities. The nursery environment is stimulating, child friendly and inviting, with many high quality, child generated displays adding to the ambience and appearance of the playrooms and other areas. The well-chosen furniture, resources and equipment are of excellent quality; durable, safe and appropriate for the children's use. Adaptations for children with mobility issues or additional needs ensure

accessibility and inclusion for them at every stage of the day. Children use the well-resourced, partially covered outdoor learning area throughout the day, all year round. Staff deployment throughout the rooms is highly effective and free-flow play is positively embraced and encouraged, allowing children to be active learners, confident, happy and self-motivated.

The setting has a commitment to equality and diversity and promotes this well, successfully ensuring that all children integrate well. For children who have additional needs or English as a second language, support systems have been developed which ensure their inclusion and full participation, seeking and utilising outside help from a range of professional services where appropriate. The staff are able to successfully identify and close gaps in learning due to their thorough assessment and record keeping system, based on meaningful regular, and detailed, observations. Planning is a whole staff activity, largely initiated by the key persons following children's interests and ideas; the staff value the children's participation and respect their contributions. The topic based activities are fun and exciting, often following the seasons and nature, and complementing the core curriculum, which offers continuous provision across all areas of learning. Consequently, in this stimulating environment, the outcomes for children are highly positive.

The nursery is sensitive to the needs of the families and local community. Being located within a children's centre means that many facilities are available to parents for a holistic approach to their child care needs. The nursery and partners are fully committed to working together, and have well-developed systems of communication to ensure children's care and welfare needs remain paramount. Parents, carers and children are involved in decision making processes, and staff value and act upon suggestions made whenever possible. For example, a recent questionnaire highlighted parents' views regarding the main entrance to the nursery, and the provision of a cooked meal at midday and these issues have been incorporated into the development plan to improve the day-to-day running of the nursery for users.

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

Children are seen to positively relish their time at the setting and respond enthusiastically to the learning opportunities, activities and resources available to them. The children are inquisitive learners and their natural curiosity is enhanced as they engage with the wide range of stimulating equipment and play materials in a spirit of exploration. For example, seeing what may be hidden in the sand tray, or finding out the properties of shape and relative length and weight through free play with the large blocks. They design and create a personalised Easter card to take home, or use sequins and glue to decorate a pot for growing cress. Children show pride and ownership of their work, and stow items away in their personal drawer ready to take home.

Children develop excellent habits to aid their health and well-being. They participate in lively movement sessions in the soft play room, and take part in the

popular 'sticky kids' programme, or enjoy parachute games. Children are challenged and encouraged to extend their capabilities as they play on the climbing equipment and use the wheeled toys outside. At snack time children pour their own drinks, where they are able to, and share a healthy snack of fruit and a drink. Meal times are sociable and unhurried, with time for conversations and discussions about likes and dislikes and home and family matters. Children show that they can independently take care of their personal needs, getting dressed for outside play when the weather is a little wet or chilly, they enthusiastically don their wet weather gear so as not to miss out on an opportunity. Children can take a tissue and dispose of it as they need to. Staff remain unobtrusive, but are on hand to assist if needed, thus allowing children to work and play without dominating them.

Children demonstrate perseverance and excellent concentration as they are given time and space to complete activities in a relaxed manner, for example, toddlers completing a craft activity and being offered extra paper to experiment freely with colour, texture and shape. An inviting book area is available for children who wish to relax on the comfortable cushions, with mobiles to provide extra sensory stimulation for babies and younger children. The self-contained sensory room, equipped with lights, sounds, colours and textures, provides a peaceful yet stimulating oasis or interlude for children needing a quiet time away from the general lively hubbub of nursery life. Story times provide a key time for language and vocabulary development as children participate in the telling of a favourite story. Circle time rounds off the sessions and is a valuable time for both speaking and listening as staff reflect and also help the children at transition times.

The curriculum emphasises children's independence and self-motivation, and is effectively based on the themes contained within the Early Years Foundation Stage to deliver excellent results for the children, helping them to achieve the early learning goals and ensuring all areas are covered. The programme for multicultural awareness includes popular festivals and celebrations, but has less general coverage and understanding of world cultures in the widest sense. Children are consistently busy and happily engaged in their work and play, moving confidently about in their respective care rooms. They come together on occasion too, allowing siblings to see one another during the day at various times. Children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities; this progress is evident from the detailed records of achievement made by key persons and with contributions from parents, who are invited to be involved at all times. Diligent staff attention and respect for each child's uniqueness ensure all children have a strong sense of belonging and feel safe within the setting. A new child is very happy and settled, exploring her environment and making new friends with the support of staff. A sensitive approach to individual family circumstances ensures children's individual needs are recognised and their best interests are served at all times.

Children benefit from attending this exceptionally child-focused and dynamic environment, which allows them to develop in all the six areas of learning, supporting them and building their skills for the future. All staff have a sound and expert knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and their enthusiasm, dedication and high quality care and teaching motivates children to develop effectively and make excellent progress in a warm and caring environment.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
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	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	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
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

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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