

Fircones Child Care Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	08/02/2010
Inspector	Edgar Hastings
Setting address	Firs Primary School, Dreghorn Road, Birmingham, West Midlands, B36 8LL
Telephone number	0121 749 6659
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Fircones Child Care Centre registered in 1993. It operates from a modular building, within the grounds of the Firs Primary School, Birmingham, and is accessible for adults and children who may have disabilities. Located within easy access of main bus routes across the city the group serves the local community and surrounding areas. It is on the Early Years Register and can provide care for 22 children at any one time. There are currently 45 children from two to five years on roll. This includes a number of two, three and four-year-old children who are in receipt of nursery grant funding. Children can attend for a variety of sessions.

The group have strategies in place to support children with special educational needs and/or difficulties and for children who speak English as an additional language. The setting is open five days a week during school term-time only, providing full-time places, a wrap around service and morning and afternoon sessions. Sessions are between 8.30am and 3.30pm each day. There are five staff available to work with the children and four staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification Level 2 and 3, and the manager has a BA degree and Early Years Professional Status. The setting receives support from the local authority, and has close links with the host school, Pines Special School, St Wilfred's Catholic Primary and Tame Valley Children's Centre.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The provision meets the needs of the early years children well because of the range of interesting and enjoyable activities provided that enable children to make good progress in their learning and development. This is an inclusive setting that provides for the needs of all children and provides good support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who speak English as an additional language. A strong relationship with other local schools enables the setting's curriculum to be linked to theirs and ensures that smooth transitional arrangements are in place. Due to the effective leadership the setting has good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the self-evaluation process in order to identify the setting's strengths and areas for development

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership at Fircones Child Care Centre is good and provides a secure and stimulating environment where children enjoy attending and make good progress in their learning and development. All staff are keen to provide the best opportunities they can for the children and together as a team they are planning to raise the level of provision through further development of the building and the outdoor area. The issues raised at the last inspection have all been addressed, and records and procedures now meet requirements. The assessment procedures have been considerably improved and are proving to be an effective method of measuring children's progress across the areas of learning. They are now designed so that they can be shared with parents. The book corner has been improved by the addition of new furniture and arrangements with the local library to receive books on loan.

The experienced staff are used effectively and take on roles and responsibilities that play to their strengths. The manager is responsible for co-ordinating special educational needs, and others take on the roles of equal opportunities and cultural diversity. The setting is well resourced to meet the learning needs of their children, and these are stored so that they are accessible to them. The good relationships enjoyed with the two other school sharing the site means that children are able to access the good quality outdoor facilities to aid their physical development. The local area in and around the site is used effectively to extend children's learning about wild life and the natural environment, and children enjoy visits to 'Conker Island' on the mini bus.

The use of self-evaluation is in the early stages and is not yet being used effectively to identify the setting's strengths and areas for development. However, the leaders do use staff questionnaires in order to involve them in analysing how and where improvements can be made. Annual appraisal interviews for staff enable individuals to look at areas for their own personal development linked to the needs of the setting. There is a high commitment to developing relationships with other schools, establishments and agencies that enables very effective relationships to develop and has a beneficial effect upon children's learning and development. There is an excellent relationship with the schools on-site that enables planning to be made jointly in order to prepare children well for their time of transfer. Very good quality of support is provided by outside agencies to enable children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to play a full part in all activities, and to make good progress.

Parents speak highly of the good level of provision made for their children. They say they are kept well informed about the activities their children participate in daily and have regular access to staff to discuss their children's progress. Parents are enabled to contribute to their children's learning through the home diary that accompanies the 'space baby', they regularly share reading books from the setting, and are provided with nursery rhymes books so they can sing them at home with their children. Good systems enable parents to provide the setting with information about what their children know, like and can do prior to admission,

and they are able to view children's progress through their assessment books. Workshops for parents, and open evenings are held during the year to enable all parents to become involved in gaining an understanding of their children's development in the setting. Daily and weekly planning are displayed for parents who say their children make good progress because the staff are 'brilliant' with the children.

Children are provided with a safe and secure environment in which to learn because of the good quality safeguarding procedures that are in place. Regular risk assessments are carried out to ensure resources and equipment are fit for purpose, and safe practices are in place which the children are encouraged to follow. Safeguarding policies are in place and are effective because all staff are trained in child protection procedures. Strict procedures are followed to ensure suitable people are appointed for employment in the setting. Diversity is promoted well through a range of activities that celebrate important cultural events and festivals such as Diwali, Eid and the Chinese New Year. The setting uses the cultural background of staff members as a primary resource, with displays of costumes, dance and cooking to enhance the experiences for young children.

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

The leaders and staff provide a warm welcome to the children on arrival and they are clearly happy to be there. Parents of newly admitted children stay for a while and engage in some of the activities to help them settle. The setting provides a colourful learning environment, is brightly decorated with many examples of children's work, and with plenty of good quality resources that are made easily accessible to children. At the start of the session a wide range of resources are well organised and set out so that children can make choices for themselves, and can enjoy playing either on their own or with new friends that they have made. These include a writing area, floor toys, the computer and a role play hairdresser's salon. During the session a variety of adult-led activities are provided so that children can engage in learning about 'People who help us' including the fireman, the crossing patrol, the chef and the doctor. Staff are skilled at initiating discussion and using the specific vocabulary to develop children's learning effectively.

Children show good levels of concentration and a keen interest in the activities which help to develop their fine motor skills through using pencils and crayons, and a wide range of creative activities. Children listen carefully to instructions and explanations and work well in group situations and learn to share and to take turns with one another. They enjoy these activities and make good progress as a result. Adults praise their efforts and this gives children a good deal of encouragement. The 'achievement tree' is used effectively to recognise when a child has reached a significant milestone in their development, and is celebrated with others including parents. Children who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress in their acquisition of English and integrate well with others. They play a full part in all activities and are developing well as confident learners. There is good support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as their needs are carefully identified, and additional help and guidance sought to assist

their development and to enable them to engage fully in the activities provided to aid their learning.

The staff know their children well and use the key person system to good effect. Regular observations are made and recorded in the assessment books which measure their progress against the Early Years Foundation Stage areas for learning, and are made available to parents. The good progress children make is due to the good range of interesting activities made available to them, and the efforts made to link activities to children's experiences and their interests, such as feeding the birds in winter by making fat balls for them. Children are very comfortable in the setting and enjoy strong and trusting relationships with the adults and this assists their development well. Regular opportunities are made to reinforce children's number and counting skills which are developing well, and many children are able to recognise their own names when they register on arrival. Regular computer use means children are beginning to develop good mouse control skills in order to operate the different programs.

Children's welfare is promoted well through good procedures and practices. Good hygiene habits ensure children know when to wash their hands, and tables are cleaned before setting up for meals. The setting provides a safe environment for children with robust security procedures. Children feel safe and have a good understanding of their own safety by following the setting's rules which are reinforced regularly. Visits from 'People who help us' like the fire service helps to highlight other aspects of personal safety. Healthy lifestyles are well promoted through a healthy eating policy that encourages children to partake of healthy snacks and healthy lunch boxes. Regular opportunities to be active are provided daily using the outdoor areas, with access to climbing apparatus and adventure playground type of equipment belonging to the neighbouring schools. Behaviour is good and children's personal and social skills are developing well, with children learning to share with others and making new friends and playing together. The good progress they make and excellent links with Firs Primary school early years department aids children's transition well and ensures they are being prepared well for the future.

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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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
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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	2
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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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