

Thundersley Congregational Church

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Patricia Mary Champion

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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

Thundersley Congregational Church pre-school is run by a committee. It opened under new ownership in 2006 and operates from three playrooms and the hall in the Thundersley Church Complex in Benfleet, Essex. Children share access to an enclosed, outdoor play area. Access to the main building is suitable for people with disabilities, the two playrooms on the first floor are only accessible by stairs. A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions times are from 9.15am until 11.45am and 12.30pm to 3pm. An optional lunch club operates from 11.45am to 12.30pm and the afternoon sessions run according to demand.

There are currently 65 children aged from two to five years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions or full day care. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

The pre-school employs 14 staff, of whom 10 staff members, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Bank staff are also employed to cover staff absence. There are three staff currently working towards higher early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The pre-school is well organised and the key person system effectively supports children's welfare and development. Individual needs are successfully met as staff work with parents and other professionals to support children with any additional requirements. Overall, children's progress towards the early learning goals is good. They enjoy a wide range of activities and play experiences in a well-prepared learning environment. The pre-school has a good capability to maintain continuous improvement as staff regularly evaluate and make positive improvements to the care that children receive.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the routine to enhance the development of independence skills and ensure that children can persist for extended periods of time at activities of their choosing
- review children's assessment records more frequently to ensure that planned learning experiences consistently enable children to achieve as much as they can.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded because effective policies are in place to promote children's welfare and safety. The written procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. New information is shared with both the staff team and parents to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are well understood. All staff complete background checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children and security and access to the premises by visitors is carefully monitored. Staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow if child protection issues arise. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed to enable staff to identify and address potential hazards promptly, both inside and outside the premises and while on outings.

Children use a wide range of good quality toys and resources. On the whole, staff deploy themselves well and organise space, time and play materials effectively to meet children's needs. However, sometimes routines do not maximise the opportunities for children to develop independence skills or allow them to persist for extended periods at activities of their own choosing. Good systems are in place to evaluate many aspects of the provision. An accurate self-evaluation has been completed and staff make weekly reviews of the activities and their practice. The views of parents and children are meaningfully sought. This feedback is used to inform the ongoing plans. The pre-school has fully addressed the recommendations made at the last inspection enhancing children's welfare, safety, and learning. Staff are motivated and regularly attend training courses and gain higher qualifications to update their childcare knowledge and skills.

The pre-school is committed to being inclusive in its practice, with a welcoming environment and positive awareness of families backgrounds and needs. A planned range of activities and festivals are organised to promote children's understanding of diversity and awareness of other languages. Children feel good about themselves as staff treat them with respect. All children are highly valued as individuals. Children with special educational needs thrive because staff work closely with outside agencies to provide the best support for individual needs. Links with nearby schools are well established to assist transitions and enable children to move smoothly into full-time education.

Effective partnerships with parents are established during the supportive settling-in period. Communication systems include notice boards, newsletters and home links diaries. There are also formal consultations arranged with key persons to discuss children's progress and achievements. Parents become involved in their children's learning in meaningful ways. For example, they borrow books to read at home, they offer use of their garden to create a pre-school vegetable patch or they contribute interesting accounts about the adventures of the pre-school's teddy bear they take on holiday. Parents value the efforts of the staff team and appreciate being part of the pre-school and church community.

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

Children arrive happy and eager to participate, enjoying their time at the pre-school. They are confident and enthusiastic learners because of the good relationships they form with staff and their peers. Children respond positively to adults as they listen carefully to guidance and often include them in their own imaginative play experiences. Speech and language skills are well promoted. During many one-to-one interactions and when working in groups, staff are skilled in engaging children in lively conversations or asking questions that help extend and promote their vocabulary. Children recognise their names and describe the initial sounds of words and letters. They count and recognise numerals as they play games, such as, snakes and ladders and sort items according to colour and shapes. Children move confidently showing a good awareness of space and others. Free-flow between indoor and outdoor areas is organised by adapting part of the car park using temporary fencing. Children enjoy being outdoors on a daily basis taking part in activities imaginatively planned to support all areas of learning. They also take part in more energetic activities in the hall at the rear of the church premises and learn about the need to warm up and stretch before active movement.

Children express themselves creatively as they take part in many role play scenarios or they confidently use art and craft materials. They make greetings cards, explore colours as they mix paint or they use sensory and malleable materials such as shredded paper, wool and tissue paper. Topic work and practical activities arouses children's natural curiosity and develops their exploration and investigation skills. Children find out about people living in other countries and they sow seeds and care for plants and the pre-school goldfish. Regular outings are made in the vicinity so that children can explore the natural environment. Children are allocated a key person who uses a variety of methods to record observations, assess progress and identify the next steps in learning. Each child has a clearly organised development folder that is routinely shared with parents. While the systems for observations of children's achievements are well established, some assessment records have not been reviewed as often as others. Consequently, the current links between assessment and activity planning do not consistently ensure that children achieve as much as they can.

Children's safety is given a high priority and they are encouraged to consider and recognise potential risks and dangers through role play, topics, stories and visits from the emergency services. Children are polite, behave well and learn to consider the needs of other people. Praise is given when children are particularly kind or helpful. Regular fundraising and charity events are held and the pre-school sponsors a child in Brazil. Good hygiene practices are activity promoted and incorporated into the daily routines to encourage children to care for themselves. They are provided with a range of healthy snacks and enjoy eating their packed lunches in a social group. Drinking water is freely available so that children do not become thirsty or dehydrated. Children are well supported by the enthusiastic staff team and consequently, this encourages them to feel safe, secure and happy while in the pre-school. Older children enjoy more challenging learning experiences and

confidently demonstrate their technology and problem solving skills. Consequently, children are making good progress in developing the skills they need for their future education.

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	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
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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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