

Little Earth Worms

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY402775
Inspection date 17/06/2010
Inspector Fler Wright

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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*.

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 Earth Worms opened in 2010. It is a privately run nursery and operates from a converted single-storey house on the outskirts of Brighton. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery has three main play rooms, kitchen, toilets and all children share access to a enclosed outdoor play area. Core opening hours are from 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year, and opening hours can be extended from 7.30am until 6.30pm by special arrangement.

The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory Childcare Register. There are currently 21 children on roll aged from seven months to three years, but children can attend from birth up to eight years. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are currently three members of staff including the joint owners and all of them hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery is in its infancy but already offers children and their families an incredibly welcoming and calm environment. Children are happy, relaxed and used to the routines in place. The management team are good role models for the dedicated and enthusiastic staff. Children enjoy a good range of stimulating activities and experiences and are making good progress in their learning and development towards the early learning goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff know each child well. The nursery's commitment to eco-friendly childcare is a strong asset of the setting and children learn from a very early age about the importance of making best use of the world's resources. The management are committed to enhancing outcomes for children through effective evaluation techniques and this is an area that continues to develop. The nursery have a strong capacity to ensure their continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- update the risk assessments in place for outings to include detail of all of the potential risks involved
- ensure there are effective systems in place to identify children's starting points and assess their ongoing development regularly
- develop the use of reflective practice and self-evaluation to identify strengths

and priorities for development that will continuously improve the quality of the provision for all children

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff fully understand their responsibilities to safeguard children's welfare and robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place helping to ensure children's safety and welfare is of paramount importance. Daily risk assessments ensure the nursery is a safe environment for all. Staff plan outings formerly and carefully to ensure children remain safe, although the documents lack some detail about specific areas of risk.

Managers and staff are passionate about every aspect of nursery life and have worked extremely hard to create a wonderful environment enabling both children and staff to thrive. Children benefit from high adult to child ratios and the vast skills and experience each member of staff brings to the nursery. Staff are very motivated and work well as a team ensuring all groups of children have the opportunity to achieve. Excellent use is made of space and time, and staff are deployed effectively to ensure all children gain the most from their time at the nursery. The range and quality of resources on offer is outstanding. They are very well organised to ensure children are involved in an excellent range of purposeful play and the environment is extremely conducive to learning. Many items are recycled or made of sustainable materials complementing the ethos of the nursery.

The management have begun to look at the self evaluation process, and are actively seeking to make this an integral part of nursery life. Plans are well targeted and realistic. The latest item to be completed on the plans was the covered outdoor area that is now in place. All of the required paperwork is available, and the policies and procedures in force ensure the nursery runs smoothly. All staff contribute in some way to the planning and children's needs and interests form the basis of this. Their learning environment is carefully planned to ensure children gain the most out of it. Observations are carried out frequently and collaborated weekly and used directly to inform the planning. Staff make observations of children when they first start at the nursery and parents are asked to complete a form detailing information about their children helping staff to learn about each child and their backgrounds. However, some of these have not been returned and no other formal assessment is undertaken to establish children's starting points making it a little difficult to see exactly how well some children are progressing. At present there are no set procedures in place to periodically assess how well children are developing towards the early learning goals, although staff are looking into this and at present it has a minimal impact on children as the nursery has not been open for long.

The nursery is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and works to ensure children's needs are met. All children and families are valued and appreciated by staff who are proactive in ensuring the nursery environment is inclusive for all. Staff work with parents of children who speak English as an additional language, to highlight key words in their home language to help give the

children an important sense of belonging. Makaton is used regularly and helps all children and staff to communicate effectively. The designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has a very secure knowledge and understanding of her role and responsibilities and has a wealth of experience in this area.

The nursery demonstrates an effective partnership with parents and is beginning to form relationships with other outside agencies and childcare settings to help promote the well-being of all children. Staff talk to parents to ensure they are aware of the various policies and procedures in place and parents are also able to access these to view at any time. There is no prospectus as staff want the nursery to be as sustainable as possible so are saving on paper, but photos of the inside of the nursery are placed on the fence outside the setting along with other pieces of information creating an inviting atmosphere for all. The joint owners promote an open relationship with parents and they are able to come into the nursery at the beginning and end of each day as well as during settling in procedures that are adapted to suit each child. Parents like the welcoming environment the setting offers, the eco-friendly ethos of the nursery and are happy with the way their children are progressing.

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

All of the children are active, inquisitive learners who make good progress in all areas of learning and development. They demonstrate that they are happy, relaxed, confident and safe within the tranquil nursery environment. They are very used to routines such as staff applying sun cream or sun hats and help with these tasks.

Staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the ways in which children develop and learn and this helps to support children to achieve good outcomes. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. The different ways in which staff make observations of the children, and the good use of open-ended questioning and range of resources available, ensure very few learning opportunities are missed. Observations are used effectively to inform planning for the next steps in children's learning. Children's interests form a key part of the planning process. Staff get to know the children as they start although there are no formal ways of assessing their starting points as the procedures in place at present are not wholly effective to ensure a seamless transition into the setting. Staff are working on a system to assess children's development periodically through the year to ensure it is clear to all exactly how well children are progressing.

Children are able to continually make choices for themselves as they become independent learners thus promoting their confidence and increasing their self-motivation. The learning environment is carefully planned and contains an exceptional range of good quality sustainable resources that ensure children have access to all areas of learning on a daily basis. The outdoor environment is an effective extension of the play space and an undercover area means children are able to get fresh air in all weathers.

Children form close bonds with adults and other children at the nursery. Staff are very warm, friendly and caring. They often cuddle children or gently wipe their noses, and children are easily settled by staff if they are showing signs of tiredness or hunger. Staff engage with children well, and during nappy changes they make children giggle with delight showing children feel secure, and good trusting relationships are built. Children behave well and respect their peers. Staff apply clear and consistent boundaries so that children develop a knowledge of what is expected of them. Staff offer lots of praise and encouragement to children making them feel good about themselves.

Children greatly enjoy their time at the nursery and are very happy in their surroundings. They take pleasure from a wealth of stimulating experiences available to them throughout the day. Simple games such as jumping frogs are transformed into exciting play opportunities as staff fill the catching tray with water and pick basil leaves that children smell and then use as lily pads for the frogs to land on. Many opportunities are spur of the moment such as looking at insects under the sand pit with staff or watering the herbs in the herb garden outside.

Children have a strong understanding of keeping themselves healthy, and activities and experiences around the nursery help to ensure this remains of paramount importance. Staff are vigilant in ensuring good hygiene is promoted. Children wash their hands independently throughout the day, separate washing machines are used to launder reusable nappies, and cutlery that falls onto the floor is quickly replaced. The vast majority of foods are organic and all are prepared on site. Staff eat lunch with the children and all enjoy the sociable experience. The eco-friendly environment ensures children learn about ways to conserve energy and make the most of the world's resources. They enjoy eating the eggs laid by the chickens, using water from the water butt to paint with and watch as the worms in the wormery start to make compost for their vegetable patches. Children develop a positive attitude towards being active as they are able to use the outdoors area freely during the day. A good range of equipment enables them to develop their physical skills regularly. They ride competently on trikes and enjoy climbing and balancing on the equipment available. Their fine motor skills are encouraged throughout their play.

Children demonstrate a strong sense of security and understand issues relating to safety as they are gently reminded by staff how to keep themselves safe during everyday situations such as when using the slide and climbing apparatus in the garden. Children are kept safe on outings as they are well planned by staff although the documents in place to support this lack some detail. Children are highly valued and staff know each child well. They engage in a good range of activities and experiences which help them to value diversity. They have access to a range of resources which help them learn about communities and the wider world, and celebrate a range of cultural and religious festivals throughout the year. Overall, outcomes for children are good.

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	1
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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	3

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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