

Cherubs Firststeps

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY285273
Inspection date	01/11/2010
Inspector	Patricia Champion

Setting address	Waterson Road, Grays, Essex, RM16 4NX
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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

Cherubs Firststeps is privately owned. It opened in 2004 and operates from a room and a large hall within a community building in Chadwell St Mary, Essex. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 43 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Operating times are from 8am until 5.30pm.

There are currently 73 children aged from six months to six years on roll. Children aged two, three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions or full day care. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery employs 15 staff to work directly with the children, of whom 14 of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The nursery also employs a midday kitchen assistant. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children participate enthusiastically in a wide range of activities that supports their progress and development. A safe and fully-inclusive environment is promoted. Individual needs are carefully respected and effectively met using information from parents and other professionals working with families. There are good systems for identifying priorities for future improvement and the staff have a strong commitment towards enhancing outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review and revise the routine to ensure that children have greater access to outdoor play each day
- develop further the plans for improving the toilet facilities and nappy changing arrangements.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All documentation is systematically and confidentially organised and promotes the safe and efficient organisation of the nursery. The security of the children is given an extremely high profile with access to the premises closely controlled by an intercom and CCTV cameras. Detailed risk assessments cover all areas within the premises and are regularly reviewed. The staff also complete effective risk assessments for outings. Children are protected from harm by a robust recruitment system and staff who have a clear knowledge of safeguarding procedures underpinned by attending training.

Staff regularly reflect on their practice and embrace new ideas and ways of working. They welcome the input of advisory services, responding quickly to suggestions and enthusiastically taking part in quality assurance schemes. Since the last inspection many improvements have been made to the premises to provide a more welcoming environment and increase the opportunities for children to select resources and take decisions in their play. There is an action plan to improve the arrangements for nappy changing and the toilet facilities. However, children do not currently have a reassuring and comforting environment where these care needs are managed.

Diversity is valued and staff are effective in ensuring that all children are integrated well and achieving as much as they can. The staff are aware of the issues facing the families the nursery serves. Access to the premises is thoughtfully adapted for anyone with mobility difficulties. Children's special education needs are sensitively met by good support which is tailored to their individual requirements. Resources which portray positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disabilities are used within everyday play. This ensures that children feel good about themselves and acquire a positive attitude towards each other.

The nursery has established helpful links with outside professionals who support children with additional needs. Good systems are also in place for communication with the local school. The staff attend transition meetings and teachers visit the nursery. Consequently, children move smoothly onto the next phase in their education. Staff value information from families and key persons proactively share the children's written records. Daily diary sheets are completed for babies and 'going home' communication books are shared on request for older children. Parents are regularly asked what their children can do and fill in 'all about me' documents that give staff an indication of children's abilities and starting points. They are consulted about their views through questionnaires and any suggestions are valued and acted on. Parents are very happy with the provision and speak highly of the positive impact the staff have on their children's learning and development.

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

Children and babies are happy and content as they enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and attentiveness of the staff. They are quick to settle and demonstrate confidence in accessing the wide range of resources and activities that are accessible to them. Children are able to sustain long periods of uninterrupted play where they participate with high levels of involvement. Children explore tactile and sensory materials which they are able to freely experiment with. For example, they are inquisitive and ask questions when confidently mixing together the ingredients to make play dough. Sensitive, caring staff have developed trusting relationships with the children and are deployed well to support their welfare and learning. An effective range of teaching methods is used to promote language skills, vocabulary development and children's interest in books. For example, props, puppets and story sacks are used purposefully to fascinate children and stimulate their curiosity. Children of all ages frequently practise mark making and early writing skills within role play, creative activities or when writing captions for wall displays.

The staff demonstrate an effective understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and key persons make observations of children's achievements in a variety of ways. These are used to inform future planning with specific experiences focussed and adapted for individual children. Progress is carefully tracked and recorded so that all areas of learning are comprehensively covered. Activities are regularly evaluated to ensure that they successfully meet children's needs. This ensures that children flourish as they take part in a well-balanced range of adult-led or child-initiated experiences. The outdoor environment has been enhanced to offer children more freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. However, the opportunities for outdoor play are not yet fully maximised within the nursery routine so that children can make independent decisions about their preferred learning environment.

Children learn and adopt healthy hygiene practices. Activities are organised so that children learn about the importance of exercise, fresh air and looking after their bodies. Meal times are a relaxed social occasion. Children choose when they want to eat for their snack and safely prepare their fruit or pour their own drink. At midday older children are supported as they manage lunch boxes and babies confidently learn to feed themselves with staff are closely at hand. Children and babies rest according to their own needs and arrangements allow them to sleep peacefully and undisturbed.

Children are making good progress in developing the skills they need in later life. They treat each other respectfully and respond well to the staff's consistent approach to supporting behaviour by playing harmoniously. Children enjoy helping staff with simple tasks such as laying the table or sweeping the floor. They understand the need to use tools such as play dough utensils responsibly and efficiently follow important safety routines such as evacuation drills. Children learn about road safety when they wear high visibility jackets on outings. Visitors to the premises enhance children's safety and knowledge and understanding of the

world. For example, visits are made by the library and fire safety service and members of the Creepy-Crawly Road Show.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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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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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