

Children's Garden Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY341731
Inspection date 17/01/2011
Inspector Amanda Allen

Setting address University of East London, Children's Garden, East Building,
4 University Way, London, E16 2RD
Telephone number 0208 2232663
Email b.hipkin@uel.ac.uk
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

Children's Garden Early Years Centre is managed by the University of East London and is open to all members of the local community. It operates from three rooms in a purpose built building and is situated within the grounds of Docklands Campus, in the London borough of Newham. The centre aims to introduce early childhood education inspired by Steiner (Waldorf) philosophy. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The centre is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The setting is registered to care for 49 children, aged from three years to seven years, at any one time. There are currently 34 children on roll, of whom, 33 are in the early years age group. Children who reach statutory school age while attending the setting are home educated and their parents make up the required hours of education at home or in other learning groups. The sessions run from 8:30am to 5.00pm every weekday during school term times. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The centre supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The setting uses the Steiner Waldorf approach and the manager is a qualified Steiner Waldorf teacher. The centre employs seven full time and two part time members of staff, including the manager. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. Children's Garden supports every child so that they are fully included and the uniqueness of each child is recognised. Children's welfare is promoted and safeguarded extremely well. The experienced and well qualified manager and staff effectively promote children's learning and development in accordance with the Steiner/Waldorf approach. Children are encouraged to be involved in the setting and with the wider community. Excellent partnerships with parents and other agencies are established. Effective systems are in place to evaluate the provision and identify any areas for further development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further develop the garden area to enhance children's development in the outdoor environment

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding children is paramount to the setting. The manager and her staff take robust steps to safeguard children. Robust risk assessments are carried out daily, both inside and outside of the centre and these are reviewed annually or more frequently if required. All the staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and the steps to follow if they have any concerns. A comprehensive fire evacuation plan is in place for all areas of the nursery and all staff have fully enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks which are updated every three years and the reference numbers kept on file in the office.

Extremely comprehensive policies and procedures demonstrate the setting's sensitive and mature attitude both to protecting children and helping them understand how to keep themselves safe. The management team consistently seeks parent's views and permissions concerning a range of safeguarding issues, ensuring that their policies meet not only legal requirements but reflect the needs and wishes of parents. As a result parents and carers fully understand the steps that the setting will take to protect their children.

The manager has high aspirations for maintaining quality through continuous improvement and a strong commitment to equality and diversity. She works with her staff to reflect upon their practice to ensure that they continue to meet the individual needs of each child. The partnership with parents and children is excellent. Parents are fully integrated into the work of the setting and they help out regularly. Parents are provided with comprehensive information about the provision and they are invited to meet with staff to discuss their children's progress. The holistic approach to children's welfare ensures parents and extended family are well supported and that children's individual needs are very well catered for. Staff are very skilled at acknowledging the children and gathering their views and this is a real strength of the provision. Parents are routinely consulted to ensure that the setting fulfils parents' care requirements and information about children's progress is regularly shared. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the group and take part in regular parents forums to share ideas.

Resources are efficiently utilised to achieve the settings planned goals in learning and development and children thrive. Regular meetings ensure all staff contribute their observations of children's progress to the planning process. Staff regularly evaluate what has been successful and any areas for development and the manager reviews the children's activities throughout the week. Staff constantly attend training, including inset days for in-house training and the group is currently working, enhancing the children's outdoor provision further. The manager works hard to communicate her plans for the future. She regularly liaises with staff, parents and agencies within the local community to continually develop the provision.

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

The manager and staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and has carefully considered how they can promote each area of learning within the framework whilst following the Steiner approach. Their philosophy incorporates key themes of rhythm, repetition, reverence and imitation, and the curriculum is adapted to the needs, interests and developmental stage of each child, allowing them to develop in an unhurried way. The methods of teaching encourage independence, active learning and problem solving, helping them to develop skills for the future.

Children relish their time at the centre and play a full and active role in the setting. They make choices in their play and gain personal independence. They choose whether to join the staff at activities that are modelled for them or to engage in activities using their own ideas. The rhythm of the session is very familiar to the children, as are the poems, rhymes and songs that are used to signify the various routine activities. For example, a song of thanks for the natural world is sung at circle-time. They also learn about the rhythm of the year with seasonal activities, songs and stories linked to this. Children join in songs and accompanying actions, some of which encourage counting and calculation. The children have increasing vocabularies and demonstrate confident communication skills. They listen intently to stories told by the staff and take part in acting them out under staff guidance. There are also a selection of books which they can look at themselves.

The provision is set up in accordance with the Steiner Waldorf philosophy to be 'gentle on the eye, ear and all the senses'. Children play with natural materials such as wood and fabric and they store their belongings in baskets. Activity planning is based on the observations of children's interests and all staff meets regularly to plan for children's next steps. This ensures that children make excellent progress. Children are highly motivated to learn as they are exposed to a wide range of highly stimulating activities that help to develop their natural curiosity and provide them with numerous opportunities to explore and experiment.

The children's week is consistent and predictable so that children feel 'held and safe'. Each day children prepare healthy snacks of rice, vegetables and fruit and they engage in activities such as baking bread, making snowflakes, painting, songs and rhymes, puppet shows, building dens, dressing up and cleaning. The well thought out resources encourages children to use their imaginations. For example, pieces of cloth are used for dressing up, wrapping dolls and making walls. Children play enthusiastically outdoors, in all weathers, to develop their understanding of nature and their creative and physical skills. They go out daily whatever the weather and have high quality rain wear that they routinely dress in before they venture out. This means that they can splash freely in puddles and wade through squelching mud much to their delight. They explore the garden as they walk along the climbing frames and dig in the sand pit and learn to stay safe as use a selection of tools to plant and grow fruit and vegetables. Birthdays are a very special time when the birthday child is the focus of attention and forming good

relationships is strength of the provision.

The children are very well-behaved and understand the behavioural expectations within the setting. They are respectful of others and show one another care and consideration. They learn to share and take-turns, and resolve minor disagreements successfully for themselves. There is a relaxed and happy atmosphere within each room and the building. Children assist practitioners in tasks such as tidying away resources and to clear away after snack and meal times. They help to clear up utensils and learn to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. For example, they routinely wash their hands after activities and before they eat. The children are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles by being active, having plenty of fresh air and eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables within the nourishing meals and snacks. The children help to prepare food including peeling and chopping vegetables and making corn bread using their own grown produce. Mealtimes are a relaxed enjoyable social experience with adults and children sitting together and enjoying one another's company.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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