

Caterpillars Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY422628
Inspection date	19/01/2011
Inspector	Lynn Smith

Setting address	St Andrews Church Hall, Church Lane, Marks Tey, Colchester, Essex, CO6 1LW
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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

Caterpillars Pre-school was registered in 2011, following the incorporation of the previous Caterpillars Pre-school, and is run as a charity by a limited company. Caterpillars Pre-school has operated from the church hall in Marks Tey, near Colchester, Essex since 2002. The securely enclosed garden is used for outdoor activities. The pre-school is open from 9.30am to 12.30pm four days per week with a lunch club on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, term time only.

A maximum of 26 children under five years may attend the pre-school at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 37 children on roll. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who are learning English as an additional language. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. Of whom, three including the manager, hold appropriate qualifications to at least level three. Two staff are working towards a level three qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

This pre-school fully embraces the Early Years Foundation Stage, offering children an extremely exciting and challenging pre-school experience. Exemplary systems are in place to ensure that every child's needs are well met. Staff work effectively as a team and are actively involved in reviewing and evaluating the provision to enable them to identify areas for improvement and sustain ongoing good quality.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the organisation of snack and meal times to ensure every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are extremely well safeguarded as staff and designated officers demonstrate secure knowledge of their responsibilities with regards to protecting children. They understand the systems in place and are confident about working in partnership with other agencies to protect children. All adults working with children and serving on the operational committee are suitably vetted and proof of their

clearance is held on file. Clearly written safeguarding policies are in place to ensure that parents are made fully aware of the procedures the setting would follow if they had concerns about a child's welfare.

The staff team and committee are fully committed to striving for improvements and have made numerous changes to the working practices of the setting over the past couple of years. These improvements have had real benefits to the children and the staff's professionalism. All staff, committee members and parents are involved in the self-evaluation process and are encouraged to review and evaluate every aspect of the setting on a continuous basis. Staff's ongoing personal and professional development is a priority within this pre-school enabling them to update and further progress their individual knowledge.

The setting operates from a church hall which has to be set up and cleared away before and after every session. Staff present the premises in an extremely attractive and welcoming way. They display an excellent range of photographs and specifically made posters at the children's height. The premises consist of one large hall and two smaller rooms. The smaller rooms are used as base rooms for children under three years and children over three years. This enables staff to tailor the beginning and end of the session in a more age-appropriate way. Staff deployment is superb ensuring that five members of staff work every session. They each have specific roles which are alternated each day. This ensures that each of the areas of the setting are well supervised and enables staff to support children to a very high standard. Every child is treated with equal concern within the setting and excellent procedures are in place to promote inclusive practice. The setting translates a wide range of key words and labels displayed around the setting into relevant languages to enable children who speak English as an additional language to settle easier and to become active participants within the pre-school.

The setting has developed superb links with other settings providing for children within the Early Years Foundation Stage. They regularly meet with teachers from the local feeder school and with other pre-school staff working within the local area. The setting works closely with development workers from the local authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance and takes on board their professional advice and expertise. Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection enthusiastically share their views on the setting and the professionalism of the staff. Excellent procedures are in place for parents to be actively involved in the pre-school day and in their children's pre-school experiences.

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

Children's welfare, learning and development needs are met to an extremely high standard as staff demonstrate excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and deliver it with confidence and professionalism. Children are fully engaged throughout the session in a wide range of adult-led and freely-chosen play and learning opportunities. They have fun making shapes in the sand tray,

trailing their fingers through the sand to make familiar patterns and drawing out some recognisable letters. Their construction skills are put to the test as a group of children work together to build a house. They are heard excitedly chatting about the shape and how many bricks they will need, followed by squeals of laughter as the walls fall down and they have to start all over again. Children are excited and enthused by the selection of resources available to them. They move confidently around the setting choosing whether to play indoors or in the extremely well-equipped and stimulating outdoor area. The outdoor area offers children superb opportunities to explore learning across all six areas, as a well-positioned gazebo provides shelter from inclement weather during the winter and sunshine during the summer months. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is expertly promoted as they learn to plant seeds and flowers, develop knowledge of the local wildlife and birdlife through appropriate bird feeders and activities and are encouraged to dig for worms and other insects whenever they choose. Children expertly use the setting's computer and develop information technology skills through a range of electronic toys and resources. Staff continuously observe children's play and record their findings. An effective system enables them to plot children's progress against the Development Matters framework; this provides key persons with extremely clear knowledge of the children's progress and next steps in learning. Parents are provided with good opportunities to play an active role in their children's learning as they are invited to share their learning journeys on a regular basis.

Children are and feel extremely safe within the provision. Extensive risk assessments ensure that the premises are kept safe and secure and offer an extremely well-organised environment. Children are expertly encouraged to learn about safety indoors and outdoors as they follow the staff's clear guidance and the setting's simple rules and boundaries. A brief list of rules are displayed to remind children of important issues such as not running indoors and being considerate of each other. Children are actively encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles, for example, they are provided with nutritious and well-balanced snacks and drinks during their pre-school session. The introduction of a rolling snack bar enables children to freely choose when they stop playing to take a break. Children's independence is superbly promoted at this time as they select their own cups and plates, choose fruit from a communal plate and pour their own drinks from appropriately sized plastic jugs. There are some opportunities for children to be actively involved in the preparation of snack, however, this practice is not adopted generally. Children talk confidently about keeping healthy when they remind each other to wash their hands after using the toilet and before touching food. Children are very fit and active and thoroughly enjoy experiencing play in the outdoor environment. They make good use of the bikes and scooters on offer to them and have some opportunities to go for walks in the local area.

Children are extremely confident, settled and comfortable within the pre-school. They form close relationships with each other and with the staff, sharing real and imaginary experiences and chatting freely about their likes, dislikes and interests. Children are extremely well behaved and understand the importance of sharing and taking turns. The setting uses sand timers to promote children's understanding of turn taking and children clearly demonstrate their understanding of how these work. Staff expertly promote children's self-esteem by offering constant praise and

encouragement and providing superb opportunities for them to become independent young people. Children learn about the world around them and their local community through books, resources and appropriate, well-planned activities. They are encouraged to participate in the celebration of festivals and special occasions. Parents with first hand knowledge of differing cultures and beliefs are encouraged to visit the setting to share their expertise with the children, an example of which can be seen through photographic evidence of beautifully painted hands. Children are very confident talkers and thoroughly enjoy exploring books and literature. They are provided with opportunities to choose a library book to take home each week to share with their parents. A superb range of mathematical resources enable children to problem solve and explore numeracy, for example, children knowledgeably wander around the setting measuring a range of items including the adults working with them. They talk about which items are longer than others.

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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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