

The Marmalade Cat

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Linda Close

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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

The Marmalade Cat is a Day Nursery which opened in 2004. The nursery is one of two nurseries run by the same provider. It operates from a building attached to a church located in a residential road close to Clapham Common in the London Borough of Wandsworth. Children's playrooms are on the first and second floors of the building and these rooms are accessed via a lift or stairs. There is a kitchen on the first floor and toilet facilities are located on all floors. The group has access to a hall on the ground floor. The nursery is open each day from 8.45am to 4pm during term time. Children may attend for the morning or afternoon sessions. Some older children can stay for the whole day and their parents provide a packed lunch. Holiday activities are provided during some school holiday periods. The nursery has sole use of the building during opening hours.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register and may care for a maximum of 40 children aged two years to under eight years at any one time and all may be in the early years age group. There are currently 80 children on roll who are aged from two to under five years. The three and four-year-old children attending are in receipt of government funding for nursery education. Most children live in the local area. Several children on roll are learning English as an additional language and the nursery welcomes children who have learning difficulties. The nursery employs nine members of staff. There are eight members of staff, including the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager and her deputy have both attained Early Years Professional Status (EYPS). Peripatetic specialist teachers visit each week to lead Ballet, Music, French and sporting activities.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The dedicated staff team in this thriving nursery meticulously tracks the achievements of each child and they carefully identify their individual learning needs. They ensure that every child in the early years age group makes excellent progress in their learning given their age and starting points. The manager and her staff have successfully established strong partnerships with parents and carers and their support and involvement is highly valued. The manager and her staff evaluate all aspects of their work together and they view this as a continuous and ongoing exercise. They devise a school improvement plan termly and they systematically find ways to update and strengthen the nursery's provision for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person

should consider:

- consolidating the culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to maintain the quality of provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding is given a high priority in the nursery. Suitability checks for all staff are carried out when they join the setting and these are renewed every three years. These checks are also conducted for peripatetic specialist teachers. A recent initiative has led to the staff agreeing together to lock up their mobile phones during their hours of work to further strengthen their safeguarding measures. All staff have attended recent update training to refresh their knowledge of safeguarding issues and the senior staff have joined a course for leaders to enable them to oversee children's safety effectively. Daily visual checks, and robust risk assessments for the premises and for outings, help the staff to keep children safe and secure.

Every member of staff contributes to the detailed evaluation of the provision. Parents are invited to give their points of view and children are involved in discussions resulting in voting for favourite snacks and suggesting future activities. The manager and her staff share their strong desire to secure their own professional development and their drive for continuous improvement is tireless. The manager finds funding and obtains grants for materials and resources as well as for worthwhile training courses for her staff. She involves the nursery in exciting pilot schemes with the local authority and she invites expert speakers to talk to the adults which enriches the knowledge of staff and parents alike.

The nursery is exceptionally well organised. The staff know precisely where they will work each day and their areas of responsibility are clearly defined. They carefully prepare the learning environment before the children arrive which means they enter a clean, attractive setting and are immediately caught up in activities which catch their interest. Children benefit from having independent access to an exceptionally wide range of good quality toys, books, resources and Montessori equipment.

Staff visit the children at their homes before they join the nursery. They build on the useful information that parents provide about their children and they make sure that the culture and background of each child is celebrated and their individual learning and care needs are met with care and attention to detail. They devise and review individual education plans and work closely with therapists and advisors if there is a need. They share their extensive knowledge of local primary schools with parents to help them to select the best settings for their children when they transfer to school. Parents speak highly of the staff and they say they thoroughly enjoy taking part in social activities and curriculum events with and without their children.

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

The children are lively, enthusiastic and very well behaved. Staff speak to them in polite, kindly tones and they clearly explain what they expect of the children. For example, they ask all children to help at tidy up time and they tell the children why running indoors is not safe and the children respond to their guidance with happy smiles. Children show that they feel safe in the nursery in their relaxed body language, their eagerness to talk to the staff and their desire to greet staff and tell them their news. Staff go to great lengths to prepare children for transfer to primary school. They invite teachers to the nursery to meet the children and they hold special 'uniform days' for children to wear their new clothes and talk about school. With parental permission they share their observations of the children with their next teachers to enable them to recognise children's achievements and special interests.

Children learn about a wide range of cultures from staff and parents who bring their knowledge of special foods, national dress, customs and celebrations to the nursery. Parents also share their linguistic expertise and their storytelling skills which adds an extra dimension to multi-cultural activities. Children are involved in charity fund raising events including a Sponsored Wheelie which helps them to learn about members of society who need support.

Children enjoy looking at books at story time, all alone or with a friend. They learn about the sounds and shapes of the letters of the alphabet through a commercial scheme which is very effective. The older and more mature members of the group apply their phonic knowledge when sounding out and reading whole words and some children have progressed so well that they are taking their first steps in reading. Children talk to staff about their drawings and staff scribe for them. Children copy and then move on to writing on their own and their attempts are very plausible and legible. Their pencil grip is strong and their letters are well formed. Children are also making exceptionally good progress in counting and number recognition. They learn about numeracy in amusing ways including finding one leaf to put in a jar, one stick to show to staff and making cheese straw number ones to eat at home. Older children are progressing to simple addition and they show an early grasp of this concept which they learned through discussion over play with real objects. Children in this nursery are gaining an excellent foundation for their future learning. They demonstrate confidence and early expertise in the use of modern computers and battery operated toys. The nursery has a wide range of valuable resources for information technology including torches, robots and other battery operated toys which introduce children to the idea of cause and effect.

Staff ensure that children wash their hands well before eating and after messy play and using the toilet. Children take a wet wipe and clean their hands before helping themselves to a healthy snack of fresh fruit or cheese and crackers. They talk about keeping safe and healthy with the staff and they wipe noses and with a little reminder they put the tissue straight in the bin to prevent the spread of infection. Staff plan and provide an extensive range of outings and very worthwhile activities

to broaden children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Children enjoy sightseeing tours around London on a bus, theatre trips and visits to the wetlands. They take part in bug hunts on the common, learn about road safety and visit museums and other places of interest.

A recent study of the styles of different artists has stimulated the children to reproduce cave drawings and pictures of sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh. Their creative work is very much their own and the displays of pictures and craft work not only enhance the nursery environment but also serve as a tool for consolidation and further learning. Staff plan to take the children to visit an art gallery to see works by other artists in connection with their studies.

Children go out for a walk in the fresh air every day. They take part in energetic games on the common and they make good use of climbing and balancing apparatus in a local play area. They also have a hall for lively play indoors with their teachers and with a visiting sports and fitness teacher. Ballet and movement to music also offers children enjoyable opportunities for exercise. Staff invite parents to come along to share their sporting skills and some daddies have spent valuable time with the children giving them pointers about how to play cricket, rugby and tennis.

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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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