

# Whittingham Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 119538  
**Inspection date** 08/02/2011  
**Inspector** ISP Inspection

**Setting address** Whittingham Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 4WA

**Telephone number** 01702 603229

**Email**

**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

Whittingham Playschool opened in 1976. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

It operates from a room within the Whittingham Methodist Church in Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Children have access to a secure enclosed area for outside play. There are currently 35 children in the early years age range on roll.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9.15am until 11.45am Monday to Friday. There are eight members of staff, all of whom have early years qualifications.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Some specific legal requirements are not being met as insufficient regard is given to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's safety and well-being are compromised as some of the setting's established systems, such as arrangements for safeguarding, are not fully effective. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the provision is not rigorous enough and does not identify action required to foresee improvements necessary to the functioning of the setting. However, staff recognise the uniqueness of each child and provide a variety of activities to help them learn through play and make satisfactory progress towards their Early Years Foundation Stage goals. Partnerships with parents and carers are seen as key to ensure appropriate support for children's welfare, care and learning.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- Implement an effective safeguarding policy and ensure this is understood by all staff, and ensure that any allegations of serious harm or abuse alleged to have taken place on the premises are reported to the appropriate authorities and to Ofsted without delay (safeguarding and welfare). 28/02/2011

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review the organisation of routines, such as snack time, to maximise learning time for children

- ensure that children's development records are clear in showing what children have achieved and what they need to do next in order to continue to make progress in their learning
- ensure that risk assessments identify areas which are potentially hazardous and include details of what actions are taken to reduce risk, signed and dated and stating by whom they were carried out.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are cared for by staff who have been checked and vetted to ensure their suitability, however, some staff are insecure in their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures. Procedures for acting on concerns are not always followed, therefore, children's safety is compromised and immediate action is required to improve this situation.

Risk assessments are in place but some areas, such as the toilet doors, still pose a risk to children as they are not effectively secured at all times. The protective floor covering in the main hall is also potentially a trip hazard for active children as well as staff.

The group undertook a self-evaluation and some action has been taken to raise standards following previous inspections. However, some judgements do not match the actual practice, therefore, targeting improvements is inconsistent. Resources are generally well used to provide children with largely positive and worthwhile activities to help them work towards the early learning goals, and staff are well deployed to offer appropriate support to children as they play and work. They show dedication and team spirit, helping the sessions to be well paced, although occasionally, routines such as preparation for snack time are prolonged. Time could be more gainfully spent on the children's learning needs. All children are welcomed and included and support for children with additional needs is thorough and effective.

Partnerships with parents and carers are valued and communication is good with regard to information about the setting, as well as displays to show what children have been doing. A prospectus contains information about the setting and how it operates, and policies are available for parents to view. Parents' views are sought by means of a questionnaire and their views considered. They are encouraged to become involved by attending sessions and contributing items for topic work or themes, however, staff report that take-up is quite limited. Currently, children's development profiles are not consistently able to give a clear overview of achievements and next steps in learning, as they are fragmented and not easily negotiated. Partnerships with the feeder schools are sound and aid transitions for older children.

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

Children enjoy their time at the setting and engage in a variety of activities designed to promote their all round development. Children are mostly settled and contented. New children are supported to quickly learn routines and are able to become independent in terms of choices of activity, as well as in personal care. Children are developing a sense of how to stay safe within the setting by following rules on how to move around, but some areas pose safety hazards, such as, the toilet doors and the loose laid floor protector, which is a trip hazard. Children's behaviour is generally good and they respond to the simple rules and boundaries laid down by staff to maintain a harmonious and productive atmosphere. They show willingness to tidy up and cooperate by helping at snack time with giving out the plates and drinks, boosting their independence and self-esteem.

Children learn about why some foods are good for them and are offered healthy choices, such as cereals and fresh fruit, at snack time. Hand washing and hygiene are taught to children so that they understand about the spread of germs. Children routinely engage in a range of physical activities, both indoors and outside, where they can move freely and develop skills using the bikes and wheeled toys as well as balls and other small equipment. A climbing frame and slide in the main playroom allows children to expend energy and practice their climbing and balancing in a safe and supported way, as well as teaching them to take turns and share.

Most children display a strong sense of belonging and confidently enter the playroom at the beginning of sessions, warmly greeted by staff. They are able to direct their own learning during free play times. They competently select and use equipment and toys to support their imaginative play, such as in the role play area, and mathematical and literacy development with puzzles and free mark making. Creative activities include art and craft work, music and movement, role play and dressing up. Children show care and consideration for one another, for example, a new child is told by a more experienced child that she needs an apron for painting and shows her where to find one.

Children with additional needs or who may speak English as an additional language are supported well as staff liaise with parents and other professionals to ensure that plans are targeted to bring about progress. Strategies include pictorial cues and questioning techniques to help children develop and gain from their time at the setting.

Children's development is recorded in a scrapbook and on separate sheets, however, in some cases these do not include enough detail or show the next steps in learning clearly enough to show progress. Parents are invited to see the development profiles but, although some show interest, few include any comments or suggestions.

Overall, educational provision is satisfactory and has positive outcomes for children. Activities reflect children's lives and interests and introduce the local

community and wider world within appropriate themes and projects. They are happy and enthusiastic, friendly and responsive.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	4
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met