

The Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	258305
Inspection date	31/01/2011
Inspector	Alison Edwards

Setting address	St Philip's Church Hall, Evington Road, Leicester, LE2 1QJ
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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 Pre-school Group opened in 1994 and is a registered charity. It operates from St Philip's Church Hall in the Evington area of Leicester serving the local community. Children are based in the main hall, with use of the entrance lounge and meeting room as needed, and with access to associated cloakroom facilities. The pre-school has access to the garden of a neighbouring community group for outdoor activities. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during school terms, opening from 9.00am to 12noon and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. Children attend a variety of sessions.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 26 children from the age of two years to under the age of eight years, all of whom may be in the early years age range at any one time. It is also registered on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register to care for older children. It receives funding to provide nursery education to children aged three and four-years-old. There are currently 46 children on roll, all in the early years age range. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. There are seven childcare staff, five of whom hold recognised early years qualifications at Level 3 and one at Level 2.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

The pre-school lacks procedures to ensure the suitability of adults responsible for the overall management of the playgroup. This breaches the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, compromising arrangements to maintain children's welfare and to safeguard them from harm. It also indicates that current evaluation procedures are not rigorous enough to identify and address these significant lapses. However, children do show good levels of confidence and enjoyment in their relationships, and in many worthwhile activities helping them to make good progress in many aspects of their development. Staff work well with parents and other relevant agencies to support children's individual needs and to help children with a wide variety of abilities and backgrounds play in harmony together.

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:

- establish systems to ensure that adults responsible for children are suitable to do so, with specific regard to 14/02/2011

notifying Ofsted of any change to the individuals who are members of the committee within 14 days maximum of the event occurring (Suitable people).

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- update records of risk assessments to include assessment of risk for outings and trips
- review ways to plan and provide daily outdoor play opportunities throughout the year to fully extend children's learning across all areas of development
- make more effective use of self-evaluation processes to more accurately identify strengths and any weaknesses against robust quality criteria.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Current organisation of the pre-school does not ensure the safe and effective management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because the pre-school does not notify Ofsted of changes to committee members to enable legally required clearances, including Criminal Records Bureau checks to be carried out. As a result, there are inadequate systems to ensure that the adults who have overall legal responsibility for children's care are suitable for their role. This compromises arrangements to safeguard children from harm and to maintain their welfare and safety. However, records of clearance checks of the established staff team are maintained, and there are sound recruitment procedures to check the suitability of any new staff. Clear records are maintained of each child's personal and contact details, so enabling staff to take account of their individual needs, for example regarding diet, language or culture. The pre-school regularly reviews its policies, so, for example, ensuring that it has appropriate procedures to notify the relevant authorities of any concerns about a child, or any allegation of abuse. Concise risk assessment records are kept to underpin practical precautions taken to maintain children's safety on the premises, for example, with regard to ensuring that unused furniture is safely stacked. Children already experience some outdoor activities during the week, for example, when going on local walks or using an adjoining garden area. However, staff have not yet fully explored ways to plan and provide outdoor play opportunities on a daily basis throughout the year to fully extend children's learning across all areas of development. Staff do assess ways to minimise potential hazards to children on outings, but do not yet keep records of these to effectively document arrangements to keep children safe when off the premises.

The pre-school's current evaluation procedures have failed to identify its breach of the welfare requirements and lack of systems to ensure the suitability of those legally responsible for children's care. Consequently, it has been unable to establish ways to tackle this significant lapse. However, the pre-school has taken sound steps to address issues raised at its previous inspection. For example, it ensures that first aid supplies are checked and replaced as necessary, and that children have more opportunities for purposeful writing in their play. Managers and staff do undertake continuing review of many aspects of their practice and skills,

for example, by using local authority quality assurance schemes, and by participating in ongoing training.

The pre-school gives high priority to working in partnership with parents. It encourages parents to share their own knowledge of their children's initial needs and interests, and their changing abilities. Displays and newsletters are used effectively to share ideas with parents about ways to use practical play to help extend children's learning. A book loan scheme helps children make links between home and at pre-school. The pre-school actively encourages parental involvement in its sessions and management. These close links with parents help to ensure that pre-school staff quickly get to know and value children as individuals. This helps them to effectively promote children's self-esteem and respect for each other's abilities. For example, children show pleasure and pride in their awareness of a range of community languages when sharing dual-language books with staff. Staff work well with other agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs/and or disabilities, working sensitively with individual children to help them achieve specific targets to extend their abilities and skills.

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

The lack of systems to ensure the suitability of the committee compromises the pre-school's ability to ensure children's safety and overall welfare. However, staff do supervise children closely, and help them to learn to act safely and responsibly, for example, when exploring different ways of using the sturdy climbing frame sited on cushioned matting. Staff make effective use of games and practical play activities to help all children to extend their understanding of good hygiene practices. For example, children show good levels of familiarity with how to 'clean their teeth' and 'comb their hair' when singing 'Mulberry Bush'. Children enjoy a variety of healthy snacks contributing well to a balanced diet. Staff provide effective support to help children with a range of abilities progress well in their physical skills. For example, they sensitively encourage children to experiment with ways of reaching a higher rung on the climbing frame ladder, or with ways to move from a standing to a seated position at the top of the slide. Children consistently show good levels of independence and responsibility. For example, they pour their own drinks and sort out their own overalls when deciding to paint. Children build good relationships with adults and with each other, for example, a younger child confidently fetches an adult to involve her in play, whilst older children begin to negotiate roles in simple pretend play. Staff show good awareness of children's individual interests and concerns, and make good use of posters, books and play materials to promote all children's recognition and respect for different lifestyles and abilities. This helps all children to feel valued as individuals and to develop good levels of self-esteem.

Staff have a good overview of what children need to learn, and of how to support their learning. Staff make good use of development logs to keep track of children's changing abilities. Overall, planning generally takes careful account of the Early Years Foundation Stage development guidance to ensure broad and balanced coverage of all aspects of learning. As a result, children enjoy a range of

worthwhile adult-led and child-chosen activities helping them to make good progress in their learning and to establish a good basis for their future skills. For example, staff use simple signing and gesture to help extend all children's enjoyment of books and stories, including those with English as an additional language. Children across the age range enjoy extending their mark making skills, for example, as younger children begin to purposefully develop recognisable symbols and drawings. Staff effectively identify children's existing interests and abilities and ways to extend these, such as, making patterns with threading beads, or sorting plastic animals by size or type. Children develop confident use of everyday technology in their pretend play, for example, as they use tills and phones. They learn to purposefully use small tools, such as, scissors and hole punches as they develop their own creative ideas. They investigate similarities and differences as they experiment to find out which things float and which things sink. They begin to explore some aspects of their environment as they go for walks, or as they use magnifying glasses to investigate leaves or small creatures in a nearby garden. Children enjoy expressing their own creative ideas in self-chosen painting activities, or when exploring different ways to shape and form play dough. They enthusiastically join in with favourite songs, and enjoy acting out simple roles, for example, when playing in the 'cafe'.

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?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
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	4
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	4
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:

Not Met (with actions)

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- establish effective systems to ensure that the registered body is suitable to work with children which must include obtaining an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check (Suitability of persons to care for, or be in regular contact with, children) (also applies to the voluntary part of the Childcare Register) 14/02/2011
- establish systems to inform Ofsted of the name, date of birth, address and telephone number of any partner, director, senior officer or other member of the governing body (Changes to people). 14/02/2011

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the compulsory part of the Childcare Register section of the report (Suitability to care for children or have regular contact with them). 14/02/2011