

The Little Caterpillars

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Vicky Turner

Setting address Hillcross Primary School, Ashridge Way, Morden, Surrey,
SM4 4EE
Telephone number 0208 542 6936 or 07966035531
Email averil.barley@hotmail.co.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

The Little Caterpillars Day Nursery opened in 2002. It operates from two rooms in an annex site located within Hillcross Primary School. The Little Caterpillars offers children wrap around care consisting of a breakfast club, a pre-school, an after school club and a play scheme in the school holidays. The setting serves the local area and gives priority to children attending Hillcross and Poplar primary schools. The setting may care for a maximum of 40 children at any one time and currently has 41 children on roll aged two to five years. Of these seven receive nursery education funding. The breakfast and after school facilities may care for a maximum of 32 children at any one time aged five to eight years and currently have 63 children on roll. Of these, nine are of the early years age group. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery opens five days per week, all year round with the exception of Christmas and bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.45am to 9am (breakfast club) 9am to 12.15pm (pre-school) 3pm to 6pm (after school care) and 8am to 6pm (holiday play scheme), 17 part-time and two full time staff work with the children, 10 have early years qualifications at level two, three and four. Two members of staff are working towards a qualification at level 3. The setting supports children with English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register, and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The Little Caterpillars provides a good, safe and stimulating environment for children to learn and develop. Excellent partnerships with the school, parents and external agencies means that children's needs are well met. Children enjoy their time at the setting and make good progress towards the early learning goals because the adults have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and there are ample opportunities to maximise children's learning in most aspects of learning. The continuous self-evaluation process at all levels, enables the setting to build on its strengths and identify areas for further improvement such as tracking all children's progress even more carefully. The setting's capacity for continuous improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop further systems for analysing information on children's progress in order to gain an overview of progress overall and to more easily identify where there may be gaps in the provision
- provide more opportunities for developing children's skills in problem-solving and numeracy.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place and followed consistently to safeguard the children. All staff are thoroughly vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. All staff are trained in child protection and understand procedures to be followed should they have a concern about a child. Daily safety checks ensure that the learning environment is safe. The electronic entry system means that the premises are well secured and visitors' identity is checked before entering the setting. Nine members of staff are trained in first aid, so children's welfare needs are well supported. The provider and manager lead an effective team who share the vision of providing good quality childcare in a safe and secure environment where children's individualism is celebrated. Staff are encouraged to update their training which contributes to good outcomes for the children. Annual appraisals and peer observations support staff professional development.

Staff, parents and children are involved in the self-evaluation process which enables the setting to build on its strengths and identify areas for improvement. Improvements have resulted in a more welcoming, safer learning environment and more learning opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The 'Every Child A Talker' project has identified individual children's strengths and weaknesses in communication. Staff and team meetings offer good opportunities for staff to share their ideas and disseminate good practice. The setting is very well resourced with good quality age-appropriate resources which are accessible to the children. The setting utilises two rooms. Staff are well deployed on a rota basis and according to their strengths. The newly developed outdoor play area is exceptionally well resourced with good opportunities for developing all areas of learning. The setting's involvement in the 'Inclusion pilot' has enabled them to adapt the curriculum to meet individual children's needs. Staff have a good understanding of children's backgrounds and are therefore able to plan appropriate play opportunities. A wide range of multicultural books, dressing up clothes, food, utensils and 'All about me' books, help children develop an understanding about differences. Children's awareness of disabilities is promoted through books and disability figures. The setting celebrates different festivals and cultural days of the children who attend the setting. For example, St. Patrick's Day.

Excellent partnerships with the school means that there are excellent systems for sharing of information which enable the staff to plan appropriately to complement the children's learning and development at the after school provision. Very good links with a wide range of external agencies means that children are well supported. The setting works particularly well with parents and carers who are kept well informed through daily informal chats, half-termly newsletters, letters, e-mail, telephone calls and the website. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's records. The 'Every Child A Talker' project has provided parents with information packs on how to support their children's language development at home. Parents and carers are really pleased with many aspects of the settings work and comment that 'the children love it', 'staff are really friendly and really

good at helping children settle', and there are 'great toys and structure for learning and a welcoming atmosphere'.

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

Children happily engage in active learning in a stimulating well-resourced environment with children able to freely access activities both indoors and out. There is a good balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities. Older children like attending the out of school provisions because 'it's fun'. Parents share information about their children by completing the 'Settling in Profiles' which give staff a starting point when planning for individual needs. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals, particularly in communication language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development. This is less evident in problem-solving and numeracy. The stimulating outdoor play area includes a pond, a digging area and an allotment which offer exciting opportunities for children to explore materials and investigate living things and life cycles. They plant flowers and grow their own vegetables. The talking circle of logs, provide a focal point for discussions, stories and songs. A range of sensory equipment provides stimulating sensory experiences for the children.

Children are happy, relaxed and share a trusting relationship with adults. Well established routines and set boundaries help keep them safe. They follow instructions well, play safely and use a range of tools and equipment safely. They learn about road safety, 'Stranger Danger' and fire safety from visitors to the setting and practice their understanding through role play and at the pedestrian crossing, waiting for the 'green man'. Children engage in daily physical activities such as riding their tricycles and scooters, running, climbing, swinging and sliding. They make healthy choices at breakfast club and snack time and parents are encouraged to provide healthy lunch boxes. Children have established good hand washing routines. Children's dietary and medical needs are very well met. Children behave exceptionally well and happily join in with games and activities. They make decisions about what they would like to play with and help tidy up the setting. They display high levels of confidence and play very well together, taking turns and sharing. Children are encouraged to express their views about the setting. They learn to recycle using the compost bin.

Children have good opportunities for 'talk' through language groups, talking tables, role play, talk buttons and constant dialogue with their adults. They retell their favourite stories using puppets and have access to mark-making equipment and resources both indoors and outdoors. Older children match rhyming words as they participate in a phonic activity and thoroughly enjoy singing the 'Silly Soup' song. The younger ones enjoy singing games and join in using repetitive language as they listen to the stories. They have some opportunities to develop further their problem-solving and numeracy skills through cooking and counting activities, number rhymes and computer programs. Children have access to a wide range of information and communication technology equipment and demonstrate good mouse control when using the computer. The staff monitor individual children's

progress closely. Detailed observations are carried out, next steps identified and this informs future planning. Children's learning profiles include samples of mark-making, art work and photographic evidence of their achievements made, however some records lack clarity to demonstrate a clear view of progress overall.

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

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| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 2 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 2 |
| 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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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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