

Gooseberry Green Pre school

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Martyn Richards

Setting address Hogarth Primary School, Riseway, Brentwood, Essex, CM15
8BG
Telephone number 01277 236 737
Email elizabeth.jelfs@Sky.com
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

Gooseberry Green Pre-school is one of two pre-schools run by a limited company in the Brentwood and Billericay region of Essex. It was registered in 2007 and operates from a refurbished classroom in a local primary school in Brentwood. They have access to an extensive enclosed and secure outdoor play area.

A maximum of 26 children from two years to under five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 51 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The pre-school is open each weekday from 8.45am to 3.30pm, during term times only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school receives funding for early education places. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff. One holds a degree in Early Years education, six hold National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 3 and one is working towards NVQ at level 3. The pre-school has close links with its host primary school, and collaborates with local Children's Centres. It receives support from the local authority. The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Gooseberry Green is a lively and welcoming pre-school. The good quality of care and safety it provides, together with its broad activity programme, ensures the needs of the children are met well. All children are valued as individuals and the programme is adapted to their varied needs and interests. It is an inclusive pre-school, catering for a full range of children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. All children make good progress in their learning and development and staff are working to improve their assessment systems still further. The pre-school has made rapid strides since its last inspection, and is keen for further improvement. It is refining its self-evaluation process, and has a good capacity to continue improving in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- refine assessment processes by establishing children's starting points on entry to the pre-school
- refine self-evaluation processes to focus more analytically on the impact of the pre-school's provision on children's outcomes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is given good priority. The activity room, with its separate kitchen area and toilet facilities, is secure from intrusion, or from children slipping out unnoticed. The outdoor area is well-fenced and safe. The suitability of all adults wishing to work with the children is checked and the managers apply sound recruitment principles and vetting processes when filling vacancies. All staff have updated their training in child protection and understand their roles. They are alert to any indications of mistreatment, and know how to respond if they have concerns. Every day, staff check the facilities for risks and record their findings. This is in addition to their annual risk assessment of the whole setting. They have established good procedures for circumstances where a child might go missing, or fail to be collected at the usual time. They are well qualified in first aid, and keep good records of any minor bumps and bruises. Fire drills are held regularly and are carefully logged and evaluated. All policies and procedures are reviewed and updated.

The leaders and managers of the pre-school are energetic and keen to improve further. Staff regularly access additional training, which is selected to meet the changing needs of the pre-school, and there is a good track record of improvement since the last inspection. In particular the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework have been successfully implemented, and a highly effective key person scheme has been introduced. This means that for every child there is a named adult with a particular responsibility to oversee their welfare and development, and the first port of call for parents if they have any concerns. New processes for assessing children's progress over time have also been put in place. Children's learning records clearly indicate that good progress is being made. However, they lack sufficient information about children's skills on entry to show the extent of children's progress from their individual starting points. Staff have sound plans for the future, such as providing more training opportunities for supporting children who speak English as a second language and creating a covered, all-weather area in the outside play space. The pre-school is well-equipped, and well-staffed. As a result, children have close oversight from staff, and one-to-one help when they need it.

This is a self-critical pre-school, and staff have developed a systematic process for evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. At present the review gives a good picture of the opportunities the pre-school provides for its children, but too little insight into what they gain from it. Parents think very highly of the pre-school and comment in overwhelmingly favourable terms about the excellent levels of communication that the staff have established. Parents express their confidence in the safety of the pre-school and are impressed by the progress their children make. There are excellent arrangements in place for them to talk to staff and to contribute their own ideas to the improvement of the pre-school. Strong links with the host primary school and other settings help children make a confident transition when they leave pre-school.

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

Children are enthusiastic to start the session on arrival and quickly hurry to self-chosen activities. Within minutes they are calm and settled in their play. Some work on puzzles with a friend, or build models of a spaceship with construction toys. They enjoy accessing the computer, where they can practise moving an icon across the screen to catch a falling object. They show patience and persistence during their chosen tasks, as well as high levels of control of the mouse. Children's creativity is fostered well as they play with paint rollers to make prints. They talk to their helper about the colours and about what their patterns remind them of. Several settle down with an adult in the book corner, browsing happily. They know which way up a book must be held and understand that print carries meaning. Children express their imaginations in the role play area as they pretend to be hairdressers. There is a booking desk with a telephone and appointments diary, in which the receptionist takes down the reservations. Customers arrive to sit under the drier, to have a haircut, or choose a new hair colour. The whole play activity is infused with language, new vocabulary and with great fun.

The activities provided for the children are chosen to appeal to a full range of ages and abilities, and equally to boys and girls. At present only a small number of children are learning English as an additional language, but provision for them is also good. Key words in their home languages are displayed with English equivalents, and their bilingualism is celebrated with an impressive world map display, showing where in the world their home languages are spoken. Staff are introducing the 'Every Child a Talker' project, and this is placing a greater emphasis on children's communication skills. Staff prompt children to talk about the texture of dough as they roll it out to make pretend cakes and about the importance of clean hands when cake-making. Celebrations of St Patrick's Day, Easter, and other cultural festivals also help children towards an appreciation of cultural diversity. Children learn to link initial sounds and letters, to recognise their names and to listen in a very mature way to others in whole group sessions. They enjoy mark making as a precursor to writing, and show good hand control for their ages. They begin to count and to recognise common regular shapes. They know comparative terms such as 'more' and 'less', 'bigger' and 'smaller'. They have recently been learning about animals, and have brought in photographs or pictures of their favourite pets. Children know that some animals are domesticated while others are wild, and the kind of care that pets need. They have germinated seeds and grown their own vegetables and were fascinated by the mini beasts they found when they lifted a damp mat in the outside area.

Because relationships with staff are so supportive, children feel secure and are happy to try new activities. Their behaviour is excellent as they are calm and polite, helpful to each other and friendly to staff and visitors alike. They know how to use tools, such as scissors and pencils safely, and move considerately around the activity room, aware of the presence of others. They know the importance of keeping their hands clean, using tissues and acting hygienically when they have a cough or cold. Children have an outstanding appreciation of healthy lifestyles. They help themselves to the healthy daily snacks, such as bananas, raisins and milk and

thoroughly enjoy vigorous outdoor activity. The children comment on why exercise is good for them and it is important to eat nutritious foods. Above all, the children grow in confidence and in the ability to make decisions for themselves. The attitudes and skills they acquire in the pre-school will stand them in good stead in the next stage of their education.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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	2
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	2
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	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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	2
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