

The Courtyard Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Maura Pigram

Setting address

The Courtyard, Leavesden Road, Watford, Hertfordshire,
WD24 5ED

Telephone number

01923 252336

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

The Courtyard pre-school is committee led and was registered in 1998. It operates from two rooms on the first floor of the Elim Pentecostal Church Centre in North Watford, Hertfordshire. The pre-school serves the local area. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.30am to 3pm and a lunch club is also provided. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 23 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school provides funded early education for two, three and four year old children. The group supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. Two members of staff hold level 2 qualifications. The pre-school leader is working towards the Early Years Foundation Degree. Two members of staff are working towards a level 2 and a level 3 qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Positive steps are taken to ensure staff know each child well which enables them to meet children's individual learning and development needs. The uniqueness of each child is valued and inclusion is positively promoted so that children and their families are well supported. Partnerships with other professionals are effective so that there is a continuation of care and learning. There is a close partnership with parents and they share valuable information that promotes children's learning and welfare. Senior staff and the team reflect on their practice and recognise how to bring about improvement that benefits the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the culture of reflective practice so that it includes children's views and that of their parents or carers and use this to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Ongoing safeguarding training for all staff ensure effective procedures are followed if there are any concerns about children in their care. Documentation to support this is easily available and procedures such as the mobile phone policy ensures children are as safe as possible at all times. Clear recruitment procedures ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. Robust procedures for arrival and departure ensure children are handed over safely to a known adult. Risk assessments for all areas contribute to children feeling safe and positive steps are taken to ensure children have a secure understanding of how to stay safe. For example, good staff deployment and effective management ensure children safely use the stairs to the outdoor area.

The pre-school leader and her team have worked very hard since the last inspection to ensure recommendations and actions raised have been effectively addressed. For example, all necessary policies and procedures have been updated and continual staff training has had a positive impact on the outcomes for children. In addition, the layout of the attractive resources has been improved so that they are freely available to the children. Since the last inspection, an attractive outdoor area has been provided. The painting of the surrounding walls means that it is bright and welcoming for children and their families. The management team have a clear vision for the future. Strengths and areas to develop are well known. For example, plans for the future include developing free-flow play and ensuring the provision is child-led and child-centred with staff facilitating learning and development. All staff are involved in the monitoring of the provision through informal discussions and the regular team meetings. Although children's and parents views are welcome, these are yet to be used in the self-evaluation process.

The pre-school actively promotes inclusive practice. Staff and parents work well together to ensure children who are learning English as an additional language are effectively supported. For example, some staff speak various languages and parents who speak children's home languages are encouraged to attend sessions. This effectively supports and meets children's and their families individual needs. Partnerships with professionals at the Children's Centre are well established. This contributes positively to children's achievement and wellbeing. Children's proposed teachers are invited to visit the pre-school to meet their new children. This helps to ease transition times. Parents are very pleased with the pre-school and comment positively on the effective steps that are taken to ensure their children feel settled and secure. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning through the use of learning journals, open sessions, daily discussions and by joining the parent rota. Parents and carers enjoy taking part in the summer outings to suitable parks and various places of interest such as the Lincolnsfield Centre.

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

Since the last inspection the pre-school leader and her team have effectively implemented their knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage to help children make good progress towards the early learning goals. One-to-one support is provided to ensure that an inclusive practice is provided and activities are modified so that all children can fully participate. Children's starting points are well known and are used effectively in the settling-in process so that children can be helped to settle. The key worker system and the positive partnership with parents further contributes to children feeling settled. This means that children are valued and are happy in their play. Planning is flexible, it is based on themes and children's interests. For example, children's interest in transport and fire engines link effectively to them learning about safety and the people who help them do this. All areas of learning are linked into the planning and assessments are regularly carried out. However, they do not always show the next steps in children's learning.

Children are busy and engaged in active learning. They can freely choose between child-initiated play and the adult-led activities on offer. They play well independently and in groups becoming active, curious and inquisitive learners. They confidently select resources such as trains, books, drawing materials or enjoy imaginative play in the well-resourced home area. The experienced staff are skilled at promoting positive attitudes to learning. For example, children's concentration during construction and computer games, imaginative play and drawing are extended due to good quality interaction. Staff skilfully use open questions to help children process their thoughts and language skills. They are attentive and are very aware of each child's individual needs to ensure they are effectively supported in their learning. For example, every opportunity is taken to help children develop skills for the future such as sharing and taking turns. For example, Children eagerly plant seeds outdoors in the newly acquired garden pots. They are helped to understand turn-taking whilst using the child-size watering can and participate in discussions to help them understand the growing process.

Children enjoy further sensory play with sand, cornflour and paint. Problem solving and mathematical concepts such as calculation are promoted through cooking, jigsaws and construction of train tracks and towers with building blocks. Children have ample books including dual language books to support their understanding that print can carry meaning. The book lending system further supports children's emerging reading skills and interest in books. Displays show children's independent work and additional crafts or paintings are eagerly taken home to share with their families. This promotes children's self-esteem. Children's cultural backgrounds are valued. Parents are invited to share their experiences and family backgrounds so that children's learn to respect others. Children effectively learn about the wider world through outings within the community and visitors to the setting such as fire safety officers. High ratios are maintained during outings to ensure children's safety. Children learn about keeping safe whilst walking along the pavements and crossing roads. Children behave well because they are busy within their play and they know what is expected of them.

Their good health is promoted through consistent routines that help prevent the spread of infection. Rolling snack time is effectively managed so that children develop a good awareness of healthy eating. Dietary needs are known and physical activities are well supported so that children develop a healthy lifestyle.

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	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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	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:

Met

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

Met