

Little Angels Pre School Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY359225
Inspection date	09/06/2011
Inspector	Sarah Williams
Setting address	St. Matthews Church, Harwich Road, COLCHESTER, CO4 3HR
Telephone number	01206 862394
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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*.

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Description of the setting

Little Angels Pre-School Ltd registered under their new name in 2007 and operates from a church building in Colchester, Essex. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 62 children in the early years age range on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is open each weekday in term time from 9am to 12noon and 12.30pm to 3.30pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, and from 12noon until 12.30pm on Fridays for lunch club. The afternoon session is from 12.45pm until 3.45pm. On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons sessions are from 12.30pm to 3pm.

The nursery employs twelve members of staff. Of these, eleven hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Staff are extremely effective in raising children's self-esteem and igniting their natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. The staff team work together to successfully help children learn and develop as they progress towards their early learning goals. They have established exceptional working relationships with parents in order to find out about the particular needs of each child, to provide appropriate care. Additionally, parents' views are taken into account and changes made when possible. Staff ensure that children are valued as unique individuals, promoting inclusion. The self-evaluation is an ongoing activity and all staff are all invited to contribute and become involved, providing a sense of purpose and promoting positive outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- taking steps to minimise any hazards to children from equipment or activities relating to water
- introducing more text and print to the outside areas to support children's learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are vigilant in ensuring that a high level of commitment is given to promoting children's welfare and the designated person fully understands her role and responsibility in protecting children. Effective procedures are in place to identify and record any concerns regarding children's wellbeing and safety. The manager recognises the need to inform and work with relevant agencies to ensure that children's welfare and safety is paramount. All staff understand the setting's clear child protection policy, which is reviewed regularly and implemented well.

The staff are highly dedicated and motivated to work very effectively together as a team. Their enthusiastic approach contributes towards the setting's all-round effectiveness. Excellent organisational skills demonstrated by the senior staff ensure high standards are maintained throughout the setting. A very thorough and detailed self-evaluation is available and used to effectively identify strengths and monitor any areas for future development. For example, some changes in the partnership with parents have occurred as a result of information gained via questionnaires. The managers are proactive in ensuring that they involve staff, parents and children when identifying strengths and areas for improvements. All recommendations set at the last inspection have been addressed in line with the setting's commitment to continuous improvement. In addition, continuous professional development is fully supported by the management and regular training opportunities are provided for all staff to help them learn new skills and keep up-to-date with changes to improve their practice.

Detailed risk assessments are conducted and reviewed to ensure hazards to children within the premises are minimised. These are largely effective. However, one aspect of outside play involving a water feature poses a potential hazard and needs to be further addressed. The high ratio of staff is well deployed, which enables the children to be well supervised and supported in all activities. Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they practise fire drills to develop their awareness of emergency evacuation procedures and these regular events are recorded.

The setting has developed excellent relationships with parents and carers which is highly beneficial to the continuity of excellent quality care that the children receive. Staff and parents work extremely well together to meet children's individual needs. Parents share essential information to enable staff to meet children's needs when they first attend. The key persons work closely with parents and other professionals to identify individual learning needs and work together to provide high quality care and learning opportunities for children, promoting inclusion for all. Some children attend other settings and staff have begun to make links to ensure continuity, for example, using communication diaries to actively share information with other settings. A particular strength of this setting is the well-developed transition procedures for children entering full-time school. They take children to visit the school and see the classrooms and meet the teachers. This means children become familiar with the building and the people they will encounter when they start school, thereby promoting a smooth transition and

alleviating anxieties.

The setting has developed many innovative ways to keep parents fully informed about day-to-day issues, activities and their child's progress. Newsletters, open evenings, well managed noticeboards, verbal and written daily contact and photographic and video evidence of children's achievements offer a wealth of choices. They have access to an impressive array of relevant information about the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning and other childcare related topics, events and resources in the local area, all displayed in the foyer. Children's individual learning journals, in the popular scrapbook format, are available for parents to view or take home when they wish, keeping parents fully aware of all aspects about their children's developmental progress and strengthening the link for children between the setting and their homes. The full range of comprehensive policies and procedures is available in the operational plan. This is well presented and easily accessible. The written policies successfully underpin the smooth running of the setting and are reviewed regularly to address any changes.

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

Children flourish and grow within this child-centred, stimulating and exciting setting, where they are extremely happy and settled, demonstrating a strong sense of belonging. The setting makes exceptionally good use of the space available to offer a broad and balanced variety of activities across all areas of learning. The playroom and outside area are set up to encourage children to make choices and actively pursue their own interests as they learn through well-structured play activities. There is an excellent balance of mainly child-initiated activities and times when they come together with the adults to discuss what they have been doing and share ideas such as at show and tell time. Staff support the children exceptionally well as they play and learn, and they skilfully join in at an appropriate level without dominating to facilitate individual and small group work both indoors and outdoors. Staff are very skilled at asking open-ended questions which encourage children to think for themselves and solve problems.

The setting uses very effective planning to ensure that children develop in all areas of learning and their progress is tracked as they progress towards early learning goals. They are fully aware of all children's starting points and know the children well, including their individual styles and preferences. Careful observations, and the use of 'mind mapping' alongside the activities are used to ensure that children's next steps in learning are planned for effectively. The setting uses its understanding of children as individuals to ensure that all children make progress, including those who have English as an additional language or who have additional needs, always ensuring any outside professional support is made available. The resulting individual education plans are regularly reviewed to ensure children make maximum progress in their learning.

Children are eager to explore and learn, engaging with the equipment and developing their imagination and skills. They use the climbing frame and slide as a base for imaginative games and recall seeing birds in the tree which overhangs the

garden. The roleplay train station is equipped with a booking office, tickets and a train to take them to faraway places once they are seated safely. Children have access to a superb range of art and craft materials so they can collage, paint, create models and explore colour, shape and form in an open-ended way. They proudly show their creations to parents at home time. Shaving foam or cornflour goop makes for a sensory experience as children draw and make patterns, feeling and smelling the soft, intriguing material with their fingers. Children's language skills and vocabulary are developed extremely effectively as they chat over snack time, or describe their work and express ideas and opinions. The range of books is attractively presented in an appealing and inviting book corner where children can browse or share stories with a staff member. The playroom has labelled displays, and text in various contexts. However, the outside area lacks any bold print to help extend children's understanding of the link between the spoken and written word. Children routinely learn sign language, developing their understanding of both verbal and non-verbal communication, ensuring all children are included.

Staff are very attentive and supportive towards younger children who may be settling in, and any tears are soon replaced with smiles as they become engrossed in an activity of choice. Staff make very good use of the local area to extend children's knowledge and understanding of their local community. An inspiring activity is the nearby allotment which the group took over and have cleared, cultivated and produced crops from. The children attend in small groups with staff and parent helpers and gain insight into lifecycles and caring for living things. This fits with the setting's ethos and its embrace of the forest school approach, which values children learning through the natural environment as far as possible. The children suggested making a scarecrow so this was incorporated into the planning. The allotment provides a hugely valuable experience for the children, giving them a sense of community as they interact with and learn from the other gardeners and see cultivation at first hand, under the watchful eyes of staff at all times.

Children are very confident and interact positively with the friendly staff team, including the volunteers and students on placement. They show very positive attitudes to each other and the staff whose calm and consistent manner provides a sense of security and excellent role models for the children. As a result, behaviour is exemplary, with children showing cooperation and kindness towards one another. They work and play together harmoniously, taking turns and sharing.

Children's health and wellbeing is promoted exceptionally well. Staff follow well-established routines and procedures to maintain excellent standards of hygiene in the setting. For example, children understand that clean hands are needed to eat snacks and meals so use a wipe or wash their hands before they sit down at the table. Parents provide packed lunches and the setting makes sure they are stored appropriately, as well as promote healthy options by providing information for parents. Healthy snacks are prepared on the premises, which include a hearty sandwich with fresh vegetables, a protein and selection of bread. Children help themselves to milk or water and can have a drink at any time.

Children's all-round experiences ensure they build a firm foundation for future learning and give them some highly positive, memorable experiences as they play and learn with their friends in this exceptional, free-flow environment.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
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	1

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