

Little Hands Preschool Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 203764
Inspection date 15/06/2011
Inspector Patricia Champion

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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 Hands Preschool Nursery is privately owned. It opened in 1994 and operates from the main hall within a community hall in Witham, Essex. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Operating times are from 9am until 2.55pm.

There are currently 72 children aged from two to five years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions or full day care. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

The pre-school employs 11 staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Children are happy and settled and make steady progress in their learning and development. The staff have established suitable working partnerships with parents and other early years professionals to ensure that they are fully aware of and can support each child's unique needs. Although self-evaluation includes the strengths of the setting it does not give priority to identifying areas for further development. Not all the recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. There are breaches of specific welfare requirements in relation to meeting the requirements for keeping appropriate records regarding the staff's suitability checks and ensuring children's health is effectively promoted. Not all policies and procedures meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, the management of the pre-school is not effectively safeguarding children's welfare.

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:

- take the necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by ensuring welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are 22/07/2011

- known and met by all managers and the staff team (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)
- promote the good health of children and take the necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection by improving the handwashing facilities (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 22/07/2011
- ensure that the food provided for children is healthy, balanced and nutritious (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 22/07/2011
- ensure that the information used to assess suitability include both the unique reference numbers of Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and the date on which they were obtained (Suitable people) 22/07/2011
- expand the risk assessment of the premises to include all aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis and keep a record of these checks and when and by whom they are made (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 22/07/2011
- review and maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting and ensure that they meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and reflect current practice (Documentation). 22/07/2011

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that information about evacuation drills is recorded in a fire log book with details of any problems encountered and how they were resolved
- improve the system for ongoing assessments to include clearer links to the Early Years Foundation Stage and share these with parents so they can add their comments
- develop the educational programme for children's problem solving, reasoning and numeracy by planning more challenging practical activities and using resources more imaginatively so that the older and more able children can practise and extend their skills in this area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The managers and staff have a limited understanding of the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and consequently, children are not fully safeguarded. The setting has an adequate child protection policy and the manager has recently acquired the revised guidelines from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) so that the staff know what to do if there are concerns about a child's well-being. However, children may not be fully protected as some safeguarding procedures are not fully robust and some details about the staff's enhanced disclosures through the Criminal Records Bureau are not held on the premises. At the last inspection the pre-school was recommended to improve handwashing facilities and the food provided to enhance outcomes for children's

health. These issues have not been addressed. Although the staff carry out a basic risk assessment for the premises, equipment and any outings, these checks do not identify all potential hazards such as stinging nettles to ensure they are removed as a matter of urgency. While staff revised the registers to show hours of attendance during this inspection, the written policies, procedures and fire drill records have not been updated in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage or to reflect current practice.

The learning environment is made welcoming and inclusive to both children and their families. Staff gather information about individual needs, cultural heritage and linguistic diversity right from the start so that each child is included and can participate fully in the activities. Displays containing artwork and captions with different languages and scripts demonstrate that everyone's contribution is valued. Staff take suitable steps to close identified achievement gaps. They seek advice from external agencies and professionals to ensure children with special educational needs including those with speech and language difficulties get the additional support they need. The staff have established positive partnerships with local schools to assist the children's transition into full-time education.

Children select from a wide range of resources, both indoors and outside, which are regularly rotated. They are sensitively supported by a high number of qualified adults each session. While there are many opportunities for the staff team to attend further training courses, priority has not been given to building their confidence in undertaking observations directly linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, assessment responsibilities are not delegated to all staff members and it is one of the managers who completes all the children's development matters profiles and learning journey records. This has an impact on the smooth running of the pre-school and capacity for further improvements.

Children benefit from the very friendly relationships between the staff and their parents and carers. The introductory welcome booklet explains the educational provision and the care provided and staff make time for informal discussions with parents. Newsletters are distributed and written information and important certificates are displayed on notice boards, although they are not all up to date. Parents become involved in their children's learning through the book share scheme and when families take a pre-school teddy bear on outings and record their adventures. Parents meet formally with some of the key persons to discuss children's achievements, progress and targets. However, they are not yet encouraged to add their comments or contribute to the ongoing assessments. They are invited to share their views through questionnaires and the majority make very positive comments about the pre-school and appreciate the efforts of the staff team. All parents and carers spoken to during the inspection were happy with the pre-school.

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

Children receive a warm and friendly greeting from the staff when they arrive at the pre-school. They separate from parents and carers confidently and are

motivated and eager to play. The staff are calm role models and consequently, children are well behaved and keen to develop new skills. Interaction is animated and staff use effective questioning to elicit interesting answers from the children. For example, children are expressive and imaginative as they describe their adventures on a roller-coaster or explain what happens when the sun dries the brush marks on the wall and paving stones. A range of teaching methods are used to promote vocabulary development, knowledge of sounds and letters and staff enliven children's interest in books. Children are fully involved and interested in their chosen activities. For example, as they act out role play scenarios, smooth wood with sandpaper or spend time digging in the garden and hunting for bugs. Plenty of praise and encouragement is given to acknowledge children's good attempts and accomplishments and this raises confidence and self-esteem.

Staff plan a generally suitable range of learning experiences linked to the six areas of learning and children are making steady progress as they develop the skills they need for the future. Some of the routines and activities encourage children to practise their independence skills and they manage to change their clothes for a PE session with adult support. Children confidently develop their knowledge of technology as they adeptly use the mouse to control movements on the computer screen. They are beginning to form letters as they write messages in greetings cards and use numbers and mathematical language within everyday play. However, there is not always sufficient challenge offered through imaginative and practical experiences for the older children to develop and extend their problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills.

Children make some healthy choices as they relish the opportunity to choose whether to play inside or outdoors in the fresh air. They have opportunities for energetic movement when practising team games and races for their sports day. Suitable physical apparatus and wheeled toys are provided and children push prams and use scooters with care and control. Children are beginning to use the garden to grow vegetables and fruit such as strawberries so that they start to learn about the food that is good for them. However, the pre-school only provides biscuits and does not offer a varied, balanced and nutritious menu at snack times so that children can try healthy food everyday. At lunch times children eat in social groups with the staff and learn to independently manage food and drinks containers in preparation for starting school. Children use sanitising gel to cleanse their hands prior to their outdoor snack time. However, there is potential for cross-infection as children share a communal towel and bowl to wash their hands when playing in the hall. Young children are not encouraged to practise safe hygiene routines and become confidently independent in their self-care because the paper towel dispenser and liquid soap in the toilet facilities are out of reach. Also the step stools which have to be moved between the hand basins and toilets are not kept scrupulously clean.

Children behave responsibly and understand the need to share and take turns with equipment such as the computer. The staff explain to children about safety when they use the woodworking tools. Children demonstrate that they feel safe through their interactions with the staff. However, children may have a false sense of security due to the safeguarding and health issues detailed earlier in this report.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

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	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	4
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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