

# The Cornerstone Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 155085  
**Inspection date** 07/07/2011  
**Inspector** Jane Davenport

**Setting address** 149 Canterbury Road, Leyton, London, E10 6EH

**Telephone number** 02085568585

**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

Cornerstone Pre-School was registered in 1998 and is run by a voluntary management committee. It operates from the Cornerstone Church and community centre, in the Leyton area within the London borough of Waltham Forest. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 30 children between the ages of two and eight may attend the provision at any one time. The provision is open each week day from 9.00am to 3.30pm, during school term time. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children. There are currently 55 children in the early years age range on roll. The pre-school currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 15 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Department of their local authority and has participated in their quality assurance schemes.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children relish attending this stimulating pre-school. Their care and learning is prioritised by the dedicated staff who ensure that they are safe at all times. The setting has a wonderful ethos, which provides children with a homely and friendly child-centred environment. Children are offered an excellent range of innovative learning experiences. This captures their imagination and supports their learning very effectively, ensuring they make excellent progress towards the early learning goals, given their age, ability and starting points. Excellent partnerships with the parents and outside agencies, have been forged to ensure that the unique needs of each child are identified and met. A highly effective system of self-evaluation ensures continuous improvement is sustained, and further enhances a setting that already meets the needs of all children extremely successfully.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the system of recording complaints, to ensure that all staff are aware of the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are extremely well safeguarded because staff are diligent in child protection matters. In-depth policies and procedures ensure that staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities, in protecting the children in their care. Robust systems are in place for managing the recruitment and induction of staff, and to check their suitability. Stringent risk assessments, which cover all areas, equipment and outings, enable children to safely enjoy a wealth of activities, whilst developing their knowledge of using equipment safely and taking controlled risks. Extensive documentation generally enhances the excellent practice, and ensures the safe and efficient management of the provision. However, complaints in the complaints log are not currently recorded in a way that ensures privacy and confidentiality.

The staff team is highly cohesive and diverse at all levels. Staff are passionate and dedicated to the service they provide. They are well qualified and regularly attend additional training, to further their knowledge and expertise. Staff are always looking for innovative ways to enhance children's enjoyment of learning. For example, they bring in flowers, rocks and leaves for children to create their own indoor gardens, and take the children on a torch light 'bear hunt', where they search the dimly lit corridors using their torches, to find the hidden teddy bear.

Resources are plentiful, well maintained and stored to enable children to safely and independently select activities for themselves. Equality and diversity is actively promoted. This is a real strength within the setting, and helps children to develop an awareness of the society in which they live. Children are valued as individuals and this is reflected in the respect they have, both for themselves and their peers.

Staff and parents enjoy a productive relationship. Parents are kept very well informed about all aspects of their children's achievement, well-being and development. Staff are available to chat to them on a daily basis, and parents are offered regular meetings with their child's key person. Staff give parents ideas of how they can support their children's learning at home, and also encourage them to participate in the 'stay and play' scheme. Parents really appreciate this and comment, 'It was interesting to see how many activities are available for the children to do in one day. It gave me a chance to interact with my child and the teachers, and get involved in the play area' and 'I don't get much opportunity to do play and stay, as I work full time, but I was very pleased to see what type of activities children do'. Parents are also actively encouraged to contribute to their children's learning journeys, which ensures that they are fully included in their learning.

Staff enjoy highly effective working relationships with other services and providers. They have well-established channels of communication with agencies, such as the speech and language therapists and health visitors. They also have excellent links with the school that the children usually feed into, and with other local settings. This ensures a shared approach to children's care and learning.

The setting is totally committed to continuous improvement, and the capacity for this is excellent. Staff work closely together to find and implement systems to develop the provision. This ensures that children consistently receive a high level of childcare and education. Self-evaluation procedures and participation in quality assurance schemes, are used very effectively as tools for driving quality and improvement. For example, the setting has completed the local authority Quality Improvement in Learning and Teaching and Certificate of Minimum Standards quality assurance schemes, and plans to embark on the Ten Dimensions of Care scheme in September. A holistic approach to evaluation ensures that staff, parents and children are all given a voice in identifying ways to push forward an ongoing basis.

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

The pre-school is a vibrant place for children to spend time in. Children make excellent progress in their learning, as they experience a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities, which meet their interests and developmental needs. The wealth of resources are thoughtfully laid out to ensure that different areas are created for instance, somewhere to undertake messy play, and a role play area with dressing up to develop children's imaginative skills, and spaces where children can be thoughtful and quiet as they relax or look at books. Planning and assessment processes in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, have been implemented to ensure that all areas of learning and development are covered. Observation and children's personal choices are used to develop planning and identify the next steps of children's learning. Parents, who are seen as equal partners in their child's learning, are supplied with a guide to their child's learning journey portfolio. They take them home every six weeks and are encouraged and motivated to add their own contributions.

The pre-school is totally child orientated, and staff strive to ensure that children have fun and enjoy all aspects of their time in the setting. Children are encouraged to be active learners and are excited and motivated to take part in the activities provided for them. Outdoors is seen as an extension to learning, and children are able to access the outdoor area at all times and in all weathers. Staff are confident to let activities develop from the children for example, two children playing in the outdoor playhouse, take water into the kitchen and mix it with flower petals to brew and pour their own tea. During an unexpected heavy rain shower, the children put on their rain capes and wellington boots and have a wonderful time running under the rain drips from the roof, and splashing in the puddles. They hold pans from the home corner under a drip to catch the water and realise that, as the drip gets bigger and bigger, that they need something larger. A bucket is then used to catch the water streaming down from the roof as the children squeal with delight.

All areas of children's development are very well promoted. Their language flourishes as staff ask open ended questions, giving the children time to gather their thoughts before they answer. Innovative practices such as the 'word of the

week' add many new words to children's vocabulary. For example, when the word of the week was 'strong', the children were asked to contribute other words which they thought had similar meanings. They came up with the words 'tough', 'firm', 'hard' and 'solid'. Labelling throughout all areas of the pre-school, which are in English and other community languages, help children to grasp the concept that print carries meaning. There are many opportunities for mark-making and children are able to write their names, supported by staff, who gently refer them to the alphabet poster if they are not sure of all the letters. A four-year-old child confidently explains to the inspector that in order to write the 'a' in their name, they must make a circle and then add on a tail. Children learn how other people communicate for example, during small group sessions when staff use Makaton signing as they talk to the children.

Children enjoy being creative as they use large lumps of clay, adding water and hammering it into shape. They use mathematical language during their project on growth, where they are measured against the wall and discuss how many centimetres tall they are and who is the tallest. They learn about nature and the world around them during planting activities, when they feed and stroke the guinea pig and when they measure their African land snails, to see how much they have grown. Children are well behaved and respond appropriately to expectations of their behaviour. They are able to share and take turns during play and respond positively to well-established routines, taking responsibility for their environment as they help tidy away toys. Children learn about sustainability and protecting the earth's natural resources as they add items to the re-cycling station.

Children's good health and well-being is promoted effectively. They actively participate in physical play and exercise every day. For example, on the day of the inspection, they danced energetically to music outside and then played musical statues. Staff implement and teach the children high standards of hygiene practice. This helps prevent the spread of infection. For example, children are gently reminded to wash their hands after stroking the guinea pig, and following a project on health, they know that warm water and soap are the best way of getting rid of germs. Staff demonstrate a clear awareness of protocols regarding specific health needs of individual children, and ensure children's individual needs are met for example, supporting children who have allergies. Snacks, which include fresh fruit and vegetables, are healthy and nutritious and parents are supplied with good advice about how to ensure the contents of their child's packed lunch, complies with the pre-school's healthy eating policy. Children are aware of when they need to drink for example, after the efforts they put into their dancing, and strategically placed jugs of fresh drinking water and cups, ensure that they remain well hydrated. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe. For example, during an emergency evacuation practice, they leave the building with minimum fuss and line up while their names are called. When the children are asked if they understand why they have to practise the drill, they reply, 'because there might be a fire and we have to keep safe.'

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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## **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