

Little Fishes Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	402043
Inspection date	19/09/2011
Inspector	Angela Jackson

Setting address	St Mary's Church Centre, Churchgate Street, Old Harlow, Essex, CM17 0JR
Telephone number	01279 432135
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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*.

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

Little Fishes Pre-School was registered in 1992. It is managed by a voluntary management committee. The pre-school operates from the main hall within St Mary's Church Centre in Old Harlow, Essex. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9.15am to 12.15pm during school term times. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 31 children from two to under five years on roll. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. All staff 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 good.

Children have a thoroughly enjoyable time at the pre-school. Staff successfully plan for each child's individual needs and overall, children make very good progress in their learning and development. The staff are skilled in self-evaluating and make sure that priorities for development are identified and acted upon. As a result, children benefit from a continually improving environment and innovative activities which are interesting and fun to take part in. Relationships with parents are strong with families joining children in celebrations and events throughout the year.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- record full details of evacuation drills in a fire log book noting any problems encountered and how they were resolved.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are well safeguarded and protected as there are very good policies and procedures in place and staff are well qualified. All staff have a thorough understanding of child protection issues and how to manage any concerns they may have about children's welfare. There are effective systems in place to check and vet the suitability of all adults that come into contact with children. The robust recruitment and induction process means that children are cared for by staff who put their safety at the centre of their work. This helps to make children feel safe

and secure. In addition, daily and ongoing risk assessments identify potential hazards that staff effectively and promptly eliminate. This means that children are able to move freely and safely around the premises and through to the outdoor area. Children have ready access to a wide range of activities and resources and staff effectively place themselves to make sure they are on hand to support children in their learning. Toys and equipment are in good condition and provide an inspiring variety of experiences. For example, children spend concentrated amounts of time trying out a number of different ways to pick up pasta and pulses in order to fill up pots and other containers.

There are strong working partnerships with parents whose views are taken into very good account in the process of self-evaluation. The manager and staff have high aspirations for providing outstanding care and learning opportunities for all children. They continually reflect on what they do and accurately and rigorously monitor the impact of their work on children. As a result, the provision is fresh and exciting for children to enjoy and make the most of. Parents provide useful information about children's interests and needs. As a result, children are well supported and make good progress, especially in their social interactions and emotional development. There is a continual drive to raise children's understanding of diversity. Families are actively encouraged to participate in celebrations and traditions that reflect different cultures and beliefs. For example, the harvest festival service in the adjoining church and the Japanese Kodomo-no-hi 'children's day' event. Partnerships with other providers and professionals makes sure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language, are effectively supported. This means that all children are fully included and thrive in the pre-school.

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

Parents very quickly see the difference that coming to the pre-school has on their children. They comment on how children get up early and look forward to their day. Children make friends easily and grow in confidence and maturity within a matter of weeks. Children are very happy and flourish in the warm and welcoming environment. Within this secure and comfortable setting, children take part in fun activities that are planned to raise their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They follow a few simple rules, such as no running indoors and learn about road safety through visits and through role play outside. Children sit in the wheelie cars and drive around the roundabout made of old tyres, going into the garage to fill up with petrol. In the garage office, other children sit at the desk filling in forms attached to clipboards. Staff promote further learning of the outside world and how to manage risk through careful and well-timed intervention. They discuss the volume of petrol needed and how much it costs. This is one of many well-planned and initiated activities that successfully support children's learning across a number of different areas. In addition, it helps children learn skills for the future. Children develop excellent communication skills and use number in role play that reflects everyday situations and life in the community.

Children's good health is paramount to staff. The foods from the snack bar, from a planned menu that includes cereal bars, milk and water. Before sitting down to eat, children follow the well-established routines for good hygiene. They go off to wash their hands independently in the full knowledge that they are getting rid of the germs that will make them ill. Children learn about how their bodies work and the effect of physical activity through well-planned keep fit sessions. They participate in a wide range of indoor and outdoor exercise that develops their coordination, balance and running skills. Excellent use is made of the premises with children excitedly participating in parachute games and music and dance. They go out to explore the rich natural environment surrounding the pre-school where they are also able to play and run with plenty of room to stretch and move around safely.

Children's knowledge of the natural world is enhanced and extended through visits from outside specialists, such as staff and an animal handling company. Children meet and welcome, animals from the rainforest, such as, snakes, giant snails and millipedes. Children learn to care for other creatures and to find out about wildlife from other countries. They readily engage in holding and carefully handling, the different reptiles. This fosters children's interest and respect for other living animals and life in other countries.

Children are extremely well behaved. They play together in small and larger groups, taking turns and sharing. They understand the boundaries and respect themselves and each other. Children enthusiastically help to tidy up. They take control of dustpans and brushes going round and clearing up the bits of pasta and straw used in some of the activities they had participated in earlier. Children learn about sustainability. They look at the story book pictures of how straw is used on a farm and make their own collective version using the natural materials. Afterwards, children pick up the bits of leftover straw for use later.

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

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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
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	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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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