

Caterpillars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Lynn A Hartigan

Setting address Birch C of E School, School Hill, Birch, COLCHESTER, CO2
OLZ
Telephone number 07840 857592
Email admin@caterpillarspreschool.org
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Caterpillars Pre-School has been registered since 2010. It is a committee-run pre-school with a manager in place for the day-to-day running of the setting. The pre-school operates from a purpose-built cabin within the grounds of Birch Church of England School in Birch, Essex. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school is registered to care for 16 children at any one time, aged between two and five years. There are currently 15 children on roll during school term times. The pre-school opens from 9am until 12pm on a Wednesday and Friday and 9am until 1pm on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register. There are strategies in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs three members of staff, including the manager, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The pre-school is outstanding and ensures children progress exceptionally well through the Early Years Foundation Stage. The provision for the children's emotional well-being is also extremely good. Children are happy, settled and have immense fun in an exceptionally welcoming environment, offering an abundance of resources that are easily accessible. Excellent opportunities are in place to communicate with parents, and effective partnership enhances the children's time at pre-school. Staff value children's uniqueness and great emphasis is given to inclusion to ensure their individual development is supported. However, sufficient challenges are not always offered at snack time. Robust systems are in place for self-evaluation and continuous improvement, which ensures the outcomes for children are positive.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continuing to evaluate the organisation of snack and meal times and storage of lunch boxes to ensure every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning experience.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively as robust systems are in place to ensure they are cared for by staff that have completed all required suitability checks.

Comprehensive policies that provide clear guidance and awareness among the staff ensure children's well-being is protected. Staff are committed to training, ensuring they are able to extend their knowledge with regard to child protection issues.

Completion of superb risk assessments ensure potential hazards are identified and promptly addressed. Excellent staff ratios and stringent supervision enable children to play and learn within a very safe and secure environment. Enthusiastic staff have created very appealing, defined play areas. The pre-school is very welcoming for both children and their families. Superb opportunities are available to the children to play and explore in an exciting outdoor play space, which includes a wooded area where children have great fun enjoying 'bear hunts'.

The manager is extremely enthusiastic and is exceptionally successful in inspiring her team of staff to strive for excellence. The morale of the staff is very good and they have high expectations and ambitious plans to ensure continued improvement. Robust evaluation and monitoring enable the staff to realistically target plans for the future, for example, development of the outdoor environment to include shelter for a cosy book reading area.

A systematic system is in place to document the pre-school's development. This is in the form of a learning journey and uses photographic evidence to document changes made. This successfully includes parents' and children's views. The pre-school are superbly supported by the local primary school and children's centre.

The pre-school is highly committed to working in partnership with others and is proactive in taking the lead role and establishing themselves with other settings. For example, the staff visit other settings children may attend and superb links are in place to ensure continuity of care and transition.

Staff have developed strong partnerships with parents and carers. For example, opportunities for effective communication are established. These include a website, text messages, newsletters and a parent handbook. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting by friendly staff, who happily chat to parents on a daily basis. Extensive information is readily available on notice boards. Parents and carers speak highly of every aspect of care offered to their children.

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

The manager and her staff have an extremely good understanding of how children learn and develop. The exceptionally child-friendly environment strongly reflects the children's backgrounds and wider community. For example, the provision of

quality toys and resources, superb posters and photographs displayed, positively promote diversity and enable children to embrace differences and individuality. Planning of activities is strongly influenced by the children attending and they are positively encouraged and supported to initiate their own play and learning.

High quality observations are documented within each child's learning journey, which are readily available daily for parents, who are invited to regularly comment. Children are also encouraged to view their own files and add pictures and comments. Children's next steps of learning are effectively documented to guide future planning of activities.

Resources are stored low down to ensure every child can easily access equipment of their choice. Designated areas, such as cosy book corners, quiet comfortable dens, a communication area and home corner, are inspiring and offer children many opportunities to lose themselves in a world of imaginary play. They sit comfortably in the den to enjoy stories, and the provision of clipboards and paper encourages children to write their own stories. Children thoroughly enjoy 'pirate' week. They dress up and learn different sounds to communicate. They follow simple pictorial clues to find hidden treasure and have great fun sitting in the pirate ship. Sound boxes are used to help children with speech and language difficulties, and superb pictorial timelines, prompts and different text are widely used throughout the pre-school.

Superb opportunities are available to discover and explore using sensory and natural materials within the quiet area. An abundance of materials are readily available to encourage mark making, both indoors and outdoors. They make patterns in the large trays of cornflour provided. They squeal with delight when mixing powder paint into puddles and watch the colours change.

The environment is conducive to learning and is rich in opportunities for children to develop their understanding of numbers and problem solving. For example, children are encouraged to match their shoes with the numbered waterproof boots and rain suits when playing outdoors. Staff encourage children to think about numbers within their everyday routines. For example, the snack monitor is required to count how many plates and cups are needed. Children show sustained levels of interest in the sequencing and sorting activities that are readily available.

Staff listen with interest to the children, who have formed close attachments. Staff are highly skilled and sensitive in their management of children and their behaviour. For example, a dispute over a toy is successfully concluded as skilful staff encourage children to resolve problems for themselves, while being on hand to support them. Children's behaviour is good and their relationships with the staff and their peers are excellent. Children have excellent manners and speak to one another with respect.

Children's health and safety are significantly enhanced by the robust policies in place. Children learn to take responsibility of their own personal needs through the everyday routines and projects completed. They can independently access the bathroom and know to wash hands following a visit to the toilet. Fun activities using glitter as germs, assists children in understanding the importance of good

hygiene practices. They have a good understanding about dental care as they learn about cleaning teeth and good foods, as a result of a 'healthy me' project. They are encouraged to take responsibility and make decisions about sensible clothing to wear outdoors, supported by staff.

Children enjoy fresh air daily as they use the outdoor environment all year round. Provision of rainy day resources ensure playing outdoors is exciting. They are able to inform the planning of activities and equipment provided, for example, requesting a construction area with sand and tools. Children show a strong sense of security and feel safe. They are beginning to show an excellent understanding of safety issues when helping in the preparation of snack. However, children's independence is not always maximised at meal times and the provision of lunch boxes should be evaluated to ensure safe storage of foods.

Diversity is reflected in every area of the pre-school. Posters depicting positive images prompt conversation and children are beginning to understand about the wider world through topic work and celebrations acknowledged within the planning. For example, they have immense fun learning about Diwali. They make clay pots with candles, cook barfi and taste Indian foods while listening to Indian music.

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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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