

The Commons Pre-School LLP

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY425329
Inspection date	28/11/2011
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting address	Commonswood Jmi School, The Commons, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, Hertfordshire, AL7 4RU
Telephone number	07766 407 317
Email	tina.covill@tesco.net
Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

The Commons Pre-school is one of two pre-schools run as a private partnership and registered in 2011. It operates from a modular building in the grounds of Commonswood School in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. The setting is accessible to all children and there is a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It is open each weekday during term-time only and sessions are from 8.45am to 11.45am, with an optional lunch club from 11.45am until 12.45pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 24 places and there are currently 40 children on roll who are within this age group. The setting serves the local and neighbouring communities. A small number of children attend other settings such as local nurseries and childminders. The setting maintains close links with the school on which it is sited. It currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The setting is also registered to offer care to children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are currently no children on roll in this age group.

The setting employs eight members of child care staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 and five at level 3 or above. One staff member has achieved Early Years Professional status. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting's thoughtful daily practice and their commitment to treating each child as an individual mean that all children are respected and develop a positive sense of self. Children make excellent progress and are always offered appropriate support, ensuring that their needs are consistently met and they can participate meaningfully. The setting's comprehensive procedures for self-evaluation enable them to build a thorough overview of their practice and develop practical action plans for continuous improvements, thereby maintaining a service which is highly responsive to children's needs. Caring, skilled staff confidently implement practical assessment and planning procedures, meaning that children are offered a creative variety of activities that closely reflect their interests and developmental needs. Excellent partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals ensure that individual children's needs are met and their welfare is well promoted.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing further the use of the outdoor play area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting's highly effective safeguarding procedures mean that children's well-being is significantly enhanced and their welfare is consistently promoted. All staff have attended relevant training and there are robust procedures to ensure their suitability. Comprehensive risk assessments and thorough daily safety checks mean that children's safety is carefully considered in all areas. Children gain an excellent understanding of keeping themselves and others safe. For example, they discuss the role of the emergency services and how to contact them, with staff incorporating this in children's role play to gently reinforce their knowledge.

The owners and all staff work to high standards and demonstrate a great warmth and energy for their work. Their conscientious self-evaluation enables them to develop clearly-targeted action plans. These are securely based on feedback from staff, parents and children, meaning that changes are well prioritised and lead to improvements in the outcomes for children. Recent changes include the re-siting of the quiet area so that this is more accessible to children. The promotion of equal opportunities is central to all areas of work. For example, the setting's daily procedures are under constant review to ensure that they reflect children's needs. Staff make excellent use of resources in order to promote children's development. For example, the main play areas are well organised, with accessible, appealing resources, encouraging children to explore and make independent choices. Children are offered a very good range of outdoor opportunities. For example, they engage in role play scenarios, develop physical skills as they use larger play equipment and develop early writing skills as they choose from a selection of writing materials. However, the outdoor play area is not yet used to the very optimum to offer children a fully extended range of opportunities.

Staff build excellent partnerships with parents and carers. They utilise a variety of communication methods to ensure that parents are exceptionally well informed of their children's progress and activities. For example, there are regular newsletters, an informative website and daily communication sheets. There is also practical information about the Early Years Foundation Stage and ways in which parents can support their child's learning. The setting has excellent procedures for liaising with other professionals. For example, they work closely with childminders, providing ongoing information and sharing assessments and daily strategies to ensure that children's care is consistent and their development promoted.

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

Children make excellent progress because staff have a comprehensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Practical, thorough assessment procedures enable staff to gain a clear understanding of each child's developmental needs and interests. These are also meticulously noted throughout each session and are fed into the activity planning, ensuring that every child's development is promoted. Children receive highly appropriate support from staff, enabling them to understand and participate meaningfully and resulting in children developing positive attitudes to learning. For example, staff talk with children about feelings and behaviour, using 'empathy dials' as a practical and sensitive way of encouraging children's understanding of feelings and the effects their behaviour has on others.

Children's emotional development is promoted as they develop secure, trusting relationships with staff and with their peers. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are gaining an excellent understanding of the expected standards of behaviour as they organise their play and readily share the resources, thus developing skills for use in future life. All children are highly valued as individuals and engage in an extensive range of activities and discussions that help them to value diversity and understand the cultures and lifestyles of others. For example, the celebration of a range of festivals is used as an opportunity for children to explore other beliefs and also to share their own customs and family traditions. The setting's excellent procedures for working with parents and others mean that children who speak English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are consistently offered highly appropriate support. For example, children and staff use greetings in other languages and use sign language as they sing favourite songs.

Excellent settling-in procedures mean that children settle quickly and feel welcome. For example, home visits before children start at the setting enable staff to gather information about individual children and to use this when planning the child's first sessions. Staff are skilled and observant, noting children's changing interests and extending these. For example, a staff member puts away the musical instruments, replacing them with a book and associated props; children are drawn to the table and become engrossed as they listen to the story, identifying the different fruits in the basket, learning new vocabulary, such as 'guava' and 'mango' and going on to experiment by carrying the basket of fruit on their heads. Children's learning is further promoted because staff make very good use of all incidental learning opportunities. For example, children playing in a 'hospital' role play area fill in charts, discuss their patient's progress on the telephone and go on to use a stethoscope, with a staff member encouraging them to discuss how heart beats change according to rest and exercise.

Exceptional staff support and the provision of appropriate resources mean that children are encouraged to be active learners. For example, staff note children using the 'nature detectives box' to look for bugs and provide laminated pictures of these to support children in identifying them and to encourage further questions

and discussions. Activities are creatively adapted to ensure that all children are included and their interests are used to capture their attention. For example, when children asked for a 'builder's site', staff worked with them to transform the role play area, going on to note that several boys were taking the tools outside and so extending this to create a dedicated outdoor building site, where children enjoy putting on hard hats, exploring the tools and building.

Children are offered numerous opportunities to learn about the uses of information and communication technology and therefore gain further skills for the future. For example, they use a computer, digital cameras and calculators as part of their daily play. Children gain a very good awareness of the relevance of a wide range of health practices. For example, their understanding of the importance of a healthy diet is promoted as they participate in discussions and cooking activities. The thoughtful planning and organisation means that children's transitions to school are supported. For example, children enjoy trying on the school uniform, visiting the school and also participating in well-structured additional activities at the end of each session.

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
--	---

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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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