

The Funhouse Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Edgar Hastings
Setting address	Janet Duke Primary School, Markhams Chase, Basildon, Essex, SS15 5LS
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

The Funhouse Pre-School originally opened in 1995 and relocated in April 2011, having been re-registered by Ofsted, when it took possession of new, purpose built accommodation situated in the grounds of Janet Duke Primary School, in Basildon, Essex. The pre-school has its own secure, outdoor play area. Opening times are 8.45am to 11.45am and 12.30pm until 3.30pm, Monday to Friday, during term time only.

A maximum of 26 children aged between two and five years may attend at any one time. There are currently 79 children on roll aged from two to five years. Currently 56 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local community and wider areas, and supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or difficulties, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school employs seven staff and all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager and four others all hold National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 3, and two more hold NVQs at level 2. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and has close links with the host primary school.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make good progress because of the good quality of provision that supports their development in all areas of learning. The new and excellent purpose-built accommodation has high quality resources, enabling children to thrive in an exciting learning environment. Promotion of equality is at the heart of the pre-school's work and ensures all children are fully integrated because the skilled staff know their children well, and are deployed very effectively to meet their needs. The promotion of learning, development and welfare is carried out successfully through highly effective partnerships which support all children. The leadership team have amply demonstrated their ability to develop the pre-school and have the capacity to maintain good continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the use of observations and assessments to better identify learning priorities and help plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child
- develop the use of self-evaluation to better identify areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding procedures are good. The safety and well-being of the children are given a high priority through well-established policies and procedures that are in place and reviewed annually. Regular risk assessments are carried out to ensure the premises and equipment are safe for children to use. There are effective procedures in place to ensure the safety of children while on the premises, and good hygiene practices protect children from infection. All welfare needs are met well, and there are strict recruiting procedures to ensure the suitability of newly appointed staff. Staff attend safeguarding training, first aid and fire safety courses and understand their roles clearly. There are staff rotas for first aid administration, and fire drills and evacuation procedures are carried out at regular intervals. Parents express their confidence in knowing their children are looked after in a secure and safe environment, and that children exhibit safe behaviour in their play. Staff are vigilant at all times both in the indoor and outdoor areas .

The leadership team have been successful in attracting local authority funding for the establishment of the new pre-school accommodation. They had input into the design so that the facility meets the needs of pre-school children well. It is exceptionally well resourced and furnished with colourful and substantial furniture and equipment both inside and outdoors, which is deployed extremely well. The self-evaluation process involves all staff, who meet regularly to discuss issues for development, as well as curriculum planning issues. This results in an accurate plan of development proprieties. However, this process is relatively new and is not yet fully embedded. Assessment procedures are developing through the use of progress trackers but arrangements do not highlight the next steps all groups of children need to take to extend their learning further. All staff hold appropriate qualifications, have received training in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and are keen to update their knowledge and skills through attendance at locally organised training courses. The Special Needs Co-ordinator has received full training in this area, and another member of staff is also undertaking this training. Both are currently engaged in a signing course in order to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and this demonstrates the excellent level of commitment the pre-school staff have towards creating an inclusive learning environment. Children also benefit from the excellent links established with a number of external agencies, and the advice and guidance provided for their personal development. Cultural development is promoted well through many of the books and resources provided for the children on a daily basis to encourage positive attitudes to diversity, as well as through the celebration of festivals such Diwali, Chinese New Year, Christmas and demonstrations of Indian dancing.

Good links with parents ensure that the pre-school works in partnership with them to support children's development and achievement. Information on progress and

achievement is documented in learning journey folders, which are readily accessible to parents at any time. Parents say how much they appreciate the daily contact with the pre-school staff to discuss children's well-being, and how pleased they are with their progress. Children settle quickly and rapidly become confident, developing social skills and establishing strong relationships with other children and staff. Some parents volunteer their services at different times and help out in a number of ways and for a variety of events, including cake sales and wrapping Christmas presents. Parents are kept informed of activities and developments by regular newsletters, and their views sought at times through questionnaires. The pre-school enjoys excellent links with the host school, and children get to make frequent visits to watch plays and celebrations. Transitional arrangements ensure children are prepared well for the time when the majority of them transfer into the Reception class.

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

Children confidently enter the pre-school and show how familiar they are with the routines. They are warmly welcomed by staff who know them well, and relationships are clearly strong. Children self-register when they arrive by carefully selecting their own name card and then placing it on the magnetic board. The day starts when children sit together to talk about the days of the week and take the opportunity to develop their counting skills. The learning environment is stimulating and well organised with activities carefully set out before their arrival. There is a good balance of adult-led and free choice activities for children to access both indoors and outside. Activities are planned carefully to stimulate children's imagination and are often linked to specific topics such as the farm, or the natural environment. Painting the outline of a robin captures the imagination of a group of boys and girls and they embellish their work by gluing feathers creatively. There is evidence around the room of creative activities the children have undertaken, with samples put in their learning journey folders to demonstrate evidence of their development and progress. Children show good levels of concentration and happily work with each other, taking turns when appropriate, and showing obvious enjoyment in their engagement. They respond well and listen carefully to instructions and show good levels of cooperation with one another and when engaging in putting equipment away. Adults expertly engage children in conversation during activities, and participate well in play with children, while extending their learning at the same time. Relationships are strong and trusting and this enables children to engage willingly in learning and to join in activities. They feel safe and secure and show good self confidence.

Children are learning to use and apply their counting skills, and staff exploit many opportunities to build on children's understanding of numbers throughout the session. For example, staff use bears to encourage children to compare size, and to count. Staff also use angled mirrors which duplicate the number of bears to extend their counting ability, with an element of fun at the same time. The mark-making area provides a range of interesting activities that encourage children to

engage in early writing skills. Some of the older children are forming letters to write words as captions to their pictures such as 'cat'. A range of information and communication technology equipment enables children to develop their hand and eye coordination and to have fun as they try to load rocks into railway trucks. Activities that encourage children to draw or colour using crayons assist in the development of their fine motor and manipulative skills. Social skills are developing well as children sit together at snack time, when healthy eating is effectively promoted. Children are learning to follow good hygiene practices such as hand washing at the appropriate times, and disposing of used tissues in the bin. Children generally make good progress, especially in personal and social development, and this is preparing them well for the next stage of their education.

Children greatly enjoy their time in the pre-school because of the exciting and stimulating range of activities offered to them in a safe and secure environment. The book corner is popular with children, who enjoy exploring books of well known stories. The pre-school lending library enables parents and children to select books to read at home together. Opportunities to be active are provided daily in the secure and well-equipped outdoor area. Children enjoy developing ball skills, such as throwing and kicking, riding wheeled toys around the marked out road, climbing and sliding, and playing games like hide and seek. Visits to the local farm supports topics undertaken, and hunting for mini beasts in the bark chipping area provides valuable first-hand experiences of the natural environment. Children have a good understanding of how to stay safe and staff encourage and promote safe play effectively. The school crossing patrol visits the pre-school to talk about road safety issues, and to show children how they can keep themselves safe when crossing the road.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
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	1
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	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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