

Little Hands Preschool Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 203764
Inspection date 02/02/2012
Inspector Sarah Williams

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Little Hands Pre-school Nursery is privately owned. It opened in 1994 and operates from the main hall within a community hall in Witham, Essex. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Operating times are from 9am until 2.55pm.

There are currently 70 children aged from two to five years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions or full day care. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

The pre-school employs 11 staff, all of whom, 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 inadequate.

Children are generally happy and settled and enjoy their time at the setting, making progress in their learning and development, however, lack of systematic observation and assessment means that records do not effectively show individual children's achievements or identify next steps, which are relevant and meaningful to each child. Children with additional needs are supported, however, the lack of a key person system for all children attending, means children's needs may not be fully met in all cases. The self-evaluation lacks any meaningful action plan to prioritise action which will bring about further improvement. Actions arising from the last inspection have not been fully addressed. There are breaches of specific welfare requirements in relation to meeting the requirements for keeping appropriate records regarding risk assessments and details of children's key workers. Policies and procedures do not reflect current practice, therefore, do not meet Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Consequently, the management of the pre-school is not effectively safeguarding children's welfare. Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

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What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- ensure that staff have appropriate training, skills and knowledge to enable them provide care and education for children which effectively meets the early years foundation stage welfare requirements (Suitable people) 24/02/2012
- assign each child a key person and undertake sensitive observational assessment to ensure that each child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to their individual needs (Organisation) 24/02/2012
- implement a system to complete the risk assessment procedure by recording action taken following a review or after hazards are identified, showing what action was taken and by whom (Documentation) 24/02/2012
- maintain records required for the safe and efficient management of the setting: this relates to the names of the children's key workers (Documentation) 24/02/2012

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- explore ways of developing children's independence by involving them fully in routines such as snack time
- develop links with other settings attended by children to ensure continuity of care by maintaining a two way flow of information
- develop a culture of reflective practice which involves all staff, to enable them to meet the needs of individual children, and includes an effective system of self evaluation which identifies the setting's strengths and prioritises areas for development in order to improve outcomes for children

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The managers and staff have a limited understanding of the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and consequently, children's needs are not fully met in line with EYFS welfare and learning and development requirements. The setting has an adequate child protection policy and staff know what to do if there are concerns about a child's well-being. Children are protected as safeguarding procedures are robust and details about the staff's enhanced disclosures through the Criminal Records Bureau are available. At the last inspection the pre-school was recommended to improve hand washing facilities and the food provided to enhance outcomes for children's health. The setting has improved these aspects of care by providing new hand washing facilities which meet requirements, and improving the variety and quality of food and drink offered to children at snack time. Risk assessments are in place for the premises, equipment and any outings, whilst these checks identify potential hazards there is no procedure for reporting and dealing with hazards or recording what action was

taken, therefore, further action is needed to meet requirements in this area. Fire drill records have now been updated in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage and to reflect current practice, improving children's safety.

The setting is welcoming for children and their families. Children have space to hang coats and have a named space for their lunchboxes and other possessions. Staff gather information about individual needs and home backgrounds before children attend, but no key person system is in place, thereby, potentially missing vital links to meet children's needs fully, on an ongoing basis. This is a breach of welfare requirements. Support is provided for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example, speech and language difficulties, and individual education plans are in place, which are reviewed regularly. Children benefit from positive partnerships with local schools which assists their transition into full-time education, however, links with other settings attended by children have not been established, thereby, potentially failing to provide continuity of care for some children. Children can choose from a good selection of resources, both indoors and outside, which are regularly rotated. They are sensitively supported by a good ratio of adults, including students on placement or work experience and a team of qualified staff, offering one to one support in areas, such as, computer skills, cutting, art and craft and exploring books. The lack of a robust system for undertaking observations and assessments, fails to make best use of the staff's skills and qualifications, as only senior staff complete children's records. Staff develop informal, friendly relationships with parents and carers and open evenings allow for discussion regarding children's progress, however, children's developmental records are not consistently completed in a timely manner, therefore, are not a meaningful record of achievements or clearly next steps in learning. Parents are given a booklet explaining the setting's ethos of learning through play, and a handbook which includes policies and other operational information. Newsletters and a notice board provide further information and keep parents informed about key dates and events. A book share scheme and two travelling teddies help forge links between home and nursery and help parents and family members to be involved in children's learning. However, there is no clear avenue for parents to contribute ideas to aid future planning for individual children. Parents' views have been sought via a questionnaire, but these responses are not currently included in the setting's evaluation. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection are happy with the pre-school and say their children are eager to attend.

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

Children are happy and settled and they demonstrate this by confidently moving around the setting, accessing play equipment and seeking help from staff when needed. The staff are approachable and address the children appropriately, listening to their responses and providing ideas when required. Children notice that the play house has more than the permitted number of children and are eager to tell staff that there are five children when there should only be four. Children sit with a staff member to go through a book, changed weekly, learning valuable pre-reading skills and developing vocabulary. Children are invited to create a picture

related to the story of Red Riding Hood, using a finger painting technique, exploring colour, shape and form. Staff praise and encourage children and ensure that all children are included in activities, with the result that all children are engaged and purposeful. Planning is linked to the six areas of learning and includes both indoor and outdoor play, free-flow when weather permits. There are plans to offer a wider range of outdoor activities, such as, planting and cultivating, as the warmer weather approaches.

Children develop their physical skills as they use wheeled toys outside, enjoying movement in the open air. Following the last inspection, snack time has been improved to provide a varied and nutritious menu with choices for children, based on healthy options. They have opportunities to try new tastes, such as, exotic fruits, as part of the celebration of multicultural festivals. At lunch times, children manage their own lunchboxes, giving them some of the skills they will need for the future. They are sometimes allowed to help prepare snack, for example making sandwiches or cutting bananas, but some opportunities to develop independence, such as, washing their own cups and plates, are not taken.

Children's behaviour is good and they respond well to staff's instructions and requests. They join in enthusiastically at circle time with favourite songs and rhymes, and count numbers of children present. They are happy to share and take turns, and begin to take account of the feelings of their friends. Children show that they feel safe and well protected, and have confidence and self-esteem boosted as they play and work in small or larger groups, or independently.

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?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	4

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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