

Lithos Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Christine Bonnett

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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

Lithos Pre-School is one of five pre-schools in Camden directly managed by the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA). It opened in 2003 and re-registered at their present site in 2011. The Pre-School operates from a room within The Lithos Tenant's Community Hall in the London Borough of Camden. It is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 20 children aged from two years to the end of the early years age group. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9.30am to 1.25pm, term time only. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school employs four staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, safe and generally make good progress in their learning. The well qualified and enthusiastic team of practitioners focus on promoting each child's well-being, learning and development. Their excellent engagement with parents further contributes towards good outcomes for children and helps to ensure their needs are met. Staff work hard to enable children to make decisions and to develop extremely good levels of self-esteem. The manager and her staff team demonstrate a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- create an environment rich in print where children can learn about words, for example, using names and labels
- support children in using a range of information and communication technology, such as cameras, computers and programmable toys.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues and how to make a referral if concerns arise about a child's welfare. They are safety conscious and routinely check the whereabouts of each child throughout the session. The robust recruitment procedure helps to ensure that all staff have the necessary checks to enable them to work with children. The risk assessments on the playroom and garden are thorough and help to minimise potential hazards.

The staff are a highly motivated workforce and they maintain their enthusiasm throughout the day. They deploy themselves well in order to monitor the well-

being of the children and promote their learning. They provide an environment that is conducive to learning because the good range of resources and play equipment is stored at child height. As result, this promotes easy access and promotes children's independence. Staff routinely join in the activities to make them fun and consequently the children become enthusiastic learners.

Staff promote equality and diversity well. They value all children for their differences and actively develop their interest in other cultures and beliefs. Children have opportunities to participate in a variety of world faith festivals to help them gain an understanding of the wider world. The display of photographs of the children and their families also help them to learn about and respect differences and to develop a positive self-image. The staff help to make the children's time at the group fun and enjoyable because they treat all the children with care and kindness.

The manager and her staff team share a clear vision for the group's future. They are forward thinking and always put the needs and interests of the children and their families at the heart of planned developments. For example, the recent move to the new premises came about through issues raised by parents. Staff routinely self-evaluate and reflect on their practice to make positive changes. These include rearranging the layout of the room to enable children to engage more easily with particular activities. In addition, the children contribute their views and suggestions about the group and recently had the opportunity to select new play equipment. Plans for the future include expanding the group to enable more children to benefit from attending.

The staff establish highly effective partnerships with parents and carers. Parents are heavily involved in the decision-making on key issues. Their views and comments are welcomed and are actively taken on board to enhance the provision and improve outcomes for children. Regular meetings with parents ensure that they are aware of their child's progress and to how to support learning at home. Staff and parents work closely together to devise strategies to manage any particular issues that may arise in order to provide consistent and appropriate care for children. A parent forum is being established to further ensure that parents and carers engage at every level with the running of the group. There are currently no children attending the group who attend other early years settings or who need support from other agencies. However, staff are aware of the need to work in partnership with all other parties if the need arises.

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

Children thoroughly enjoy their play. They have fun and become active learners. They arrive happily and separate from their parents willingly, showing an eagerness to attend. The staff's good knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements means that children generally make good progress in all areas of learning. Observations of the children at play enable staff to assess each child's stage of development in each area of learning and to identify

and plan their next steps in learning. They then tailor activities to meet the individual needs of each child in order for them to make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Children's development files clearly show the rich variety of activities they enjoy, and the progress they make.

Children develop a good range of skills to support their future learning. They develop a love of books because the staff make books easily accessible and read stories to children on request. Children paint and draw to practise mark making and their work is on display to brighten the environment and to show that it is valued. However the environment lacks signs and labels to support children's growing understanding that print carries meaning. Numeracy and problem solving is well embedded into the routine of the day. For example, children think about and count the number of chairs needed at the snack table. The group has some programmable toys and equipment, such as calculators and telephones. However, children are not always encouraged to engage with them to develop early skills in information and communication technology.

Children learn the value of leading a healthy lifestyle. They confidently relate that fruit is healthy to eat and too many sweets are not. The group provides the five recommended portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Children are able to climb, slide, play ball games and generally run around for fresh air and exercise in the garden. The children also enjoy and benefit from weekly yoga sessions that focus on stretching and breathing exercises. Children learn to take care of their own personal hygiene. They understand why they need to wash their hands before their snack and at other times throughout the session.

All children show an extremely strong sense of belonging. They display very high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Staff aim to empower children to stand up for themselves and challenge unfairness in a positive manner. For example, they are encouraged to say 'I don't like it' if other children are unkind to them. This helps to create a harmonious environment in which children behave extremely well. Children play contentedly by themselves and collaborate well together in small groups. They take responsibility for their actions because they know what is expected of them, such as clearing away their own plate at snack time. Children also influence the routine of the session, for example, as they confidently ask staff if they can play one of their favourite games, such as musical chairs. Children enjoy a good range of experiences that help them learn how to keep safe. For example, staff show them how to handle scissors without endangering themselves or others. Children also remind each other not to run indoors. As a result, they show they feel safe in the group and with the staff.

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	3
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	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	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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