

Cuddles Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Lara Hickson

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Cuddles Pre-School was registered in 2011. The pre-school operates from a community hall on the Fleet estate in Dartford, Kent. Children have access to the main hall, a lounge area, and there is a separate kitchen area and separate toilets. There is a fully enclosed outside area for outdoor play activities. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times and sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm every day.

The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 42 children in the early years age group, at any one time; 21 of whom may be aged under three years. Currently there are 43 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are eight members of staff, seven of whom work with the children and of these five are qualified to level 3. All staff hold a current first aid certificate. The pre-school receives support from the Setting Improvement Person (SIP) from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are progressing very well in most aspects of their learning as a result of the pre-school staff's knowledge, skills and support. Staff know the children well and plan a generally successful range of activities to meet the needs of the children. Newly introduced tracking systems are working well to highlight where children are in their learning and development, any support they may require and any gaps in their learning. Partnerships with parents and other outside agencies enable the pre-school to meet the individual needs of the children, including those with any additional needs. The staff team demonstrates a very positive capacity for improvement and continually reflects on the effectiveness of the service they provides.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve opportunities for letter recognition and writing during role-play and other activities
- review the organisation of large group activities, such as, story time to ensure that the needs of children of different ages and stages of development are met during these shared activities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding matters and have established clear procedures for dealing with any concerns regarding child protection. Risk assessments clearly identify hazards and any action taken by staff to minimise these. These are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are effective in minimising any potential hazards to children and adults. Children practise the emergency evacuation procedure each term so they are prepared for an emergency should it arise. Clear procedures are in operation regarding arrival and collection of children and visitors to the setting, which further promote children's ongoing safety.

A wide range of resources and toys are available in the indoor and outdoor environments. These are used successfully to promote children's development across all six areas of learning. Toys are in good condition and suitable for the ages and stages of children. Inclusion is actively promoted by staff through offering a good range of resources which reflect different cultural backgrounds, religions, languages and disabilities. All children are highly valued and additional support from outside agencies is obtained where necessary, to ensure children's individual needs are met. Partnerships with outside agencies are well developed and the level of support given to children with English as an additional language or special educational needs is excellent. For example, a contact book is used for parents with English as an additional language. Staff feel that this extends the communication channels and enables these parents to feel fully involved in their child's learning.

Parents are happy with the pre-school and praise effective settling-in procedures and the friendly, approachable staff team. Parents are invited to look through their child's developmental profile at any time and staff are looking at additional ways to involve parents with the ongoing observation and assessment process. Newsletters are sent out regularly and these inform parents of changes to the setting and forthcoming events and topics. Parent questionnaires and the Parent Involvement Group feedback is used to identify areas that the pre-school could improve as well as to confirm what parents find valuable.

The self evaluation systems in place clearly identify the changes the setting has made to improve outcomes for children and additional areas it is planning to develop further. The Setting Improvement Person (SIP) comes into the setting to review practice regularly and is on hand at any time to offer advice and support to the group. The management team has a strong vision regarding the ongoing development of the setting. Deployment of staff is excellent in both the indoor and outdoor environments and ensures that the safety and learning needs of children are effectively met. For example, staff sit with the children and join in their conversations cleverly asking open-ended questions to extend children's communication, understanding and vocabulary. Training needs are identified through informal discussions at staff meetings and through regular supervision.

Documentation is maintained to a good standard and all records required for the

safe and efficient management of the pre-school are available. A comprehensive range of written policies and procedures are in place and these are regularly updated to reflect changes in legislation and clearly underpin the setting's practices.

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

Children are happy, relate well to staff and really enjoy their time at the pre-school. There is a good balance of adult-led and child initiated activities and children actively engage in the broad range of indoor and outdoor activities on offer. Children have good opportunities to make effective progress across all areas of their learning and development. During the settling in period the key person takes the opportunity to inform parents about all aspects of the provision and to find out about the individual needs of their key child. An 'all about me' form is completed with parents and incorporates children's interests, favourite toys and activities. Staff use this information to identify children's starting points. The children's key persons make observations to track children's individual progress and plan for the next steps in their learning. They highlight which children require more support or additional challenges and successfully promote differentiation in small groups as children's individual stages are known so well by their key worker.

Children enjoy looking independently at the wide range of books and listen to stories staff read to them both on a one to one basis and in small groups. The book area is inviting and used well by the children. However the planned whole group story sessions and circle time are not always organised effectively to ensure all children are fully engaged. As a result some children display a few minor behavioural issues. Children with English as an additional language are soundly supported through the use of signs, pictures and symbols. Future skills such as listening and speaking to an audience are fostered through planned and spontaneous activities. Puppets are introduced as a way of extending children's communication skills. A member of staff cleverly uses the puppet to talk to the children about what they did at the weekend. In response children happily share the news of what they do with their families. Counting and problem solving skills are encouraged extremely well by staff in both the indoor and outdoor environments. For example, children are encouraged to count their steps when they walk along the balance beam, their jumps on the trampoline or the wooden people figures they use to form a line. Staff support children's counting skills and extend their development by introducing their counting further or asking them to sort objects into groups. Children have opportunities to mark make using a variety of different media. However there are few labels around the setting to promote children's recognition of letters and limited opportunities for writing during role-play.

Behaviour within the setting is generally managed extremely well by staff who understand the need to get down to a child's level and use age and stage appropriate language and strategies. Positive behaviour, good manners and turn taking are promoted which helps the children to establish close relationships with

their peers. The staff team promotes children's understanding of how to keep safe through discussions and activities in both the indoor and outdoor environments. Where necessary they reinforce the setting rules to promote children's ongoing safety.

Children move freely around the hall from one activity to another and confidently make decisions about what they would like to play with from the selection available. The well organised snack bar system supports children to serve themselves and they are able to make decisions about when and what they wish to eat or drink. They are encouraged to make healthy choices. Children know to wash their hands, at the portable sink prior to snack time, as good hygiene practice.

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	2
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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