

Little Explorers Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY438275

Inspection date

30/05/2012

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Setting address

Greenstead Community Centre, Hawthorn Avenue,
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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

Little Explorers Pre-School was registered in 2011. It operates from rooms within Greenstead Community Centre in Colchester, Essex. There is a secure garden for outdoor activities. The pre-school opens on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9.15am to 2.15pm, during term time.

A maximum of 22 children may attend at any one time and there are currently 25 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school has strategies in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of staff, including the manager, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications to level 3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff have a good knowledge of each child's individual needs and children are cared for in an effectively organised, child-centred learning environment. As a result, children are generally safe and secure, enjoy their learning and make good progress in their development. Partnerships with parents and other agencies involved with the children are good, helping to make sure that the needs of all children and families are met. A culture of reflective practice and evaluation by the manager and staff ensure that priorities for future development are identified and acted on. This demonstrates their 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:

- review the risk assessment to cover anything with which a child may come into contact, this refers to sun cream in children's bags and potato plants growing in the garden
- enhance the learning environment by paying attention to labelling, images and displays to stimulate children's imagination and curiosity in the world around them.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are fully aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and are confident in dealing with any concerns. Parents are informed of safeguarding procedures before children attend. Vetting and recruitment procedures are robust and copies

of contracts, qualifications and disclosure numbers are held on file. There is a good induction system in place and special guidelines are issued to any volunteers or visitors so that they know what is expected of them. All staff are qualified in first aid, to ensure that they are able to deal with any accidents efficiently. Good steps are taken by the staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children. For example, external doors and gates are locked, the identification documents of visitors are checked and records are made of their visits. The pre-school undertakes routine risk assessments of the premises, which cover most areas to keep children safe and secure. However, some areas have not been fully assessed and therefore pose a potential hazard to children. Risk assessments for trips and outings are comprehensive, which promotes children's safety.

Children with any additional needs are identified and supported well. Outside agencies, such as speech therapists, are contacted where extra support is needed. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported very well in conjunction with parents' wishes. There is a wealth of useful and interesting information available to parents on a large, well-presented notice-board sited. Together with a newsletter, prospectus and verbal interactions, all parents are kept very well informed of all activities and topics. Ideas suggested by the children are also available as these are posted weekly for all to see. Good systems are in place to inform parents of children's progress. For example, children's development profiles are available at all times and parents receive a regular written summary of progress. In addition to this, staff share informal chats with parents on a daily basis. They effectively encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. The pre-school makes links with other early years providers, such as childminders, and this ensures a good flow of communication to aid continuity of care and learning. Links are forged with some feeder schools to aid children's transition into school. The pre-school also introduces ideas to help children understand some of the routines they can expect, such as changing their shoes and clothes for physical education sessions and having a packed lunch.

The commitment to improvement is strongly evident as staff have had to adapt to new premises, which are much smaller. However, a positive approach has brought about improvements, such as a greater independence for children in the form of free-flow play due to the new layout. Leaders communicate their desire for continuous improvement and staff work very well as a team. They welcome any ideas that will benefit the children and take advantage of close working relationships with the adjacent children's centre. For example, children join in with drama sessions, which parents say have improved children's confidence and speech.

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

Children enthusiastically enter the bright and child-friendly environment where a wide range of stimulating equipment and activities are available. The playroom is decorated with children's work, posters and number lines. However, the quality of labelling and displays is inconsistent and misses some opportunities to inspire children's curiosity and to help them make sense of print in different contexts. The

activities reflect all areas of learning and effectively challenge children of various ages and abilities. Children have very good opportunities to make decisions as they have the freedom to play where they wish and for as long as they wish. Staff interact effectively with the children and have a good understanding of how they learn. Staff are on hand to assist and guide where needed, but remain unobtrusive so as to not interrupt the flow of play. Key persons gather detailed information from parents before children start, which enables them to gain children's starting points and plan their next steps in learning. As a result, children make good progress.

A self-registration system helps children recognise their name and the theme is continued on the coat pegs and at snack time. The quality of planning is good and ensures that each child receives enjoyable and challenging experiences. Planning is fluid and is based largely on children's interests and ideas, which staff skilfully weave into topics or themes. For example, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee has provoked much intrigue and children are fascinated by examining coins and stamps which display images of the Queen. Children use numbers in their play and concepts of more or less; heavy and light are explored through sand and water play. Children's communication, language and literacy skills develop well because staff use open-ended questions. Staff are genuinely interested in children and effectively encourage them to share their news at group times. As a result, children are confident in talking about their homes and families.

Children have good opportunities to develop their knowledge of the wider world. For example, they grow flowers, learning how to take care of them and spot mini-beasts in the garden, identifying them on a chart. Additionally, they learn about the local environment as they visit the library and local shops on a rota basis. Positive home links are encouraged by a 'fluffy cat' who can be taken home. Records of these home activities are kept with some very entertaining photographs showing the cat enjoying games or going out and about with the children. These are shared at circle time to everyone's delight. Staff also encourage children to take equipment home if they are particularly engrossed in playing with it.

Children develop an understanding of keeping themselves safe. For example, they participate in regular evacuation drills and understand and comply with routines that promote their safety, such as walking indoors and listening to staff's instructions. Health and hygiene is promoted through daily routines and there is a strong emphasis on healthy eating. Staff are aware that some children need guidance and help to behave in ways that will enhance their time at the pre-school and ensure that everyone is happy, for example, learning to take turns and share. They reward children with praise and encouragement and calmly and quietly reinforce and explain the codes of behaviour, which children are expected to follow. Children respond well to prompts, such as the bell and tidy up time song which signals the end of the session time. The pre-school promotes good self-esteem and feelings of responsibility by nominating a child helper each day. As a result, children's good behaviour is developing; they form some very firm friendships and are developing cooperation and friendly relationships with their peers.

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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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