Imperial College Early Years Education Centre

Imperial College Early Years Education Centre, 8 Princes Gardens, London, SW7 1NA

Inspection date	02/01/2013
Previous inspection date	26/07/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	**This inspection:**	1
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Staff are exceptionally well qualified in early years and use their skills and knowledge to promote excellent outcomes for children.
- Children make exceptional progress because staff know the children well and devise comprehensive and meticulous plans to meet their needs well.
- Management have excellent insight into the setting's strengths and areas for development and have developed highly ambitious targets to improve the provision and outcomes for children.
- Children have high levels of confidence and are enthusiastic learners because staff organise the environment to encourage strong levels of independence.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed staff interaction with children.
- The inspector tracked the progress of several children and examined planning and assessment records.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents and took their views into consideration during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the indoor and outdoor environments.

Inspector

Jennifer Beckles

Full Report

Information about the setting

Imperial College Early Years Education Centre provides full day care and a holiday play scheme. It opened in 1992 and is run by Imperial College for the children of students and staff. It operates from nine rooms over six floors in converted Victorian houses on the Imperial College campus, in the city of Westminster. Access is via several flights of stairs as there is no lift. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.45am to 5.15pm all year

round. The play scheme operates similar opening hours and is open every half term and during the summer holiday. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and a three acre secret garden. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 139 children in the early years age group on roll. The setting provides funded places for children aged three and four years. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They support a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs 34 staff. Of these, two hold Early Years Professional status, seven have degrees in early years education, three staff are qualified teachers and the remaining staff are qualified in early years. The manager and early years supervisor are supernumerary. The setting employs two cooks.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop further the potential of the garden to support children's mathematical skills, for example, by numbering cars and parking bays to support number recognition.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff devise highly imaginative, rich and varied experiences for children that cover all areas of learning. They are extremely skilled practitioners who use a range of effective teaching strategies and, consequently, children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. For instance, children go out on woodland walks in the three acre 'secret garden' adjacent to the setting to listen to the sounds of birds and discover different aspects of nature. Staff have implemented the 'Every Child a Talker' scheme which provides a strong focus on promotion of language. For example, they use puppets, audio equipment and visual resources to support children's communication skills exceptionally well. Children's language skills are developed further as they happily engage in conversation with each other in the garden play house or veranda.

Babies learn early technology skills as they play with cause and effect toys. They happily select from a range of stimulating resources, including 'treasure baskets' containing natural and interesting objects for discovery play. Babies become aware of the qualities of different materials as they run their hands eagerly along a 'texture wall'. They crawl purposefully to the attractive and well-stocked book corner to select colourful board books.

Staff have excellent knowledge of how children learn and develop and ensure that children's interests are fully incorporated in planning. They ensure that children have lots of opportunities to initiate their own play and balance this well with adult-led activities. They know the children very well because they carry out rigorous observations of them. Staff use the information from observations to determine challenging next steps for learning for each child. As a result, children are highly motivated, keen learners.

Older children recognise their names confidently when they arrive for self-registration and use their name cards to write their names on their work independently. They have very good knowledge of letters and their associated sounds because staff organise a 'letter of the week' and encourage the children to bring items from home in relation to this. Interactive displays are set up with these items to consolidate children's learning successfully. Children learn to count, sort and match through a range of fun everyday activities as they play. For instance, during circle time they talk about their favourite part of the Christmas holiday and use their fingers to count securely the number of presents they received. They learn about order and size as they stack different sized beakers into the correct order, or sort coloured model animals into groups. Children's learning is enriched by visits to the nearby science museum and natural history museum. The visits support their understanding of the world as they take part in fun, practical activities.

Staff help children to develop critical thinking skills as they take part in a dough-making activity. They do this by asking children which ingredients are needed and what they think will happen at different stages of the process. Children explore different materials as they add glitter to flour paste, knead and roll dough. They learn good social skills as they wait their turn and praise each other for completing tasks.

While in the garden, children practise their climbing and balancing skills on a challenging wooden climbing frame. They ride on wheeled toys confidently and use momentum to swing independently from tyre swings. Children use a wide range of large and small equipment to develop a variety of physical skills. Babies enjoy crawling and exploring space and movement as they clamber over soft cushions and venture inside pop-up tents. Older children learn about plant growth as they plant seeds and watch them grow. They learn to listen carefully and distinguish between sounds as they play different hanging instruments in the garden. However, the garden is not used to its maximum potential to enhance children's mathematical skills. For instance, by having numbered wheeled toys and parking bays to help children to recognise numbers.

Staff work very effectively with other professionals involved in the care and learning of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They take advice on individual plans for children and implement suggestions so that children make excellent progress in their learning and development.

Parents are kept well informed of their child's development because they meet with staff to review their child's progress and development folder. They share observations of their child with staff which helps to inform individual plans for children. Parents have excellent opportunities to contribute to children's learning because staff offer suggestions on how they can support children's language skills in the home environment. This exchange of

information and ideas helps to consolidate children's learning and to promote excellent outcomes for children.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children are articulate, highly confident and enthusiastic learners. They are secure and happy because they have very strong, warm relationships with staff. Young children settle quickly because staff introduce routines through a visual timetable. They settle extremely well because staff spend time getting to know them and work closely with parents to find out children's interests and skills so that staff can make suitable plans to meet their needs. This contributes significantly to children's well-being.

The environment is exceptionally well-organised and has a vast range of highly appropriate resources that are easily accessible to children and enable them to make choices. Children are strongly independent and have excellent self-care skills. For example, they brush their teeth and wash their hands at appropriate times and understand the reasons for doing so. Younger children are supported well towards independence by staff. Staff change nappies hygienically and gently in a private area. They reduce the risk of cross infection by wearing gloves and by cleaning mats after each nappy change. Children show excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe. For instance, they put on aprons to protect their clothes when involved in messy activities, and negotiate space carefully when riding wheeled toys in the garden. Young children are reminded to climb ladders one step at a time to avoid slipping and falling.

Children are healthy because they get large amounts of fresh air and physical exercise by using a wide range of small and large equipment in the garden to promote a range of physical skills. They also benefit from regular walks in the adjacent 'secret garden' consisting of acres of woodland. Children have nutritious and appetising meals and serve themselves from a buffet style presentation. This helps them to make healthy choices. Children who have special dietary needs are catered for fully by the on-site chef.

Children live outside of the borough and attend schools that are not local to the setting so links with local schools are not appropriate. However, staff provide 'moving-on' reports to support continuity in learning for children who move to school outside of the borough. Children learn to listen and follow instruction as they take part in adult-led activities. These skills help to prepare children for school effectively. Children learn to take responsibility as they are given small tasks to complete by staff, such as tidying a specific area or helping to prepare for snacks. Staff spend time with children in new group rooms before they move up within the setting. This helps children to become familiar with the environment, routines and staff so that they settle more readily.

Staff manage behaviour superbly. They teach children to express to each other how they feel and encourage them to negotiate and resolve issues for themselves, where appropriate. Staff draw up ground rules for behaviour with the children and display these on the wall to act as reminders. They use distraction techniques for younger children or offer alternatives to manage behaviour. Children behave excellently because staff use

praise to reward specific behaviour. This motivates children to do well. If there is any incident of unacceptable behaviour, staff encourage children to think about their behaviour and help them to come up with a solution.

Children learn to accept difference through discussion and learning about and celebrating different cultures. For instance, they learn how to write Chinese script from a parent who visits during Chinese New Year and learn Indian dancing during Diwali, the festival of light. Their learning is enhanced by using cultural dolls to help them to understand about difference.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have excellent awareness of how to keep children safe from harm. They carry out detailed daily risk assessments on all aspects of the provision both indoors and outdoors and have received comprehensive safeguarding training which enables them to protect children fully. Managers vet staff thoroughly during the recruitment process to determine suitability for their roles. The staff group is exceptionally well qualified in early years and use their skills to promote excellent outcomes for children.

The setting is managed extremely well by an early years supervisor and a manager/provider. They have clear responsibilities in each of their roles and both are fully aware that the provider has responsibility for ensuring compliance with all legal requirements. Staff are given high quality supervision by senior leaders who are based in group rooms so that they have excellent insight into staff practice. Supervision provides high levels of support, coaching, mentoring and training. Where issues are identified, supervision sessions are increased to offer more support and training, actions are identified and underperformance is tackled highly effectively. Staff are motivated to do well because management identify and train future senior leaders from the existing staff group. Management is highly committed to excellence and, to this end, have developed an accredited leadership and management course that all senior leaders attend and which enables them to fulfil their roles well. The training needs of staff are identified well through supervision sessions and from yearly appraisals. For instance, a staff member attended the 'Every Child a Talker' scheme which led to implementation of activities and ideas that have an excellent impact on children's communication and language skills.

Management monitor the educational programme and assessment robustly. The curriculum is regularly reviewed during supervision of senior staff by management and children's development folders are also examined. During this process, there is identification of groups of children who may be underachieving and excellent strategies are implemented to resolve issues. For instance, management found that boys did not appear to be interested in mark making or writing opportunities so they removed chairs from writing tables as boys preferred to stand when writing. This led to boys being more involved in writing activities and helped to close gaps in their learning.

Staff have highly effective partnerships with parents that enable children's needs to be

exceptionally well met. Parents have very good opportunities to contribute to their child's learning because staff provide parents with ideas on how they can support children's communication and language skills in the home environment. Strong links with others involved in the care and learning of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities provide excellent advice and information so that children make very good progress.

Managers have an astute awareness of the setting's strengths and areas for development. They reflect deeply on the provision and have set highly ambitious priorities for development. For example, they plan to broaden the range of training courses offered to staff so that they have further excellent opportunities to hone their skills. The setting has successfully met previous recommendations. For instance, it has increased the range of resources to help children to learn about and accept difference. The setting has excellent capacity to improve future outcomes for children.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	**Met**
The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	**Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision		
Grade	**Judgement**	**Description**
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.

Met	The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met	The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	135043
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	895907
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	140
Number of children on roll	139
Name of provider	Imperial College Ltd
Date of previous inspection	26/07/2011
Telephone number	020 7594 5120 or 5121 or 5127

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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