

# Whittingham Playschool

Whittingham Avenue, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, Essex, SS2 4WA

<b>Inspection date</b>	16/04/2013
Previous inspection date	10/01/2012

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	4
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is inadequate

- Children's safety is compromised as staff are not deployed effectively when parents arrive to collect their children at the end of the session.
- Activities are not always sufficiently interesting to stimulate children's learning as staff do not consistently make the best use of time, space and resources to support children's progress.
- The staff team have not completed the required progress checks for children when they reach the age of two, to ensure that parents and carers are fully aware of their children's progress and development.
- The monitoring of the staff's performance lacks precision and rigour. As a result, assessment of children's progress is not consistent in quality and activities are not fully matched to children's needs.
- The pre-school is not using robust self-evaluation to identify the priorities for development or to set challenging targets that will improve the quality of provision.

### It has the following strengths

- There is a well-established key person system. This means that children settle quickly into the pre-school as they form warm bonds with the familiar and friendly staff.
- Well-established links exist with local schools to promote smooth transitions and continuity in children's learning and development.

## 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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled 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 activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The inspector held discussions with the registered provider, staff and children.
- The inspector viewed a sample of the children's development records.  
The inspector saw evidence of suitability and qualifications of the staff, risk assessment, policies and procedures and other documentation in relation to health and safety checks.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

## Inspector

Patricia Champion

## **Full Report**

### **Information about the setting**

Whittingham Playschool was registered in 1976. It is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from the Whittingham Methodist Church in Southend, Essex. It is privately run and managed. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from the main hall within the church building and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two staff hold qualifications at level 2.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.15am until 11.45am. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 30 children attending who are within the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

### **What the setting needs to do to improve further**

**To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:**

- improve the staffing arrangements to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety by: effectively deploying staff to make certain that children are adequately supervised and do not leave the premises unsupervised, particularly at the time when parents start to arrive to collect their children at the end of a session
- provide more challenging and enjoyable experiences for children by: reviewing routines and the use of space and resources to improve the balance of adult-led and child-initiated activity
- review the progress of children when they reach the age of two and provide parents and/or carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas. Ensure that this progress check identifies the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected.

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

- monitor more closely staff's performance to assure the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of the observation and assessment processes
- develop reflective practice and self-evaluation to identify the priorities for development that will continuously improve the quality of provision for all children.

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

The staff have a reasonable understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, they do not fully understand how the characteristics of effective teaching and learning support children's progress and development. Despite staff planning activities linked to the areas of learning, for both indoor and outdoor play, some tasks offer limited challenge and do not capture the interest of the older and more able children. This hinders their progress and behaviour as they are not inspired to achieve as much as they can. Children are easily distracted and tend to drift from activity to activity without concentrating. In addition, the routine does not allow children to have uninterrupted time to play and explore. Children have to clear away their indoor activities just an hour after they have arrived, so that staff can get the hall ready for the next item in the rigid timetable. This means that children do not have the time and freedom to become deeply involved and persevere in activities of their own

choosing.

Children's language skills are steadily developing because the staff talk to them in conversations and introduce words in relation to their play. For example, the staff use open-ended questions to encourage children to talk about what they are making with play dough, or invite them to discuss the colour of paint they wish to use on their pictures. Children and staff have warm conversations as they talk about family lives or recent events, such as birthdays. Children also begin to use simple sign language, for example, they sign 'please' and 'thank you', at snack time. There are suitable arrangements to support children who speak English as an additional language. The staff use a visual timetable and picture clues so that children can understand what they need to do next and can also communicate their needs.

There are appropriate systems in place to record progress and celebrate children's achievements. Each child has a learning journal containing observations carried out by key persons, these are illustrated by photographs. The staff are now identifying learning priorities to help them plan activities to meet the children's needs. However, not all children are learning as much as they can, as not all staff are consistently analysing children's progress to ensure that there are no gaps in learning. Parents provide 'Wow moments' for the learning journals, as a contribution of their observations of children's learning at home. Parents also become involved in their children's learning in other meaningful ways. For example, they borrow story sacks to read to their children at home. The key persons know about the requirement to complete progress reports for children when they reach the age of two. However, none of these have been completed. This means that parents are not fully informed where there are any areas where the child's progress is less than expected or if there are emerging concerns.

Children are beginning to develop the skills they need for future learning. Some can recognise and name different shapes and count items with staff. They practice pencil control and early writing skills as they make marks or begin to write their names on worksheets. Children enjoy listening to stories read by staff. They are attentive, listen carefully, offer ideas and anticipate what is going to happen next. Children have some opportunities to learn about technology as they press buttons and switches to make sounds, and turn on and off electronic toys.

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

Staff are kind and provide warmth and affection to the children. As a result, children are happy and settle well. The key person system is well established, and means that all parents have a designated person they can talk to if they are anxious about their child's development. There are appropriate settling-in procedures so that children gain confidence with new carers, when they leave their parents for the first time. Parents provide information on 'All about me' sheets, so that key persons are aware of children's needs and requirements right from the start. The staff understand the importance of linking with other early years professionals to promote continuity in children's learning and development, when this is required.

The staff use sound behaviour management routines to help children gain an understanding of right and wrong. This means that most of the children behave responsibly and know what is expected of them. They usually listen and follow the staff's instructions, for example, they line up sensibly to go outside to play. They are told about safety and the need to take care as they play in the various areas of the pre-school, and this message is re-enforced throughout each session. Fire drills are regularly practised so that children and staff can swiftly evacuate the premises in an emergency. However, children may have a false sense of security due to the safeguarding issues detailed in the leadership and management section of this report.

The opportunities for exercise, fresh air and acceptable hygiene routines ensure that children remain healthy. The premises are adequately clean. Children have access to baby wipes, or they use step stools to reach the hand basins. This means they learn about the importance of cleaning their hands at appropriate times. Children develop their self-help skills as they go to the toilet by themselves or attempt to put on their own coats. Children eat balanced and nutritious snacks, such as fruit and cereal, in social groups. Children enjoy distributing the milk cartons and plates to their friends or serving their own cereal. Drinking water is freely accessible so that children can independently pour themselves a drink whenever they feel thirsty. Children have fun and run energetically as they play outdoors in the playground. They develop their coordination as they steer and manoeuvre scooters and bicycles around obstacles. Climbing and balancing skills are also developed as children confidently use indoor physical play apparatus.

Children are provided with a reasonable variety of play materials each session. However, they are not used well enough to provide challenge for children or to engage their interest. In addition, children are currently unable to choose whether to play indoors or outdoors. There is some low-level storage so that children can take decisions and select their resources, however, this is just for the first hour of each session. This means that there are not enough opportunities offered for child-initiated activity.

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

The pre-school does not comply with all the safeguarding requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's needs are not fully met because the registered provider does not ensure that staff are consistently suitably deployed to maintain children's safety and well-being at all times. This inspection took place following concerns raised about the supervision of children in the toilet area and also about an incident when a child left the setting unsupervised, at the end of a session. The inspection found that the registered provider has not fully considered the seriousness of these events, as a comprehensive review has not been undertaken to prevent such incidents from reoccurring. During the inspection some action was taken by the registered provider to ensure that children are unable to lock themselves in the toilet cubicles. However, it was found that insufficient steps have been taken to prevent a child exiting the main entrance door unnoticed, and unsupervised by an adult at the end of a session. Consequently, children are not fully safeguarded. This also affects the registered provider's ability to meet the requirements of the Childcare Register.

Children are protected from harm for much of each session. Staff are aware of their child protection responsibilities. The designated person for safeguarding has attended specific training so that she is aware of the signs alerting her to any child protection concerns and who these should be reported to. Risk assessment is carried out for the premises and this is, generally, adequate in ensuring that any potential hazards are removed or made safe. There are consistent procedures for monitoring visitors and the pre-school's policy for the prohibited use of mobile phones is made known from the outset.

The registered provider promotes the staff's professional development by ensuring they attend training courses. A new supervision and staff appraisal system has very recently been set up and there are regular staff meetings. Staff have a clear understanding of the seven areas of learning and use these in their planning of activities to support children's development. However, the monitoring of staff performance is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure their observation and assessment records support all children to make appropriate progress. The registered provider has not evaluated the provision to establish what is working well, and what needs to improve, for a number of years. During this inspection, management and staff were receptive to comments made and some effort was made to improve outcomes for children. However, the lack of consistent reflective practice or thorough self-evaluation means that insufficient focus has been placed on setting ambitious targets that raise children's achievements. In addition, requirements, such as the need to carry out progress checks for children when they reach the age of two, are not completed in a timely way.

Some of the recommendations raised at the last inspections have been addressed more successfully than others. Children's hours of attendance are now recorded in the register. Parents are now more involved in their children's ongoing assessments. However, the pre-school has not reviewed and improved the organisation of routines in order to maximise learning time for children, as recommended at the last two inspections.

Parents and carers are kept reasonably well informed through daily discussions, notice boards and regular newsletters about the activities and forthcoming events. When children start, parents receive a detailed prospectus and information about the setting's policies and procedures. Most parents and carers spoken to on the day of inspection, report they are satisfied with the service offered. They say they feel able to approach the key persons directly if they have any concerns about their children's care and learning. Partnerships with the local schools, other settings and agencies are well established and ensure that children transfer smoothly onto the next stage in their education. There are also positive links with local community groups as the pre-school received strong support when replacing the play equipment lost due to recent flooding on the premises.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met  
(with  
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met**

**(with  
actions)**

**To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:**

- ensure that a child is unable to leave the premises without a person who is caring for children on those premises becoming aware of the child leaving (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that a child is unable to leave the premises without a person who is caring for children on those premises becoming aware of the child leaving (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).



## 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 action. 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119538
<b>Local authority</b>	Southend on Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	912785
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	30
<b>Name of provider</b>	Linda Kennedy
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10/01/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 603229

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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