

Circles Montessori Nursery School

Christ The King Church Hall, Haldens, Welwyn Garden City, HERFORDSHIRE, AL7 1DH

Inspection date

25/10/2013

Previous inspection date

08/01/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children are happy and secure in their play, they are keen and motivated learners. Children develop close bonds with their key person, they are cared for in a stimulating yet nurturing learning environment. The staff team works well together to meet the needs of all children.
- Staff are motivated, they have a good understanding of how children learn through good quality play. A robust evaluation process means that areas for development are effectively targeted. This ensures children's care, learning and progress are promoted to a good level.
- The leadership and management of the nursery are strong. Effective recruitment and ongoing training ensures staff have the skills to ensure children's well-being and learning is effectively promoted. Children are cared for in a safe environment; the safeguarding and welfare requirements are met to a good standard.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The planning for the outside environment does not consistently include the seven areas of learning to reflect and build on children's different styles of learning.

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 children playing in the classroom, having the morning snack, having their lunch and playing in the garden.
- The inspector talked to some of the children to find out what they enjoyed doing at nursery.
- The inspector looked at a selection of documents for the welfare of the children and the management of the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to parents and staff about the children's care, development and daily routines.

Inspector

Tina Kelly

Full Report

Information about the setting

Circles Montessori Nursery School in Welwyn Garden City is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Child Care Register. The nursery is one of three nurseries which are privately owned by the registered provider. The nursery operates from the Christ The King Church Hall in Welwyn Garden City, they use the large main hall with integral kitchen, cloakrooms and office space. There is a large enclosed garden for outside play.

The nursery is open from 8.30am until 4.00pm weekdays during term time. There are currently 25 children on roll, the nursery provides care for children aged from 18 months to five years old. The nursery provides funded early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. They support children who speak English as an additional language. Full-time and sessional care is offered and children can attend for a variety of sessions.

The manager is supported by the registered provider, the nursery employs seven members of staff to work with the children. The deputy has an Early Years Degree and a Montessori Diploma level 4. One member of staff has a level 3, and three other staff hold a level 2 early years qualification. An apprenticeship scheme is in place. The nursery receive support from the local authority, they are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and the National Day Nursery Association.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review planning for the outdoor area to enhance opportunities to promote children's learning experiences across all areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

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

Children's learning needs are well-met as the classroom is laid out with specific areas to accommodate children's different learning and developmental needs. The Montessori style of learning and the resources which are set out around the nursery compliments the seven areas of learning which are planned for very effectively within the classroom environment. The information gained from parents as the children come into the nursery is used as the basis for the progress check at age two years, ongoing observations, and to plan for the next steps in the children's learning. This detail is recorded effectively throughout the

nursery.

The key person takes responsibility in identifying the children's interests and to plan for the next steps in their learning. Children's artwork on display around the classroom, observations and assessments in the learning journals show children are making good progress in relation to their starting points. Parents are involved in their children's learning as they meet with their key persons on a regular basis. The home link book enables parents share events from home, they are encouraged to share in their children's experiences at the nursery and to support their learning at home. Children are happy and settled throughout the nursery. They make independent choices about their play, staff sit with the children to encourage them to think about what they are doing, they ask appropriate questions to extend children's learning through play.

Young children enjoy being involved in small group play sessions. They are given time to extend their play as they concentrate on the bright bricks set out on the floor. Staff provide excellent support as they model activities, such as stacking and balancing the bricks. They reflect on what the children have achieved by asking the children to look at how high the tower is. Staff give consistent praise, they support children as they choose their own ways to do things and extend their play ideas. Early counting, recognising patterns and talking about how the bricks fit together introduces children to early mathematical skills.

Children are chatty, they are keen to share their play ideas with staff and the inspector. Children who speak English as an additional language and younger children with early language skills are supported extremely well. Staff use Makaton sign language and laminated pictorial signs to reinforce children's understanding of the daily routines. They direct them to snack time, ask them if they want to join in a particular activity and make sure children are happy using a picture of a smiley face. Children's language and communication skills are promoted to a very high level, children are competent in asking questions and making their needs known.

Children enjoy exploring and making full use of the very good quality Montessori resources. Children focus on the challenge of sifting flour through a sieve, looking at how the fine flour covers the base tray. Staff support play and exploration when needed to extend children's learning. They ask the children about the texture of the flour and to look at how the items on the tray have left a pattern. Children's learning is enhanced by staff who are very knowledgeable about how children learn through play.

Children have free access to the large garden which leads from the classroom. They have space to extend their play ideas, to explore, to run and enjoy the freedom that the spacious grassed area provides. Children are encouraged by staff to use the play house and a range of ride on toys. They become fully involved in pretending to drive, they talk about going to the shops and to work. Staff interact appropriately using red and green signs to direct children as they use the ride on toys and drive around the play area. Children's learning is reinforced as they are beginning to understand that signs and colours carry different meanings. Designated growing areas and the development of a sensory area introduce children to the natural world. They are keen to take part in painting activities and water play which are set out by the staff. However, the

comprehensive planning within the classroom does not consistently include the outside play space. As a result, the outside play area is not always used as effectively to provide children who prefer to play outside with such an extensive range of experiences across all areas of learning.

All children take part in many varied experiences which ensure they are well prepared to move onto new settings, such as nursery and reception class with confidence. Children are developing skills based on the seven areas of learning to ensure they are capable in taking part in new learning experiences and to support their future learning.

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

Children build strong bonds and attachments with their key person and other members of staff. They are welcomed by name as they come into the classroom, children smile and settle quickly to play. There is a very effective settling-in process, parents are encouraged to stay to ensure children feel secure and settled and ready to take part in new experiences. Children's key persons establish strong home links through an effective 'All about me' form and regular discussion with parents, especially those of young children and those children speak English as an additional language. They ensure all parents are fully aware of the routines and activities their children take part in.

Meal and snack times are calm and social events. Children enjoy healthy, nutritious food that is prepared on site by the qualified chef. Individual dietary needs are recorded and met as effective records are well-maintained. Staff invite children to join in snack time and sit alongside their friends. Children self-select from a range of healthy snack foods, staff sit with the children, supporting their understanding by using sign language and laminated picture cards. They remind children to wash hands and ask them to make their choices with the use of the cards if needed. Children's understanding of new social events are supported well by staff who are sensitive to the young children's needs.

Children are learning about their own safety and that of children playing nearby. Staff remind them not to run in the classroom, asking them to look where they are going and to take care. When using the ride on toys in the garden children are beginning to negotiate and to take turns. They are supported well by staff who give them time to think about how they can ask the other children to join in and to make room for them to play. Good social skills are highly valued, children are taught to take the needs of others into account to be kind and helpful.

Children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle and in having confidence in their own personal care routines is good. Staff talk to the children about the weather, making children aware of the muddy ground and light rain when they ask to play outside. They assist the children in finding their coats and provide wellington boots if needed. A record is kept of children as they go out to play, this ensures staff know who has had opportunities for physical play and for the overall safety of the children through appropriate deployment of staff. When asked if they need to use the cloakroom before going out to play, some children are very confident in explaining that "if I need to go I will come in again".

Children show a strong sense of confidence and self-esteem.

The well-managed day-to-day activities ensure children have the skills to move onto nursery or school with confidence. The nursery has well-established links with other early years settings and schools. They are keen to invite teachers from reception class to the setting to share in the experiences the children have enjoyed. This ensures children are supported well as they move onto new early years settings.

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

The registered provider is involved in all aspects of the nursery. She supports the manager in ensuring robust recruitment and induction procedures are in place. She is involved in staff appraisals to ensure all adults working with the children are suitable to do so. The nursery reflects on their practice and reviews the documents to ensure the welfare of children and for the smooth running of the nursery. The well-qualified and experienced staff team have a good understanding of the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage which are met to a good standard. Unqualified staff are working towards National Vocational Qualifications through an apprenticeship scheme. They are involved in all aspects of the day-to-day routines within the nursery, and so gain a good, broad experience in early years practice. Staff have their professional skills recognised and valued by the provider who plans training and staff meetings for all staff.

Safeguarding is of high priority for the nursery. The senior members of staff take responsibility for safeguarding concerns. All staff maintain a good understanding of safeguarding, they attend training and discuss any issues at regular team meetings. The nursery uses the Local Safeguarding Children Board code of practice to monitor and manage any concerns about children in their care. Information is readily available on display around the classroom and on the website. Robust risk assessments and effective daily routines ensure children are cared for in a well-managed environment.

Partnership with parents is strong. The nursery has well-established links with families which enable them to consistently meet the children's individual needs. Parents are kept well-informed about their children's progress as they have a very effective links with their key person. Parent's views are sought through everyday discussions and regular questionnaires. Parents spoken to at the time of inspection talked about how their children's language has improved and how children talk about their time in nursery at home. They show they appreciate the hard work of the staff team as they make cakes for members of staff who are on maternity leave.

The nursery works closely with schools, early years agencies and other professionals to consistently review and improve the opportunities they provide for all children. Staff attend cluster meetings with local pre-school groups to share experiences and good practice. This enables the registered provider and the senior staff team to have a good overview of the curriculum and the progress that children make. An effective evaluation process uses information from the children's and parents' questionnaires and notes from

staff meetings to identify areas of the nursery which work well and aspects to be improved.

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 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

Unique reference number	EY378967
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	916234
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	25
Name of provider	Lisa Lucas
Date of previous inspection	08/01/2009
Telephone number	0800 695 1515

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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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