

Thundersley Congregational Church

Congregational Church, Kenneth Road, BENFLEET, Essex, SS7 3AL

Inspection date	04/11/2013
Previous inspection date	15/06/2010

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

- Staff have a good understanding of early childhood development and the different learning styles of children. They use this knowledge to ensure that all children make good progress.
- Children remain safe, as staff understand and implement effective policies and procedures and have good knowledge of child protection.
- Partnership work with parents and other professionals is good. This ensures that continuity of care, transitions and shared care is effectively promoted in meeting children's needs.
- The effective, skilled and experienced staff team, who are supported well by the managers, ensure that they build on their existing skills and knowledge and good standards of care and learning are maintained.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The presentation and use of books and stories for pre-school children is not maximised to enable them to make meaningful choices and develop an understanding of how to use books for pleasure and for seeking information.
- There is scope to improve the accuracy of initial assessments of children's abilities when they start at the pre-school, by involving parents more in this process.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed activities in two playrooms and the garden area.
- The inspector held discussions with the managers, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager.
The inspector looked at a range of records, including written policies, information
- about staff qualifications and suitability checks and children's learning and development records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to at the time of the inspection.

Inspector

Lisa Paisley

Full report

Information about the setting

Thundersley Congregational Church is run by a committee. The pre-school opened under new ownership in 2006 on the Early Years Register. The pre-school operates from three playrooms and a hall in Thundersley Church, Benfleet, Essex. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above.

The pre-school is open Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 8.45am until 11.45am and 12.30pm until 3.30pm. An optional lunch club operates from 11.45am to 12.30pm and the afternoon sessions run according to demand. There are currently 56 children attending, who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review the presentation of books and stories for pre-school children to encourage them to make more meaningful choices and develop an understanding of the use of books, both for pleasure and as a source of information
- extend parents involvement in the initial assessment of their children's abilities, so that staff gain a more accurate picture of what children already know and can do.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff are very knowledgeable and demonstrate a good understanding of how children learn. All staff are qualified and show a commitment to providing a rich learning environment for all children. This means children are provided with a wide range of exciting and challenging learning opportunities that cover all areas of learning. Each child is provided with an individual approach to meet their requirements as plans are adapted to ensure their specific needs and next steps in learning are supported well. An effectively organised play and learning environment that combines adult-led activities with child-initiated play means that children are interested in their play, they can build on existing knowledge and they make links in their learning. For example, children enjoy mixing and spinning paint and glitter for their firework picture. Staff understand the importance and

value of open-ended play rather than an end product, which means children are praised for their individual achievements.

There is a strong focus on developing children's language and communication skills, as staff recognise this as a key feature in young children's learning and development and their future progress, for example, when they start school. Staff use a range of strategies to support children's listening and speaking skills. This includes being at children's level when they talk to them and listening and waiting for children to express their thoughts and ideas. This means children receive good support in their play and learning. Children enjoy looking at a range of books and stories with staff and their friends as the book corner is warm and comfortable for children to rest and relax. However, staff do not always consider the value, importance and excitement of sharing stories with children to successfully capture and extend their learning. This is so that children fully understand that books are for pleasure and can also be used as a source of information.

Children are provided with a good range of creative activities, such as, sand, water, dough, paints and sticking activities. Children spend time exploring the sensory materials and using a range of tools within their play. Staff are always close by supporting children in their play by listening and providing a narrative for children. For example, they comment 'The dough feels soft and warm, what does yours feel like?' This helps children make links and develop ideas in their learning. Children have access to a range of information communication and technical equipment, including computers, mechanical toys and a digital camera. They particularly like taking a photograph of their firework picture and also favourite activities and friends. This ensures that children feel valued and staff gain an insight into their thoughts and feelings.

Early mathematical concepts are promoted within activities and daily routines, such as number songs. Staff also use child-initiated play to help children learn about shapes and colours. For example, as children splash in puddles, staff encourage children to look at the shapes and ripples as a result of their jumping. Staff promote children's learning of letters and sounds through daily activities and routines. Children self-register when they arrive at the setting and also at snack time. There are a range of writing opportunities throughout the day as children draw shapes and attempt to write their name, further helping children to prepare for school.

Children's physical development is effectively promoted as they have ongoing opportunities to play in the garden, where they can ride bikes or scooters, play with balls and skittles and build high towers with play crates. They have regular nature walks to the local woods in which they learn about the natural world. There are also trips further afield to nature resorts and also themed woodlands park to build on children's learning and to link in with favourite stories. Therefore, children have lots of exciting play and learning experiences that enables them to make good progress.

Parents are involved in their child's play and learning, as there are regular observations, formative assessments and children's learning journals are shared with the parents. Summary assessments are completed on new children at the pre-school. However, parents do not contribute to initial assessments of children's existing abilities to make sure staff have the most accurate understanding of children's development when they first

arrive. Staff complete the 'progress check at age two' for children, ensuring that any early concerns are quickly identified to access intervention, if required.

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

Children are confident, happy and secure within the pre-school as they are happily engaged in their play and learning. There are good settling-in arrangements in place for new children and staff are aware that some children may need more support than others. Staff also focus on what children's interests and likes are and build this into activities that are provided, for example, the home corner. Parents provide staff with information concerning children's care needs and preferences. The good key person systems ensures that children settle into the pre-school well. Staff provide lots of praise and cuddles for children and they always respond to children with care and sensitivity, further offering children a supportive environment where they feel valued.

The pre-school is a child-friendly environment where children have the time and space to play and explore the activities provided. The pre-school is secure and the resources, equipment and furniture are maintained to a good standard. The organisation of activities and daily routines helps develop children's independence and their cooperation as children make choices about their play and they also respond to staff's requests, such as tidy up time. Children's good health and personal safety is effectively promoted. A range of healthy snacks are available for children and they have access to drinking water during the session. Staff remind children to hold onto the bannister when going up to and down from the upstairs playroom and children move around the setting safely with ease and play with activities well. There are good systems in place to support children who have specific medical requirements as staff work with parents and other health professionals in devising care plans and there are clear procedures with regards to carrying out technical procedures, such as diabetes tests and the use of asthma pumps.

Children behave well in the pre-school as they know to be kind and offer to share and take turns with resources with little or no prompting. Staff are positive role models, speaking kindly to children and gently reminding them to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Regular praise and encouragement from staff helps to develop children's self-esteem and sense of achievement. Staff also understand children's individual needs in relation to their well-being. As a result, staff respond accordingly and sensitively to different behaviour issues. This helps children to explore feelings and boundaries in a safe and secure environment. The pre-school is inclusive and children learn to respect and celebrate each other's differences. There are good systems in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The designated special needs coordinator works with outside agencies, regular observations are made and clear targets are set. Therefore, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. There are good systems in place for supporting children moving onto school as early years teachers visit the pre-school, there are focus activities for older children moving onto school and there are lots of discussions with children. This helps support all children emotionally as they make the transition to school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years

provision

The managers with staff and committee members demonstrate a strive for providing good quality care and learning experiences for children. The managers and staff are skilled, experienced and passionate about the pre-school and they value and understand the importance of good early childhood experiences for young children. The manager along with the deputy has a good overview of the curriculum and they monitor and evaluate staff practice to ensure all children consistently make progress. This is effectively achieved as all staff have a good understanding of children's individual progress. Staff training is positively supported and therefore, children are cared for by qualified and knowledgeable staff.

Safeguarding arrangements for children are good as all staff members know how to safeguard children and practice, such as recording existing minor injuries and the procedures for the storage of mobile telephones and the use of cameras in the pre-school, underpins this. Safeguarding training is completed and therefore, staff members have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow, should they have any concerns regarding children in their care. A thorough recruitment, induction process and supervision arrangements ensure all staff members complete appropriate checks and they remain suitable for their role. This means children's well-being is protected.

The manager and the team work well together; communication within the team is good and they effectively support each other in their roles. Staff alongside with the manager are reflective and evaluate all aspects of the pre-school. This means that they successfully keep up to date with any changes. For example, children's assessment arrangements are good, they effectively link with activity plans and next steps and are shared with both children and parents. This means activity plans are strongly linked to children's interests and are effectively challenging. The 'Big makers, little creators' programme provides good opportunities for parents and children to spend time together in fun activities, such as making bread. This means that staff continue to reflect and monitor the needs of children and families and are able to provide good ideas in supporting families.

Strong partnership working with parents means children receive the best possible care. Parents contribute their ideas through the committee members, who are very supportive of staff. A parents' noticeboard and other useful information is readily available for parents. Arranged meetings with children's key persons and an open door policy means every opportunity is in place to enable parents to discuss and support their child's care and learning. Parents comment positively on their complete satisfaction of every aspect of the pre-school. They comment that children settle well into the pre-school, they are fully informed about all aspects of children's care and play and the progress children make. Staff also work closely with others, who are involved in the care of children, for example, professional agencies and other early years settings, to ensure there is continuity in their learning and their welfare needs 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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY343931
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	941529
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	56
Name of provider	Thundersley Congregational Church Committee
Date of previous inspection	15/06/2010
Telephone number	01268754731

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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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