

The Courtyard Pre-School

The Courtyard, Leavesden Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD24 5ED

Inspection date

27/03/2014

Previous inspection date

04/05/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
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The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Staff are warm, kind and caring and children are content. They are taught to greet each other in their home languages and they celebrate each other's cultural events.
- Robust procedures are in place to ensure all those working with children are safe to do so. Safeguarding procedures are secure, so that children's welfare is protected.
- Parents provide detailed information about their children's starting points. As a result, children settle easily.

It is not yet good because

- Staff do not consistently use information gained from observation and assessment to monitor children's learning and development. As a result, activities are not always challenging, to help children make good progress in their learning and development.
- Although staff identify safety risks that arise, report any issues to the provider and take adequate temporary measures, such as supervising children more closely, action to minimise the identified risks effectively is not always done promptly.
- Staff do not consistently use visual aids, time-lines, photographs and real objects during activities, so that younger children and those with English as an additional language are able to express themselves.
- Procedures to ensure parents are fully involved in sharing information from home are not sufficiently robust, to make sure all relevant information is available to use in planning for children's 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's play and staff interactions during indoor and outdoor play and a snack time.
- The inspector spoke to children and engaged in their play. She spoke to staff about how they support their learning and development. She looked at and discussed a range of documentation related to children's care and learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy, both indoors and outdoors. She also checked evidence of qualifications and suitability for all adults working at the pre-school and nursery.
- The inspector obtained views of some parents on collection of their children.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Full report

Information about the setting

The Courtyard Pre-School and nursery was registered in 1998 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is committee led. The pre-school operates from three rooms on the first floor of the Elim Pentecostal Church Centre in North Watford, Hertfordshire. The nursery operates from two ground floor rooms. The pre-school and nursery serve the local area. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. There are nine members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one at level 2. The deputy is working towards a qualification at level 6. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.30am to 3pm and a lunch club is also provided. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 7.30am to 6.30pm. It provides a service for babies until children are aged two years. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 54 children attending the pre-school, all of whom are in the early years age group. Five children attend the nursery, which also offers a creche service. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school also supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school and nursery receive support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve knowledge of assessment, so that information gained from observations is effectively used to show how children are progressing, and use this information to plan challenging learning experiences for each child based on their interests and learning styles
- review the risk assessments and ensure all items used by children are safe and fit for purpose, this refers to the children's play mats in the pre-school and in the baby room
- strengthen opportunities for parents to contribute more information about what children do at home and use this shared knowledge to plan together and think through ideas of how to move children even further forward in their learning.

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

- promote the use of time-lines, pictures and photographs showing familiar events, objects and activities, so that younger children and those with English as an additional language can be further supported and express their preferences, thoughts and feelings about the activities and their play opportunities.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff are developing a sound understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They use their knowledge to plan a satisfactory range of experiences for children. Staff talk to parents at the children's settling-in times and find out about their routines, dietary needs, child's likes and interests. Key words used by children are obtained on entry and staff refer to these during the day. As a result, children settle quickly into the pre-school and nursery. Staff use information gained from parents, along with their initial assessments to form the children's 'starting points'. There is a key person system in place and this supports the partnership with parents and carers. Special events also support the partnership with parents, such as a craft week, outings and a graduation event at the end of term to celebrate the children's move to nursery or school. Parents are also invited to volunteer at the pre-school to assist with activities. Children's achievements are discussed on collect and their learning journals are shared at the end of term. However, information about what children have been doing at home, to further support the learning process is not consistently gathered from parents. As a result, the partnership with parents is not robust, to ensure all steps are taken to help children make good progress in their learning.

Observations are used to identify children's next steps in their learning. However, staff are not effectively using this information to monitor children's progression over time. As a result, planning is not as fully focused as it could be to ensure activities offer appropriate challenge, so that teaching is more focused to help children make good progress in their learning.

Staff support the communication and language skills of all children, including those learning English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some staff can communicate in home languages used by children, this contributes to children feeling settled and happily joining in with activities. Some staff use visual aids and pictures during activities, such as singing songs and popular nursery rhymes. This helps children understand and make connections in their learning. Staff provide one-to-one support as necessary and work closely with other professionals, so that all children's individual needs are identified and supported. However, staff do not consistently use visual aid, time-lines photographs, pictures and real-life objects during other aspects of the children's day, supporting their teaching and children's understanding. Children enjoy free play, as well as adult-led activities. They enjoy looking at books and these are available in various areas of the play rooms, so that children can build on the enjoyment of sharing books. Staff encourage children to count objects during their play, and they talk about colours and shapes seen. As a result, children are introduced to some simple mathematical concepts. Pens and pencils are easily available for children to develop early writing skills. They are encouraged to recognise their names through the use of name cards. They confidently select their individual name card when having their snack. Creativity is promoted during activities, such as the celebration of a variety of festivals. This includes cooking and making related artefacts. As a result, children are developing skills to aid their readiness for the next stage in their learning and their move to school.

Activities are based on themes, such as 'all about me' and 'numbers and letters', and staff incorporate children's interests into these. For example, children enjoy 'messy play' and have lots of fun exploring various materials, such as foam, oats and paints. Children enjoy filling and emptying containers when they play with oats. Some good quality discussions take place to extend children's learning, some staff use open questions to help promote children's thought process. Babies are also provided with opportunities to explore sensory items, such as paint. For example, staff encourage them to make marks with their fingers, feet and hands. Completed work is displayed and children take items that they create to share with their families. This supports children's personal, social and emotional development. Children, including babies play outdoors on a daily basis. Older children learn to negotiate space outdoors during bike races. They have great fun and shout 'ready, steady, go'. In addition, older children are able to practise their physical skills when using the indoor climbing frame, and slide and the ball pool. This promotes children's coordination and physical development.

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

Children share warm relationships with the friendly and welcoming staff. They are warmly greeted on arrival. As a result, children are happy and quickly settle to play. The key person system contributes to supporting children's personal, social and emotional

development. New children are effectively supported so they too feel comfortable and settled. All care routines, including dietary and babies sleeping patterns are discussed on entry. Staff caring for babies and toddlers share information about the children's day through discussions and daily diaries. This means that children's individual needs are well known. This contributes effectively to the settling-in process and helps to support children in the transition between home and the nursery.

Older children happily explore and show that they have a positive approach to learning. For example, during play in the home area they negotiate the roles that they will take, problem solving as they go along in their play. Younger children are helped to be considerate and play cooperatively together. For example, staff work well together, providing consistent messages and boundaries, such as reminders about using 'indoor feet'. Staff also discuss with children why they need to walk when indoors. As a result, children learn how to keep themselves and their friends safe. Any issues of unwanted behaviour are appropriately managed, so that children learn right from wrong. Advice from other professionals is sought as and when necessary, so that individual support can be provided to help children manage their emotions. This contributes effectively to preparing children for the next stage in their learning, such as mixing with others when they start nursery or school. Discussions with parents ensures that there is a continuity of care between all parties involved in children's care and learning. Staff praise children during their play and routines. This promotes children's self-esteem. Children's understanding of safety is promoted at all times, in particular when using the stairs to play outdoors. For example, they are reminded to hold onto the banisters, so that they are safe. Children are helped to take supervised risks in their play when they use the slide and ride wheeled toys. There are good links with nearby schools that children may attend, so that when the time comes to move on, things run smoothly.

Children learn good hygiene practices through everyday routines, such as washing their hands before eating. Staff promote healthy eating and provide a range of healthy food choices for snacks, available for most of the session. This helps older children to make decisions about when they are hungry or thirsty. Staff work with parents to ensure cultural and dietary needs are respected. A staff member always sits with the children during snack and mealtimes. Good manners and the promotion of independence are encouraged. For example, children are able to butter their crackers and pour their own drinks. Younger children are supported to feed themselves independently and babies feed themselves with a spoon. Adult support is available if necessary. Babies are strapped into high chairs at meal and snack times, and older children are reminded to sit properly on chairs while having their snack. Staff follow good hygiene routines when changing nappies. This is a positive experience for the children. They receive good interactions as staff chat to them throughout the procedure. Staff strive to keep resources clean and safe for children to use. Soft furnishings, such as sofas, carpets and rugs are cleaned as and when necessary. Resources are plentiful and are routinely cleaned, ensuring they remain suitable for children. However, some play mats in the baby room and a pre-school play room pose a hazard to children, as they do not lay fully flat on the floor. This means that children can easily trip over these and cause themselves an unnecessary injury or upset.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years

provision

The manager, her deputy and staff have an appropriate understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, there are some partial breaches of the safeguarding and welfare, and learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. These relate to assessment and the suitability of some resources, such as play mats. Actions have been set during this inspection to ensure these issues are addressed. Staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures, and are aware of their responsibilities to protect children. They ensure their knowledge is up to date by attending relevant training. Safe recruitment procedures ensure all those working with children are safe to do so. The manager and deputy work well together, ensuring staff are well deployed and regulatory ratios are met. The manager is currently in the process of recruiting additional staff, so that more adults are available to support children's learning and development. Suitable induction procedures are in place, so that new staff understand their role and responsibilities, and are familiar with the policies and procedures. Regular meetings, clear supervision and appraisals mean that training needs are discussed and supported. Children are protected in the event of an accident as most staff have a current paediatric first-aid certificate. Daily risk assessments are completed to ensure all areas are clean and suitable for children. Issues requiring attention are identified and discussed. However, action to reduce any potential risks, such as unsuitable children's play mats are not addressed swiftly enough to avoid any accidents. This also breaches a requirement of both parts of the Childcare Register.

The new deputy has a clear vision about how to bring the pre-school and nursery forward. She works closely with the manager and members of the committee to achieve this. Her experience and knowledge is helping staff gain a wider understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, and how they can further support children's learning. This has a positive impact on children and staff are keen to continually develop their professional development. For example, they attend short courses relevant to children's needs, such as promoting boys learning. Monitoring of the pre-school, nursery, and children's assessment and planning is an ongoing process. A development plan is in place, which is regularly discussed at staff meetings and at appropriate times during the day. This is contributing to the self-evaluation procedure. Since the last inspection, children are provided with additional indoor space to practise their physical skills. The pre-school works closely with the professionals from the local authority, so that continuous improvements are made to benefit the children. Plans for the future include the development of the outdoor area, so that children are provided with a varied range of play and learning opportunities. The manager and deputy know to include parents and children's views in the self-evaluation process.

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 all necessary measures are taken to minimise identified risks, with specific regard to play mats (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure all necessary measures are taken to minimise identified risks, with specific regard to play mats (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	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	130647
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	956635
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	54
Name of provider	Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance Committee
Date of previous inspection	04/05/2011
Telephone number	01923 252336

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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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