

Churchfields Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 403438
Inspection date 30/03/2009
Inspector Jacqueline Lawson

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Churchfields Kindergarten is a committee run pre-school and opened in 1979. It operates from one room within the Abel Smith Primary School building in the Churchfields area of Hertford. The kindergarten is situated close to the town centre of Hertford and serves the local community.

A maximum of 20 children aged from two to under five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open from 12.45 to 15.00 Monday to Thursday during the school term. Children share access to a secure enclosed play area and the school field.

There are currently 20 children aged two years, ten months to three years, ten months on roll. Of these, ten receive funding for early years education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language. There is disabled access. The setting is on the Early Years Register.

Three members of staff work directly with the children. Two of them have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 and 3. The Kindergarten leader has a Foundation Degree in Early Years, a BA (Hons) in Education Studies and has completed her Early Years Professional Status.

The kindergarten maintains good links with the Abel Smith Primary School and the School Nursery. The Head Teacher of the school is part of the committee of the pre-school. The kindergarten is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Churchfields Kindergarten is an outstanding pre-school. The staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and provide exciting and stimulating activities to ensure that learning is interesting and fun. The kindergarten is an inclusive setting that provides exceptionally well for the needs of all children including for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for children who speak English as an additional language. The staff care for the children exceptionally well and place a strong emphasis on their safety and welfare. They are constantly evaluating and improving the provision of care and Early Years education, to ensure that it is always of the highest possible standard. Their self-evaluation is outstanding and therefore the setting has an outstanding capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- further develop the use of the school field to include bigger toys for physical

development

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are very happy, settled and well protected with effective safeguarding policies in place. All paperwork is detailed and of the highest standard. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that the children are safe and well cared for. Staff turnover is low. They work in a happy environment where everyone works as part of a team. The leader has implemented robust systems to monitor and evaluate the provision, and to ensure that improvements are made where necessary.

The leader is very well qualified and is committed to effective staff training to help keep the staff fully informed of best early years practice. The staff are all qualified early years practitioners. The leader and staff have a clear vision for the setting, supported by continuous self-evaluation and improvement. They meet regularly to discuss ways to make the kindergarten an even more fulfilling and interesting environment for the children. Parents are kept exceptionally well informed by way of a well-displayed notice board, a clear and well written prospectus, newsletters, questionnaires and parental interviews, as well as daily exchanges of important information. Pick up procedures are robust and ensure the children are safely handed over at the end of each session. One parent said typically, 'My child absolutely loves coming here. The staff are helpful, communicate well with the parents and it is everything we expect it to be'. The kindergarten is very well supported by a committee that includes the Headteacher of Abel Smith Primary School. Parents become involved in fund raising for the kindergarten. The 'Spring Bounce' on the school field with trampolines this year will help to celebrate the kindergarten's 30th anniversary and raise funds for the new hut to keep outdoor toys in. Parents speak very highly of the pre-school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is outstanding. The setting offers a gentle, safe environment where all children thrive and are happy. The staff have a very clear understanding of child protection and safeguarding matters. The kindergarten room is clean and welcoming and the children play quietly, absorbed in their chosen activities. All learning is well paced and matched to each individual child. Children are encouraged to become independent learners. For example, they self-register when they first enter the room in the afternoon. This starts with recognising a soft animal that they have been allocated, then when they can securely recognise their own name, choose to stick their name card on the wall.

Children learn early counting skills through activity songs. Letter and sound recognition is encouraged by being asked simple questions such as 'If your name begins with a 'M', you can sit at the table.' Children have yellow book bags and are encouraged to take a favourite book home to share with their parents or carers. A major theme of 'Celebrating Spring' presently runs through the nursery and many activities to promote this are evident. For example, watching tadpoles swim around

in a large tank, growing flowers and painting spring pictures.

An exceptional variety of appropriate resources are stored on low shelves in storage boxes so that the children know what is available and are able to access them independently. The children play an important role in their own learning and many activities are child led. Teaching is consistently inspiring and highly motivates children so they are engrossed in activities which provide optimal challenge. For example, on the craft table, children can choose to use child safety scissors and hole punches and make decisions on whether to choose glue or tape to make their pictures.

Evidence of all areas of learning is clearly shown on informative and colourful displays. For example, a display showing a learning walk through the seasons, with examples of mark-making and key words. Information and communication technology (ICT) is very well resourced and the children are encouraged to play with programmable toys, a computer, walkie-talkies and mobile telephones. Messy play such as sand, water and painting are always available. The children's work is valued and clearly displayed to build self-esteem and confidence. Diversity is celebrated. There is a selection of multicultural dolls and dressing up clothes such as African kaftans and Chinese pyjamas in the role play area. Many major religious festivals are discussed and books like 'Handa's Surprise' helps to introduce children to different cultures.

The children learn about the importance of personal hygiene through the effective routines in place. They wash their hands before having their snack. The children's health needs are very well supported and precise procedures are in place. All three staff are first aid trained and the children's safety and welfare is comprehensively considered at all times. At snack time the children are offered a piece of fresh fruit, for example banana or dates and have a choice of milk or water to drink. A jug of fresh water is available at all times and the children can pour this for themselves. The children keep active and physically fit. The outdoor learning environment is not free-flow but the children are taken out of doors in each session. The school playing field is an excellent place to pick daisies and play a parachute game and large trees provide shade in the summer. The kindergarten has recently reviewed the resources for physical development on the grassy area. Staff now plan to raise money to buy a shed to keep big toys in, for example, rolling barrels and balancing beams. There is a dedicated outdoor, part-covered play area at the front of the kindergarten where the use of sand, water and small world and wheeled toys is reflected in daily outdoor planning. Painting water spirals on the concrete to dry in the sun or digging in the garden plots in their Wellingtons are favourite activities. This year the kindergarten proudly won 'runner up' in the Hertfordshire in Bloom tallest sunflower category.

Planning is a strength and supports all areas of learning. It is done on a long and medium term basis, as well as every week, and is informed by robust assessment. The planning is evaluative and meets the needs of all abilities of children. It particularly targets those who need extra help to make sure that all children get the support that they need. The kindergarten runs a key worker system. However, in such an intimate setting, all staff observe, record on and support all of the children fully. This ensures that all are well cared for and making progress.

Assessment is clear, well developed and fully supportive of the children's learning. There are a number of robust systems in place. This includes a 'Rainbow Book' for each child. This contains examples of independent and sometimes annotated work that informs parents and becomes a memento of the children's time in the kindergarten. Each child's significant steps are carefully recorded and evaluated with photographs and comments in their 'Learning Journals'. This is a working document linked clearly to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, to target and record areas of achievement and/or concern. This is cross referenced regularly with ongoing observations and discussions to update and inform planning and next steps in learning.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.