

River Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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 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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

River Children's Centre is owned by Barnados and this registration provides pre-school provision for children from the age of two years and crèche sessions are run to support parents attending parent courses; children from birth to the end of the early years age range may attend. The centre is also registered to care for older children. A maximum of 39 children aged under eight years may attend at any one time. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The centre opened in 2008 in purpose-built accommodation with disabled access. The children also have the use of outdoor areas and designated school facilities, such as the 'Forest School' area. The centre serves the local rural community in Lydney and neighbouring towns and villages. There are currently 45 children on roll all aged within the early years age range. The centre provides early education funding for three- and four-year-olds and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language.

The centre staff team comprises of 19 staff, including sessional and cleaning staff. There are 12 early years practitioners employed, of whom, eleven hold qualifications at level two or three. This includes qualified teachers and one person who has achieved Early Years Professional Status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The early years provision within the children's centre provides a secure, welcoming environment where children engage in a broad range of activities and have their welfare needs met well by the caring practitioners. Children make good progress in their learning given their age, ability and starting points and progress in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy is particularly good. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support and are fully included within the setting. The very good partnerships with parents are a key strength of the provision. Partnerships with the school are also very good but partnerships with others settings children attend are not fully established. The setting is well organised and the staff team work together successfully to reflect upon their practice and to identify aspects for improvement. Action taken leads to improved outcomes for children and demonstrates their ability to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- provide greater opportunities for children to move freely between the indoor

- and outdoor environments
- improve partnerships with other settings children attend so as to ensure effective continuity and progression by sharing relevant information with each other and parents

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Robust steps are taken to safeguard children. The practitioners have all completed 'safe and sound' training to ensure they are up to date on safeguarding matters. There is a clear procedure to follow in the event of any concerns and this is implemented successfully. The play environment indoors and outdoors is safe, with effective security measures in place to protect the children. Practitioners demonstrate a high level of commitment to promoting children's safety; effective risk assessment takes place with daily checks completed to minimise any potential risks. Children are helped to learn to stay safe without being fearful. All members of the staff team have undergone suitability checks and attend training to support their roles.

The practitioners work very successfully together; they are clear of their responsibilities as key persons to allocated children and provide support to children and one another. The routine of the preschool sessions works well to meet the needs of the children, offering opportunities for children to engage in activities set out for them which they can extend using their own ideas. Resources are of high quality and stored at child-level encouraging independent choice and children are able to initiate their own play. Group activities such as circle-time and story-time help children to learn to take turns and listen to the adults. Time for outdoor play is scheduled into the routine and if children ask to play outdoors often they can but children do not have the freedom to choose between the indoor and outdoor activities as they wish. When outdoors children are able to engage in an extensive range of activities that promotes their all-round learning.

The practitioners have an excellent knowledge of children's backgrounds and needs. Strong relationships between staff and children are evident and as a result children feel safe, are settled and are nurtured in their care and learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive sensitive support to meet their individual needs and to help them progress in their learning and development. Adaptations are made to activities and the environment, as required, to ensure all children are fully included and the practitioners work highly successfully with parents and outside professionals to provide consistency of care and to enhance children's experiences within the setting. Children and their families who are learning English as an additional language are warmly welcomed into the setting. Practitioners learn key words of the children's home language, use dual language labels and books, picture prompts and signing to aid children's communication and acquisition of English. Systems are in place to translate important information for parents and a translator accompanies practitioners during initial home visits. The home visits take place for all new children and help practitioners to gain useful information about the children and their families. Parents share information about children's needs, interests and abilities and this is

used to inform planning when children start at the setting. This initial contact with parents leads to a flow of ongoing two-way communication. Parents are highly complimentary about the care their children receive. Daily, practitioners take time to tell parents about the activities offered and how their children have been. Parents are encouraged to take an interest in their children's learning; they can look at their children's progress records whenever they like and can add comments about their learning at home; consultation meetings take place each term so that key persons can talk to parents/carers about the children's progress and agree future plans for development. The annual bed-time story session is very popular with the children and also provides an opportunity for information sharing with parents. Invitations to the event are prepared and children, parents and staff walk to post them. Children wear their pyjamas and excitedly return to the centre with their parents to enjoy the story-time session together. The views of parents and children are sought and used as part of the setting's self-evaluation. The centre manager communicates high expectations to staff relating to the quality of the provision to secure ongoing improvement. The settings self-evaluation accurately identifies the strengths of the provision and mostly well-targeted areas for development.

The practitioners are competent in the use of their planning systems. They plan weekly with the early years teacher so that realistic and challenging targets are set for children's individual learning and as a result children's progress is at least good in all areas of their learning. Each practitioner shows high enthusiasm in their work and instinctively knows how to support children as they play. They know when to play an active role in children's play and when to stand back and let them play freely. They foster children's language development impressively by showing a keen interest in what children have to say and by asking questions to stimulate their language and thinking. They encourage children's independence well and are always on hand to offer support as required. They encourage children to gain confidence in problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy, using routine activities to introduce mathematical ideas. Information and communication technology resources are used regularly so as to further support children's acquisition of skills for the future.

The centre has an excellent relationship with the host school. It shares the use of some of the school facilities, such as the forest schools' area and joint activities enable children to become familiar with the school staff; this aids their transition into school. Some pre-school children also attend other early years settings. Sharing of information takes place between practitioners and local childminders caring for children but not with another pre-school children attend, therefore they cannot be certain that the experiences children have here enhance those they have elsewhere.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are mostly very keen to attend; those reluctant to leave their parents/carers receive reassurance from practitioners and settle very quickly, going

on to thoroughly enjoy the pre-school session. Children show a strong sense of belonging and security and are very happy. They display good or improving levels of self-esteem and relate well to the adults caring for them and also their peers. They follow instruction well and learn the behavioural expectations within the setting. New children are well supported so as to become aware of the pre-school routine and what is expected of them. Children are keen to join in activities, working happily alone or in small or large groups.

Children are encouraged to talk and develop their communication, language and literacy skills. Many communicate their needs with confidence and demonstrate increasing vocabularies. Extra help is sought from the onsite speech and language therapist, as required and staff use signing and pictures to aid children's communication further. Positive results are achieved for children's means of expressing themselves through workshops such as 'non-verbal story telling' and activities such as describing the animals found in a box at circle-time. Children enjoy looking at books and listen intently to stories read by adults. Children demonstrate increasing control as they use writing implements to draw and some children attempt to write their own name and are encouraged to do this on their art work. There is a writing area set up for use and outdoors children paint and chalk practising their developing mark-making skills.

Children join in counting and have fun problem-solving. The practitioners cleverly embrace opportunities for children to find solutions to problems; for example, children are encouraged to count how many cups are needed at snack-time and when there are not enough they calculate how many more are needed; when an extra chair is set out for circle-time the practitioner leading the activity suggests children move seats to solve the problem but then seeks children's suggestions and they are quick to identify that the chair is not needed and can be removed. The pre-school has a computer and children are gaining confidence in using it and particularly enjoy printing out photographs to go in their 'learning story' progress records. They use programmable toys and have opportunities to go with practitioners to use the centre's photocopier.

Children develop a good understanding of the wider world through planned activities and use of resources that reflect positive images of diversity. Although there are only a few positive images prominently displayed within the pre-school resources such as multi-cultural dolls, small world figures and positive images in books are used within children's play. Activities are planned around cultural celebrations, such as Chinese New Year but do not embrace those applicable to the cultural diversity within the setting, although there are plans to do this in the future.

When the children are able to go outdoors they relish the time they spend here. The garden area offers a large home corner, planting areas, a covered area where children can look at books, use musical instruments, paint and draw and help themselves to dressing up costumes such as those of their favourite film characters. They play at the water tray, run around freely and practise their ball

skills. The children get plenty of fresh air and exercise and are able to explore and investigate the environment. The more agile climb trees and use binoculars to observe the garden activity. Children spot red strawberries on their plants and excitedly collect dishes to retrieve their harvest. Children help to carry and set out protective mats around the large climbing structure and then demonstrate their agility as they climb confidently up the side and over the top onto the internal platform from which they access the slide. They learn to take care when swinging their legs over so as not to injure other and safety risks are highlighted to them. As a result they demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children learn about healthy living; they talk about healthy eating and enjoy nutritional snacks and are encouraged to exercise. Children run around energetically negotiating the outdoor space; they run through the tunnel of trees, jump down to the lower grassed level, bounce on space hoppers with gusto, push and propel wheeled equipment and carry resources safely with control. They follow mostly very good personal hygiene routines and show excellent levels of independence as they pour their drinks, dress themselves and help to tidy up.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met