

Carmel Caterpillars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Claire Parnell

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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

Carmel Caterpillars Pre-School opened in 1974 and operates from a church hall in Sittingbourne, Kent. The pre-school operates term time only, Tuesday to Friday, from 09:15 to 14:45. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The preschool is registered on the Early Years register and the compulsory and voluntary part of the Childcare register.

There are currently 52 children on roll, within the early years age range. Of these 35 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school has experience supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs ten staff. Of these eight, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three member of staff are working towards a further qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children feel safe because there are extremely good systems in place to safeguard their welfare and to ensure they feel secure and happy in the setting. The well organised and effective staff team promote children's learning well throughout most of the planning and assessment system. The setting is committed to the continuous improvement of the provision although the evaluation of their systems is not always carried out consistently. Parents are actively encouraged to engage in their children's time at the setting with a wealth of information available to them. The setting has strong partnerships with outside agencies and other professionals to promote continuity of care and development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop consistent assessment systems to enable everyone who sees them to be able to track children's development
- develop the use of continuous reflective practice and self evaluation to identify strengths and priorities for development to improve the quality of the provision for children
- extend the accessibility of resources to promote positive images of today's society.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The stable and professional staff team work very effectively together to complement each other's skills and provide excellent safeguards for children. Child protection procedures are understood by all staff and a range of in-depth information is available to them to refer to in the event of a concern. Robust recruitment systems and checks are in place to make sure suitable people work directly with the children. These measures help to keep children safe from harm.

Effective risk assessment checks means that children play in a safe and secure environment. Staff carry out very effective entering and departure procedures to make sure children do not leave the setting unaccompanied. The required records are in place and a comprehensive range of policies and procedures thoroughly underpin practice and promotes children's welfare. These are always accessible to parents and staff.

The setting have a self-evaluation system that includes input from other sources such as school improvement partnerships. The setting identifies strengths and weaknesses and makes changes where needed to promote better outcomes for children. Past recommendations have been actioned and implemented. However, reflection on the settings practices and evaluation is not always consistently carried out, therefore the effectiveness of changes is not always monitored.

Children have access to a wealth of resources within the hall and the outside area. Staff provide the activities and equipment for the day's play due to the layout of the hall and the difficulty for children in accessing stored equipment under the stage. The resources meet each child's needs and offers plenty of choices. The staff are very vigilant so that children are well supervised at all times, both indoors and outdoors. The setting's commitment to sustainability is good and involves children with concepts such as recycling for craft activities, composting, and growing their own produce. This helps to develop children's understanding of environmental matters.

Equality and diversity issues are embedded into most areas of practice. Staff are very good at promoting inclusiveness in the participation of activities, ensuring all children are engaged and using their knowledge of children's interests and preferences. A high level of expertise and support enables children with special educational needs to achieve targets which are agreed between staff, parents and other professionals. Children have access to a range of resources that reflect their society but these are not always made available on a daily basis. For example, the setting does have skin tone colours for craft activities, but these are not always available on the mark making table or on the craft table for children to truly represent in their chosen art work.

The setting has strong partnerships with parents, engaging with them on a daily basis. Parents are made to feel welcome and part of the group, talking to staff on entering and departing from the session. Parents are well informed through newsletters, good information on the notice board and regular consultations. The

setting highly promotes an open door policy with regular support from staff regarding personal issues. The parents contribute to the children's learning journey by discussing their starting points on entry and by providing information about children's learning at home and family events. Parents value the service provided and feel their children are making good progress. The setting works very effectively with other professionals and settings. For example, close links and liaisons with local primary schools helps the transition for children and their parents into full time education. Partnership working promotes clear consistency of care for all children.

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

Children happily engage in all aspects of play and learning in this welcoming environment. Staff cleverly provide a successful balance of adult-led and child-initiated play. For example, staff interact with and ask very effective open questions to children playing in the imaginative area about their pirates game. They help initiate children's play by looking for treasure, then stand back and allow children to take the play further. Therefore children are encouraged to think and respond through prolonged shared communication. Children decide whether to take their play inside or outside, linking the activities to both environments. Children thoroughly enjoy sharing their discoveries with everyone else in the setting. For example, children collect the worms from the flower bed that they are digging in and enthusiastically show everyone inside and out, talking about the compost bin and the food that is growing.

Children confidently self register, finding their name on entry and listening intently to instructions at circle time. They respond well to signs used to communicate ideas and topics for the week. Some children attempt to write their own name and explore letters and sounds. They independently show interest in books, learning how to put them back properly so that the rest of the group can enjoy them too.

Children are intrigued by problems and are encouraged to work things out for themselves. They sort their equipment into colours to enable a game of the pirate barrel to take place fairly and equally, matching the colour of the swords with the bowls available, making sure the others have an equal amount. They explore equipment as to how it works and confidently ask questions to find out the answers to their problem solving.

The availability of construction materials, sensory experiences and natural resources encourages children to explore and investigate. For example, children use the materials available on the craft table to explore their imaginations by making patterns with rollers, other pieces of paper and with their hands, whilst thoroughly enjoying the feel of the paint between their fingers. They listen carefully to instruction regarding tone and volume at circle time, saying hello to everyone in low and high pitch voices as well as replying in a wobbly tone.

Children develop good skills to meet their physical needs. They learn how to propel

a bike forward, either by using their feet on the floor or by pedalling forwards and backwards. They show progressive hand eye coordination to push the swords into the pirate barrel, to paint using a pincer grip and to mark make with confidence. All these skills help to promote their future development.

Children's ongoing development is planned very effectively through a flexible and spontaneous system. All staff input into the planning on a daily basis, linking identified next steps to individual children's learning. Information is gained from parents very effectively before children attend the setting, to initiate the planning for their individual needs. For example, stories of Peppa Pig were made available for one child on her first day, as her parents made it known during a home visit that this was her favourite character. All staff share observations with the children's key person who uses this information to build a learning journey of their progress. However, not all staff use the same system to track children's development within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children socialise well with each other, learning to respect each other's play, to take turns and to share. Staff act as very good role models to the children, encouraging positive behaviour throughout the session. At circle time, children talk about what is acceptable behaviour in the setting by using thumbs up and thumbs down signs when staff talk about running in the hall and throwing the toys. Staff are quick to respond when further explanation and discussion is needed to promote good behaviour, helping children to develop a good understanding of right and wrong. This also helps children to develop a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe. Children have a secure and trusting relationship with the staff, and show their confidence and trust in adults who visit the setting by talking freely to them.

Children make healthy choices at snack time, helping themselves to drinks, pouring either milk or water for themselves and spreading their own toast. They help to prepare snack as an activity, learning to use knives safely as part of this task. Fresh drinking water is always accessible to all children throughout the day. Children are encouraged to use the bathrooms independently, with sensitive support for children who need additional help with toileting and hygiene procedures. Children talk enthusiastically about how to wash their hands, especially after messy craft activities. Staff support children's understanding of hygiene well by encouraging them to wash up their plates and cups after their snack so that others can use them afterwards.

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	1
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	1
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