

Caterpillars Pre-School

Birch C of E School, School Hill, Birch, Colchester, CO2 0LZ

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| Inspection date | 09/10/2014 |
| Previous inspection date | 26/09/2011 |

| The quality and standards of the early years provision | This inspection: | 1 |
|--|-------------------------|----------|
| | Previous inspection: | 1 |
| How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend | | 1 |
| The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children | | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision | | 1 |

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children consistently make exceptionally good progress because the extremely high quality of teaching ensures that they have engaging, stimulating and imaginative learning opportunities at all times, both indoors and outside, as they play, investigate and explore.
- Children develop firm, meaningful attachments to their key-person and the other adults caring for them, enabling them to play and learn confidently, with increasing independence. The highly effective partnerships with parents are recognised as key to the development of children's emotional well-being.
- All children are safe and free from harm as all staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding and child protection matters. They work tirelessly and efficiently as a team to create a safe, completely child-centred environment in which children thrive and flourish.
- Leadership is inspirational and contributes to the outstanding quality of the pre-school. The overarching ethos and vision for an exceptional standard of care is consistently embedded and applies to all aspects. A reflective approach and the meticulous evaluation of all activities, ensures that constant improvements are made, to benefit children and raise their achievement levels.
- Outdoor learning is a key feature which contributes to every child's outstanding progress. Children are confident, enthusiastic learners who use their imagination and creative thinking to structure their own play and learning. They are eager to explore and actively investigate their surroundings and talk about their discoveries.

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 interacted with children in the playrooms, in the outside area and toured the woodland area used by children.
- The inspector held discussions with staff and the manager and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
The inspector viewed a sample of documentation including evidence of staff suitability checks, information for parents, some policies and children's development profiles.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection.

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full report

Information about the setting

Caterpillars Pre-School was registered in 2010 on the Early Years Register. The pre-school operates from purpose-built premises within the grounds of Birch Church of England School in Birch, Essex. There is an enclosed area available for outside play. There are currently 25 children on roll. The pre-school opens from 9am until 2.30pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, 9am to 1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 9am to 12noon on Fridays. There is support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs four members of staff, including the manager, three of whom have early years qualifications at level 3.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider extending the already very good range of reading material provided for children, to include, for example, magazines, brochures and catalogues, to promote literacy, inspire children's interest in print, and further their understanding of the different uses of print.

Inspection judgements

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

All children make exceptionally good progress in all areas of learning and development at Caterpillars Pre-School. They benefit from the consistently excellent quality of teaching delivered in a well thought out, stimulating and child-friendly environment. Excellent, imaginative use of space means that all areas are fully resourced with high-quality play and learning materials that are all easily accessible to children. This creates an outstanding, child-centred and welcoming environment that is colourful, bright and stimulating. One delightful and well-utilised feature is the exciting, spacious wooded area on site, where children enjoy sessions of unstructured, child-led outdoor learning. They visit in small groups to explore the trees, negotiate uneven terrain, take risks and challenge themselves. Imagination runs freely as they investigate the 'Faerie Glen', seek out hidden animal friends or ask the 'grandmother tree' for permission to use the woodland. Staff are very aware that children respond differently when learning in an outdoor environment and they note the benefits to children who may be less able to express themselves in the playroom. All children enjoy collecting items from the woods, to help them understand the changing seasons and the natural world. These are used to extend learning back in the classroom through linked planned activities. Children use the well-resourced outdoor kitchen to create mixtures, exploring what happens when they combine different ingredients. Pots and pans, pasta, water and natural 'finds' are combined and explored as children make 'mixtures' and 'potions'. Younger children pour and tip contents from container to container, seeing what happens and enhancing their

understanding of mathematical concepts such as, weight and volume. They make pretend food and become engrossed in role play as they cook and serve their creations to willing guests. The large, walk-in sand area is set out as a building site, so children purposefully dig and move the sand about, wearing hard hats and high-visibility vests if they so wish. Staff support children and speak to them constantly, promoting their communication and social skills as they help children understand how to take turn and share. Independence is extremely well fostered as children know that they can use the resources as they wish. A small group of boys and girls gather items for a picnic, including a baby doll, buggy, play food and a bag to carry it in, and set off across the playground. They modify and refine their plans, talking to one another as they think of new ideas for the game. Children use the bikes and trikes to transport goods and take their friends for a ride. Cleaning and washing the outdoor toys becomes an activity where children use the soapy sponges with great glee.

In the main playroom, children freely move between activities, organising their own learning. They use the exceptional, homely role-play area for sustained and complex games, with props and costumes to enhance their play. The large, interactive touch-screen whiteboard introduces children to technology as they use the educational programmes or view a running slide show of themselves and their friends at pre-school. Children develop their creativity and artistic expression by accessing a range of collage materials and glue, scissors and paint. These resources are freely available for children to combine as they choose. The youngest children become engrossed in spreading the glue, experimenting with sticking and layering different items and showing immense concentration. They know where to place their finished art works to dry, before deciding whether to take them home or keep to display at pre-school. Miniature worlds with sand, diggers, road signs and tiny spades encourage children's imagination and cooperative play. Children use the excellent range of story books and non-fiction texts, some of which they choose when they visit the local library, appealingly presented in the pre-school's inviting library area. There is an additional cosy and attractive den for children who wish to escape to a quiet place with their book, with room for an adult as well. This creates an intimate area for storytelling, particularly appealing to very young children. Staff use character and animal puppets and vary their tone of voice well, to bring favourite stories to life. There is scope to further enhance the reading area with a wider range of texts, for example, magazines, catalogues and travel brochures, to provide children with experience of the uses of print in different contexts, and to stimulate discussion.

Every child has a record of their development in the form of a scrapbook style 'learning journey'. These are compiled by their key-person and include children's starting points as well as information provided by parents about their family and interests at home. As well as examples and photographs of activities the children have taken part in, there is a wealth of information for parents about child development and how different activities promote different aspects of learning. This demonstrates the very strong and effective partnership the staff have with parents. For example, staff provide ideas of things to do at home, to complement and extend what the children do at the pre-school. The staff carefully observe children's during their play and clearly communicate the next steps in children's learning, to enable parents to support their child at home. To extend this, parents contribute photographs and comments about their child's interests and activities at home. This brings the child's 'learning journey' to life and makes it very personal to the

individual child. Children enjoy browsing their own record, as they recall and comment on things they have done. Every child's progress is tracked against guidance documents, ensuring that any gaps in learning are quickly addressed. As part of this comprehensive system, the pre-school staff carry out the progress check for children aged between two-and-three years. Parents are able to use the information from this check to discuss when children have a health visitor check. Any identified problems are addressed with specialist help from the setting's special educational needs coordinator, and any additional outside help required is sought from a team of professionals. Although there are currently no children attending who speak English as an additional language, the playroom has posters and signs using different languages and dual-language books, so that all children can see the diversity of language in written form. Sign language is often used in singing and story sessions, which particularly benefits children who are in the early stages of language acquisition and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All children very successfully develop the skills and attitudes they need for the future. They are overwhelmingly confident, eager and enthusiastic learners, who take control of their chosen activities. The transition to school is made as seamless as possible. This transition is eased for those children due to attend the adjacent school, as they see the older children including in some cases their siblings, at playtime and lunchtime. Pre-school children are also invited to visit the school at various times, such as attending concerts and assemblies. A series of phased and planned visits, when they approach the time for moving onto school enables them to experience some of the changes ahead in a safe and supported way. When children are due to attend a different school, arrangements are made for teachers to visit, so they do not miss out on opportunities to prepare for the move. For children who attend more than one early years setting, links are established and information exchanged which supports them, in order to guarantee a continuity of care and learning.

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

Children attending Caterpillars Pre-School are extremely confident and demonstrate a strong sense of self as they engage with their peers at nursery. Their high self-esteem is promoted exceptionally well by staff from the earliest days. The well-planned admissions system and highly effective key-person system establishes outstanding relationships with the child and their family. A home visit is arranged before children start to attend, so that children are reassured by familiar faces once they start at pre-school. Children quickly develop firm attachments to the adults caring for them. They readily turn to the staff for support and guidance, knowing that their needs will be met. For example, children ask staff to read a favourite story or for help with changing clothing. Children's behaviour is managed calmly and consistently so they start to learn that their actions have consequences and that by being kind and helpful they can help to influence how others feel. This is facilitated well by the free flowing use of the outdoor area. With the open-ended play and learning this provides, children are able to challenge themselves and take risks in a supported environment.

Children are emotionally very well prepared for future challenges, such as the move to primary school. Staff emphasise children's feelings and provide activities which help them to identify and address their own development. A circle game using a mirror and facial

expressions cards gives even the youngest children a voice to express how they are feeling and start to think about what makes them happy, sad, bored or excited. Staff have designated time every day to work specifically with their key children, so that they can plan activities around the child's known next steps and social needs. For example, they may set up a game which involves waiting for a turn or to describe what they are doing. The key-persons are highly skilled in preparing children well for their future learning.

The attention to children's good health is outstanding. Children move about freely, developing control as they negotiate the various slopes and steps in the wooded outdoor area. They climb trees, balance on logs and stepping stones, and use wheeled toys to steer and move about the playground. Children know that exercise and exertion is good for them and tell staff they can feel their heart beating faster when they have been very active or energetic. Children willingly engage in these active sessions because staff are good inspiring role models. They join in, show enthusiasm and suggest ideas for the children to use to extend their play. Children's self-care is exceptionally well promoted. For example, they confidently select and put on protective clothing and boots when they wish to play outside, even in wet weather. They use the bathroom independently or with support, to wash and dry their hands. Tissues are available and children are taught how to keep their hands germ free. Children who require a nappy or wet clothing change are catered for discreetly and sensitively, to preserve their privacy. Snacks are served during the sessions. Children learn how to manage their own needs as they are able to choose when they would like something to eat and drink. They take their name card when there is a space at the snack table and enjoy a selection of well chosen, healthy options. These always include fruit, vegetables and energy giving foods such as cereal or crackers, along with a drink of milk or water. Independence is very well promoted as children serve themselves using tongs and spoons. They take their used plates and cups to the sink and wash them. Any food waste is recycled in a small compost bin, so children learn about sustainability and how to reuse waste material. At lunch time children sit together and eat either their packed lunch from home or enjoy a healthy meal prepared in the school kitchen. Staff sit with the children modelling good table manners and encouraging discussion about the foods they are eating. Children can talk about what is good for them and which foods are best seen as occasional treats. For children who become sleepy or tired during the session, beds are made up in a quiet area so they can rest undisturbed while others continue to play.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership of Caterpillars Pre-School is inspirational and positively influences every aspect of children's care and learning. All staff are dedicated and passionate in their commitment to maintain the highest levels of quality within the pre-school. Staff demonstrate through discussion their fully secure understanding of how to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements. The manager is the designated person with responsibility for child protection. Children's safeguarding is assured because they are cared for in a safe and secure environment, by staff who have excellent knowledge and understanding of child protection matters. This knowledge is refreshed at every staff meeting and any concerns are discussed to ensure they are dealt with promptly and efficiently. All staff and any

volunteers are checked and vetted for suitability. No staff member is offered permanent employment until they have successfully completed a probationary period. This includes all checks and references being found satisfactory. The indoor and outdoor environments are comprehensively risk assessed to keep them safe and child-friendly. Any equipment found to be defective is removed from circulation and if it cannot be repaired, is disposed of. The learning and development requirements are fully met because all staff have a very clear and secure understanding of how children learn. This informs how staff plan the activities they will provide, as staff know what they can do to encourage every child to make the individual progress they need. Initially, each child's starting points are assessed using information sought from parents and observations of children as they play and work. This ensures that the educational programme is effectively targeted at individual learning needs. The main playroom is compact and intimate. Staff skilfully make excellent use of every surface for displays, resources and features to interest and engage children. For example, wall displays with examples of children's artwork and emergent writing, and the interactive displays with objects and artefacts linked to any current or seasonal themes. The overall progress of children is tracked and monitored very closely. The tracking of individual children is very well established and monitored by the manager, who is currently reviewing and refining her methods for tracking groups of children, so that they can be assessed and their achievements noted. Any gaps or discrepancies in the learning opportunities the pre-school provides are also analysed and addressed. This may mean changing a routine or finding new ways to present resources, so that all children have access to what they need. This meticulous attention to detail ensures that every child is included and given the best opportunities to succeed and maximise their potential.

The manager monitors the quality of teaching and carries out regular, rigorous supervision and appraisals for all staff. Where training needs are identified they are addressed promptly, so that staff improve their practice continually. Additionally, all activities are thoroughly evaluated and discussed so that they can be adapted or revisited in the future. Robust self-evaluation provides a focus for ongoing development and improvement. The manager seeks out innovative ways to introduce ideas and information to staff. For example, using extracts from films to illustrate a point about child development, and scouring the internet for different ways to present activities to children imaginatively and appealingly.

Partnership working is fully embraced as this is seen as key to children's ongoing development. Parents are fully involved in contributing to planning for their child and are encouraged to include any information regarding what children do at home. They can continue the learning as the next steps are made very clear and reviewed regularly. There is a regular, two-way flow of information between parents and the key-person, so that all important details about children's care and welfare are exchanged. Where any additional needs are identified such as, special educational needs and/or disabilities, this is sought. Staff work effectively in partnership with a range of professionals, to ensure that children's care and learning needs are identified swiftly and fully met. Lines of communication are established with any other early years providers attended by children, including childminders. This is so that all important and relevant information is shared and continuity of care is maintained. The majority of children attending the pre-school go on to attend the adjacent primary school. This eases transition for the children and their families when the time comes as they are already familiar and know some of the changes they can

expect. Overall, children's progress at Caterpillars Pre-School is excellent. They are happy, adventurous and curious while they enjoy a superb educational programme and learn through well-structured, highly stimulating and active play.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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 | | There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration. |
| Not met | | There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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

| | |
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| Unique reference number | EY422633 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 850118 |
| Type of provision | |
| Registration category | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Age range of children | 0 - 5 |
| Total number of places | 16 |
| Number of children on roll | 25 |
| Name of provider | Caterpillars Pre-School |
| Date of previous inspection | 26/09/2011 |
| Telephone number | 07840 857592 |

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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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