

# Little Fishes Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY417708  
**Inspection date** 17/11/2011  
**Inspector** Anne Daly

**Setting address** Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church, 90  
Thorpedene Gardens, Shoeburyness, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA,  
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**Type of setting** Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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## **Description of the setting**

Little Fishes Pre-school is a Committee run setting, which originally opened in 1970, before moving into new premises in 2006 and being re-registered in 2011. It operates from a designated room and the large sports hall within Shoeburyness and Thorpe Bay Baptist Church, where there is level access to the entrance and all children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 30 children may attend the setting at any one time, which opens during term times from 8.55am until 11.55am on each weekday morning for older children and from 12.30pm to 3pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons for younger children.

The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and currently has 53 children on roll, all of whom are in the Early Years Register age range. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early years education for children aged two, three and four years, who come from the local catchment area and attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and there are systems in place to support children who have English as an additional language.

The setting employs 11 permanent members of staff, of whom eight hold level 3 early years qualifications and one holds an Early Years Degree, while four are working towards further early years qualifications. The setting receives outside support from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are clearly thriving while making rapid progress in their learning and development in a setting which genuinely recognises their uniqueness and individuality. The practitioners meet children's diverse needs exceedingly well by ensuring their participation in fully inclusive activities. The manager and her team recognise the importance of self-evaluation and they have taken very well-chosen and carefully planned actions for the benefit of children. Well-established communications between providers, parents and other agencies very successfully promote children's learning and development.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- enhancing the outdoor environment with numbers and words.

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

Children are very well protected from harm because practitioners have an excellent understanding of the safeguarding procedures and know when to take action to safeguard children in their care. They are very aware of the possible signs of abuse, have a very good understanding of safeguarding issues and know how to implement the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures to protect children. All practitioners caring for the children have been through rigorous recruitment procedures, including the undertaking of Criminal Records Bureau checks. Children are protected through the established well-qualified staff team ensuring that the premises are very secure and that they are supervising the children at all times. Detailed risk assessments are carried out to provide very safe environments within the setting and when small groups of children attend the 'Forest' school. Practitioners undertake risk assessments of activities to minimise the likelihood of accidents when children are learning through play. Children display excellent awareness of safety issues and understand how to keep themselves safe, for example, being aware to wear safety goggles to protect their eyes when using woodworking tools. Practitioners take effective steps to promote children's good health to prevent the spread of infection, while informing parents through notices of any infectious diseases that children may contract, including those for which they cannot exclude children from the setting. Through reflective practice, practitioners frequently review the setting's records, policies and procedures to ensure that they are fully safeguarding and protecting children's well-being and safety.

The well-qualified practitioners work enthusiastically together and support each other to provide wide-ranging worthwhile activities for children. They display self-motivation and commitment to promoting very positive outcomes for children by consistently developing their own knowledge through ongoing training. The knowledgeable practitioners are very sensitive to individual children's needs and know when and how to engage their interests by offering them support at differing times. This enables children to take advantage of the extensive play and learning opportunities on offer. Staffing ratios well exceed the minimum levels, including a minimum of two practitioners supporting children's learning in each of the three different learning environments. Children are able to make choices and to take decisions in which areas to play and learn, however, the outdoor area occasionally does not fully support their learning. For example, they do not always see numbers and words in this area.

Practitioners, parents and children are involved in self-evaluation, which ensures reflective rigorous monitoring of what the setting does well and in what it needs to improve. The structure of sessions evolved through practitioners actively involving the children in decision making, for example, their preference for a snack bar to allow them to decide when they are ready to eat. The manager is highly active in leading and encouraging a culture of reflective practice, such as, activities being effectively evaluated to identify if they have achieved the learning outcomes or can be further developed to enhance the quality of activities for all children.

Practitioners' exceptional awareness of equality and diversity issues underpin their everyday practices. There is a very strong focus on supporting the language, communication and social skills of all children to enable them all to participate and significantly achieve. Children are gaining an extremely good awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others through topic work. During circle time, children who speak English as their first language use different languages to say good morning, for example, 'buna' and 'bonjour', to actively develop an acceptance that not everyone speaks or understands English.

The manager and members of her team have developed unquestionably well-established channels of communication, with interagency teams to develop individual education and care plans for children with special educational needs. Some children attending this setting also attend other settings delivering the learning and development requirements, resulting in staff developing strong communication links to enable all to complement the education and care the child receives at other settings.

The excellent liaison with parents and carers contributes to improvements in children's achievement, well-being and development. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to share what they know about their child when they first start at the setting and they can speak to their child's key practitioner at any time. Children's profiles contain records of their next steps agreed by practitioners and the parents and carers whose views are really listened to and unquestionably valued, especially at formal termly meetings. Parents speak very highly about the setting and a written comment for this inspection highlighted 'the professionalism, dedication and passion shown by all the staff and, in particular, the detailed planning which takes into account individual children's particular interests'.

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

Confident children are making significant progress in their learning through being eager to attend a very inclusive environment. They are very motivated to concentrate and to try several ways to make something work rather than giving up, for example, when banging nails into blocks of wood. Practitioners have a comprehensive understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and consistently plan interesting, wide-ranging worthwhile activities linked to children's individual interests. Their continuous observations and assessments inform practitioners where each child is with their learning to enhance the short-term planning to effectively support children in achieving their next steps.

The outside play area includes a 'mini forest experience' for all children. In addition, small groups of children in their last year have weekly experiences at the 'Forest' school in a wooded area away from the pre-school environment. This provides excellent opportunities to enable them to experience stimulating activities in a natural environment, for example, collecting suitable logs to make a rope swing and confidently running between boundary markers. They fully understand that they still have to implement hygiene procedures before preparing and eating their hot snacks to keep themselves warm. They are inquisitive and fully immerse

themselves in exploring living things, including examining the bark of trees and digging up worms.

Children are very active learners and independently explore their learning environment, while actively making choices and taking decisions. They are very excited when undertaking activities and thoroughly enjoy participating in imaginative role-play with peers, including acting out their understanding of the wider world by recreating life events. This purposeful play provides children with accurate opportunities to learn about the types of equipment used at the supermarket, including a scanning machine and a till accepting credit cards. An extensive range of materials, resources and sensory experiences enable children to explore colour, texture and space. Children's purposeful, relaxed conversations with practitioners enable them to talk enthusiastically about photographs of their families displayed on the wall. They are actively encouraged to write for a purpose. For example, they write a letter to their key person asking them if they can find their folder. Children behave exceptionally well, joining in and cooperating with each other when playing ring games. They have excellent opportunities to develop the skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

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

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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