

Imperial College Early Years Education Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	26/07/2011
Inspector	Carol Willett
Setting address	Imperial College Early Years Education Centre, 8 Princes Gardens, London, SW7 1NA
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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

Imperial College Early Years Education Centre provides full day care and a holiday play scheme. It opened in 1992 and is run by Imperial College, and provides care exclusively for children of students and staff of Imperial College. It operates from nine rooms over six floors within converted Victorian houses on the Imperial College campus, in the city of Westminster. Access is via several flights of stairs as there is no lift. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.45am to 5.15pm all year round. The play scheme operates similar opening hours and is open every half term and during the summer holiday. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and a three acre secret garden.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 140 children may attend the nursery at any one time. Of these, 42 can be under two years and no more than 20 children under eight years may attend the holiday play scheme at any one time. The play scheme takes children up to 11 years of age. There are currently 135 children in the early years age group on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for free early education. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They support a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The Early Years Education Centre employs 39 staff, including three who work occasionally on the play scheme. The manager and early years supervisor are supernumerary. All staff hold appropriate level 3 early years qualifications and nine of the staff have degrees, of which three are early years graduates. One member of staff holds the Early Years Professional Status. The early years supervisor has a level 5 qualification in management. The setting employs an administrator and two cooks. Cleaners are employed by the college.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development overall as they are cared for in stimulating, well organised, attractive playrooms. The highly qualified staff team are caring, dedicated and experienced and value and treat each child as a unique individual. Children are confident and secure, showing high levels of motivation and independence as the childcare centre provides an exciting range of resources and experiences for them. The setting has an excellent capacity to continually improve as the management team are highly motivated. They continually monitor and evaluate all areas of the provision, effectively identifying targeted actions to improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance children's awareness of diversity, including special educational needs and disability issues.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Imperial College Early Years Education Centre is an outstanding provision. Children are exceptionally well supervised and safeguarded. Security is excellent and thorough risk assessments and daily checking procedures are undertaken to ensure hazards to children are minimized. For example, all windows have had opening limiters put on and broken toys are removed when staff notice them. Children display an excellent awareness of safety as they carefully hold the handrail to come down the stairs and they use equipment and tools, such as scissors safely. Staff are extremely confident in their knowledge of child protection as they all receive safeguarding training, and this is an ongoing topic raised at staff meetings. Managers attend 'safer recruitment' training, recruitment procedures are rigorous and all staff are vetted, with an appraisal system in place to ensure their ongoing suitability. The clear complaints and safeguarding policies are shared with staff and parents, so they know what to do if they have any concerns. Staff are very confident in the procedures to follow and accidents and injuries are recorded effectively and shared with parents. There are excellent systems in place to ensure children's individual medical needs are fully accommodated.

The early years education centre is very well organised and is suitably divided into nine age-related base rooms, and there are different areas for outdoor play. Children have daily access to an excellent range of resources and activities both indoors and outside. The secret garden provides an exciting stimulating area for children's play and learning. All resources are of a high quality, and mostly represent and reflect the diverse backgrounds of the children in the community and wider world. Photographs of the children and staff within the setting are used extremely effectively and are attractively displayed. They provide positive images of diversity and reflect the wide array of different cultures and family backgrounds within the setting, though the resources to develop positive awareness of disability are not so plentiful.

The setting develops excellent partnerships with parents that contribute significantly to children's care and well-being. As a result, staff ensure the individual needs and interests of children are fully taken into account when planning activities. Parents say they are kept very well informed, and they and their children are very happy with the care they receive. This is reflected in regular parent surveys, which managers use to improve their practices. Handovers are extremely friendly and informative as staff are happy to discuss children's progress daily. Parents are invited to attend progress meetings where children's development profiles and progress are shared with them. Parents are provided with a copy of the policies and procedures, and any changes to procedures are emailed to them. The setting obtains all required consents to ensure parents'

wishes are followed. Staff are highly committed to working in partnership with parents and others involved in the children's care and education.

Leadership and management of the early years education centre is excellent. The management team are extremely committed and enthusiastic about providing the highest levels of care and education for all children. Staff are all friendly and enthusiastic and work well in their room teams. They are qualified to a high level with many holding degree qualifications, and professional development is ongoing for all staff. The excellent supportive relationships between staff provide a happy, welcoming atmosphere for children's care and learning. The deployment of staff is carefully managed to ensure children are fully supervised at all times. Continual monitoring and self-evaluation procedures accurately identify the strengths and areas for improvement, resulting in effective action plans including issues raised at the previous inspection. This includes the outdoor area and the continuous refurbishment and redecoration of rooms. This helps to ensure continuing excellent outcomes for children.

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

Imperial College Early Years Education Centre provides a happy, stimulating environment for children's learning and development. Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning and development, as staff have excellent interactive skills and plan effectively for children's individual needs. Settling in sessions are flexible, and enable staff to gain an excellent understanding of children's needs. Staff in the baby rooms have an innovative, attractive way of displaying this information, by hanging children's photos on a line and detailing the uniqueness of each child. Some rooms make family books of photographs for each child. Older children are extremely excited and well motivated. They play well at their chosen activities. Staff make excellent use of the indoor and outdoor facilities, maximising opportunities for children's enjoyment and progress. Staff plan extremely effectively, based on their assessment of children's observations and interests and parents shared skills, such as in 'space' and music. Staff use these findings to carefully plan for the next steps of learning. Children are extremely confident in sharing their knowledge of music genres, such as jazz and reggae for example. They confidently sing a reggae song. They talk about how things grow at large group time, where they reflect on their learning. Children play a dynamic role in their learning and they are extremely inquisitive, asking important questions, such as 'does the sun grow?' and 'why do animals eat grass?'. Staff ensure they find out the answers for the children. Older children talk about space shuttles and meteorites and mountains on the moon as they play with stimulating resources linked to the topics.

Children with additional learning needs, particularly those that are not able to speak or understand English, make excellent progress. This is as a result of staff's highly effective practice of working in partnership with parents, finding out important words in their home languages and employing staff who speak a variety of languages. Staff ensure that books include words from the home languages and

they have a pen to translate words for children. The International Day celebrations enable all parents to share their cultures and family customs, with all the children. Staff have had equal opportunities and diversity training. They all learn Makaton to aid communication with children in the centre, and this is used very effectively in the baby rooms.

Children show they feel safe as they happily make choices and are actively engaged in their play. The effective key person system enables children to make close relationships, and the organisation of the baby rooms ensure very young children do not have too many changes to their key carers. Children are confident communicators and chatter happily to each other and staff. They have a well developed sense of safety. They carefully hold the hand rail as they come downstairs and use both hands to safely hold on, as they climb the steps to the climbing frame. Indoors, they safely use a variety of resources, such as scissors. Staff are vigilant as children play and use opportunities as they arise to reinforce children's awareness. Children's behaviour is excellent and they happily play together. They have their name labels on their coat pegs and their artwork and photographs of them at play, are displayed throughout the centre. This develops their sense of belonging and ownership of their environment. Children show positive attitudes towards one another, as they help each other pack away the toys and join together in play, and happily wait their turn on the computer. Staff sensitively intervene when children's behaviour is not acceptable and remind children about making good choices.

Children have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. They have exciting opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities, such as climbing, running, jumping and using the balancing apparatus in the outdoor play area. This helps them to understand the importance of regular exercise. They enjoy the natural world and fresh air as they happily explore the secret garden. Although the children are not able to freely access the outdoor area, staff ensure all the children go out as much as possible each day. Children enjoy healthy meals and snacks that are freshly cooked on site. They are aware that they need to eat fruit and vegetables, which are included in every meal. Water is freely available to all children, including the babies from the drinking station. Staff provide excellent care for children with serious medical needs, as all senior staff taking additional training. Information is displayed in each base room, so all staff are aware of what to do in an emergency. Older children show an exceptional understanding of the importance of a good personal hygiene routine. They independently wash their hands, brush their teeth and use tissues to wipe their noses.

Children participate in a wide range of interesting and challenging activities, which staff effectively link to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Children are fully interested in the activities, and their enjoyment is increased by the staff's high quality interaction and encouragement. Consequently, children are active inquisitive learners and gain necessary skills for future 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

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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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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