

Little Treasures Day Nursery at St Michael's First School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Patricia Webb

Setting address St. Michaels C of E First School, Market Place, Penkridge,
STAFFORD, ST19 5DJ

Telephone number 01785 712344

Email office@stmichaels-penkridge-staffs.sch.uk

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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.

Description of the setting

Little Treasures Day Nursery at St. Michael's First School has been registered since 2008 and is one of two provisions run by Little Treasures Day Nursery Limited. It operates from rooms within the school in the village of Penkridge, Staffordshire. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. It is open each weekday from 08.50 to 11.20, term time only.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time and the provision is in receipt of funding for early education for three and four-year-olds. There are currently 24 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The setting has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are four members of staff, all of whom hold relevant qualifications in early years childcare and education.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding. The setting is highly effective in ensuring that children's progress across all outcomes is delivered in a consistent and inspired way. Such exceptional practice enables children to make impressive progress in their learning and development given their individual starting points, abilities and interests. Strong partnerships between providers, parents and other agencies results in children's individual needs being identified and met most effectively as all children are well integrated in the setting. Practitioners are extremely diligent in protecting children and keeping them safe with a very high emphasis on assessing risk whilst still fostering a strong exploratory impulse in each child. Leadership and management is extremely proactive in identifying areas for improvement, enhancing the experiences 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:

- continue to build on good practice to explore further strategies for expanding the access to the outdoor learning environment.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children benefit immensely from the strong, motivational leadership and practice delivered by skilled and enthusiastic practitioners. They are totally committed to ensuring that the care they provide for the children is of the highest quality. This is achieved by the constant reviewing of practice, utilising individual skills of each

practitioner and providing ample opportunities for further training and exploration of new methodologies and ideas. Staff are fully aware of their responsibility in safeguarding children and share this duty of care with parents and carers to reassure them of appropriate action being taken if necessary. There is a stringent and robust system in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children as initial checks and references are completed.

Ongoing observation, assessment and appraisal of practice builds upon strengths and skills within the staff team, each of whom complement one another with their differing styles and approaches. A key to the success of this provision is in the systems for effective communication. There is constant discussion held during sessions to share children's achievements, difficulties and examples of their concentration at specific activities, aiding how their progress is observed and charted. Everyone in the setting including parents and children contribute to the evaluation process to identify any areas for development and build upon the key strengths. For example, parents complete regular questionnaires in a most informative way and children express their views as they draw pictures to describe how they enjoy Baby Bunny visiting their home.

Partnerships with parents and carers are highly valued as practitioners respect them as first educators in their children's learning and development and they are involved in all aspects of their child's care. Very detailed information is completed by parents and carers at the start of their time in the setting, giving staff a real insight into each child's character, stage in their development and key information about their likes and dislikes. Parents are invited to cluster meetings where they join with parents attending the main nursery, which is based on another site, ensuring that they are involved in their child's progress and can express their views. Open evenings are extremely well planned by staff and much appreciated by parents as they participate in some of the activities their children experience during the daily sessions. This is used by staff in a highly effective way to demonstrate to parents how children are learning through their everyday play, bringing the Early Years Foundation Stage to life. Parents and carers are also invited to be actively involved in their children's progress by participating in such strategies as taking story books home to read with their children. Baby Bunny also goes for visits to each child's home as parents and the children write and draw to illustrate what Bunny did and how he enjoyed his time with each family.

The setting has also developed excellent partnership working with other agencies and providers to ensure a consistent and well-informed approach is adopted to meet individual children's needs. This is highly successful in preparing children for a smooth transition into full-time school and in identifying and addressing any specific needs. Planning and assessment is highly effective in being extremely flexible to make the most of naturally occurring learning opportunities. Each key person is very aware of each child's starting point, what they can do now and what the next steps are in their progress. This results in highly individualised learning for each child, where they are each supported, encouraged and extended to develop to their full potential.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are confident and enthusiastic learners in an environment that encourages their exploratory nature and promotes their ability to develop critical thinking skills. For example, they delight in playing outdoors in the snow, bringing some snow inside to examine its properties as they wonder at the melting that happens. Such enjoyment is heartily supported by the dedicated practitioners who acknowledge learning opportunities in every activity and task which the children become involved in. For instance, the Friday morning breakfast session is used in a most innovative way to promote problem solving and mathematical concepts as staff encourage children to consider how one slice of toast can be made into two or four pieces or how a square can be made into a triangle. Staff are extremely skilled at effectively questioning children without overly interrupting their discoveries, thereby promoting their thinking skills and powers of observation. The recent presence of some workmen on the school site was used to broaden children's learning as they observed the drains being repaired, discussed the need for safety equipment for the workers and many confidently asked questions of the workers whilst being diligently supervised by the practitioners.

Children are highly motivated and enthused to access the rich learning environment indoors and outside although management is aware of the current limitations in accessing the outdoor play area and are exploring various strategies to improve this aspect of the provision. Children have grown sunflowers and care for plants indoors as they learn to take care of their environment. They frequently remind parents about the merits of recycling as they do this daily within the setting. Parents speak very highly about a recent project involving the children and their families where money was raised for supplying clean water to villages in Africa. Children speak animatedly about how they stuck coins onto the map shape of the continent and some explored globes at home to discover where Africa was in the world.

As a result of the heavy snowfall, planning has been adapted to capitalise on the circumstances and offer children wonderful opportunities to enjoy the weather. They access the role play area which is now a snow cave, explore the fascinating properties of ice cubes rattling down the plastic piping and take teddy for a sledge ride on the make-believe toboggan run created out of some metallic mats. Much delight is had as they use torches and mirrors to explore the light shining on the snow and ice supported by staff who extend their vocabulary using such terms as 'reflection' and explain what it means. They describe how they celebrated Chinese New Year, performing with their own created dragons in a display shared with parents and carers. They know that red is a very lucky colour in China and are able to refer to China on the world map.

The setting is truly inclusive in its approach, celebrating each child's uniqueness. Each child becomes well known to the consistent staff team and the key person system works effectively to ensure children's individual needs are met. Where a child requires more time and attention to settle and cope with new routines this is sensitively managed following in-depth discussions with parents and carers. Children's self-esteem is very effectively fostered as they enjoy well-deserved

praise for their actions and contributions, delighting in popping their self-made badges onto the train on the wall and sharing this with parents. Staff have recently introduced Makaton sign language into the setting and are working with all children to develop their use of this in their everyday activities. Such intuitive practice ensures that children can develop a practical understanding of the differing needs of people in society.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.