

The Owl & Pussycat Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY374766
Inspection date 10/06/2009
Inspector Beryl Witheridge

Setting address The Mobile Building, Bapchild & Tonge C of E Primary School, School Lane, SITTINGBOURNE, Kent, ME9 9NL
Telephone number 07981 576143
Email
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 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).

Description of the setting

The Owl and Pussycat Pre-School opened in 2008 and operates from a mobile building sited on Bapchild and Tonge C of E Primary School in Sittingbourne, Kent. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 and from 12.30 to 15.00 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday term time only. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 54 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Children receive funding for nursery education. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register. Children come from a local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and can support children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff; of these seven staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. The pre-school staff have a good understanding of how to support children's welfare and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). All children and their parents are openly welcomed into the group. Staff provide the appropriate care according to the individual needs of each child, with support from outside agencies when this is required. Management ensure that all staff are included in the self-evaluation process for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-school and the implementation of plans to continually improve their provision. An inclusive and welcoming service is provided.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that the outside play area is securely fenced so that children are not able to leave the premises without being observed
- ensure that the policies and procedures are up to date and contain the correct information for both parents and staff
- ensure that all staff are fully involved in the planning process and that children's next steps are clearly identified on the planning, so that all staff are aware of their individual needs

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of the pre-school is strong. The group's committee is very supportive and very involved in the life of the group. All records,

policies and procedures are in place but the group does not always ensure that the detail in the policies is correct and up to date so that staff and parents receive the correct information. All staff are involved in identifying the strengths and weaknesses and the self-evaluation of the provision. The self-evaluation is very clear and positive. Action plans for improvement are in place for areas they want to improve. Staff appraisals are in place and are well used to identify their areas of expertise and areas where they need to improve, including training needs. Some of the staff are extending their qualifications as well as all staff having the opportunity to attend short courses to develop and extend their good practice.

There is an excellent working relationship between the pre-school and the parents who are encouraged to be fully involved in the children's development. Parents receive a prospectus and come in to do an initial visit. When the children start, parents are able to stay with them if they prefer. They receive contact books and staff talk to parents about their child's starting points, this is included in the Learning Journey. There is an open door policy which provides parents with the opportunity to talk to staff at any time about their children's development. Parents are able to take their child's Learning Journey books home and have an input into them. Staff share their observations and assessments with the parents and discuss their child's progress with them, asking parents for their input. Parents also come into the group about three times a year to work with staff and the children in providing activities, there is clear evidence that parents, staff and children find this a positive experience. Parents' evenings are carried out once every other term when they discuss their child's development. The pre-school has good links with the local school and other agencies who are involved in the care of the children.

The pre-school has a comprehensive safeguarding children policy. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training and are fully aware of their responsibility to the children in their care. They know the procedures to follow if they have a concern and who to go to for help and support. All adults who work with the children are suitable to do so and hold Criminal Records Bureau checks.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The children are cared for in a bright, comfortable and stimulating environment. Children's work is proudly displayed throughout the building and outside in the garden, allowing them to celebrate a sense of achievement in their work. Children are able to have free flow between the pre-school and the garden and staff are located in all areas at all times. All resources and equipment are at child height making them freely accessible to the children, helping them to make decisions about what they want to do and gain independence. Staff ensure that they provide a broad range of activities and opportunities to help children make good progress in all areas of development and learning in the EYFS. Staff support children's learning by allowing them to lead the play but extend the experiences by asking open-ended questions and encouraging them to face new challenges and develop an interest in the world around them. All staff are involved in the planning and execution of the EYFS. The keyworkers identify next steps for their children, starting points are identified and these along with the children's Learning Journey are used as a base to help track their development. The next steps are used to

lead the planning along with the children's own ideas and interests but staff do not always ensure that children's names are added to the focussed activity sheets when they identify a specific developmental need. Staff evaluate the activities that they do with the children to enable them to improve or develop the activity to ensure that it is helping children to move forward in their development.

Children's safety is addressed through such activities as visits from the community police officer and the fire brigade who all talk to the children about different aspects of keeping themselves safe. Staff carry out emergency evacuation drills with the children, sometimes just the pre-school and sometimes with the school. The building is secure with alarms on the exits; however, these alarms cannot always be heard when the children are busy and vocalising, which could lead to a child being able to open the fire escape door and leave unnoticed. Staff are aware of this issue and are looking at ways to improve this; they talk to the children about safety and doors and which doors they are allowed to use and when. The wire fencing to the outside area is not fully secure; there are places where it has lifted leaving a gap large enough for a child to crawl through, if they were so inclined. This could compromise children's safety. Staff understand the responsibility they hold regarding the care and safety of the children.

Children are encouraged to be and stay healthy. They have daily opportunities for outdoor play in a well equipped play area and understand the importance of wrapping up to keep themselves warm or dry. During a heavy rain storm children are able to put on waders and Wellington boots and go out and jump and splash in the puddles, they thoroughly enjoy this activity. They extend their knowledge of the wider world through a wide variety of activities. They have a wonderful outside area, children have made good use of the garden by planting seeds, vegetable and flowers stimulating their interest in nature. They are hatching caterpillars and are fascinated watching them eat and grow. Children know the importance of good hygiene routines and are very independent. They are introduced to healthy eating options at snack time and are able to help prepare their own food, a group of children cut up the bananas ready for their bananas and custard at snack time, they use proper knives and are monitored at all times by a member of staff. Children pour their own drinks and have free access to drinking water throughout the session from a water cooler. They are seen to make good use of this when the weather is hot and they have been playing outside, regularly coming in for drinks.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school; they have good relationships with each other and understand about considering other people's feelings. Their behaviour is of a high standard and staff are good role models for them. When they are in a large group they sit and listen to each other. The staff are fully aware of individual children's needs and aim to support them through all activities, this establishes a positive relationship between the staff and the children. Each child is accepted for who they are and staff aim to provide all children with opportunities to enable them to grow and develop. Children are learning to become independent and make decisions for themselves.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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