

Necton Little Oaks

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY360445

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Inspector

Jill Bavin

Setting address

Grounds of Necton Primary School, School Road, Necton,
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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).

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

Necton Little Oaks is an established pre-school that opened in its current premises in 2007. It is situated in the grounds of Necton Primary School and operates from a purpose-built mobile unit. Children have access to a spacious but enclosed outdoor area. The indoor and outdoor accommodation is accessible for children and adults with mobility difficulties or disabilities. The pre-school serves a wide area. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school is registered to care for 26 children from two years to under five years. There are currently 42 children on roll and this includes 28 children who receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are held each morning from 08:50 until 11:50 and on Fridays this is extended until 12:50. Afternoon sessions are held on Mondays and Wednesdays for the youngest children from 12:30 until 15:00. The pre-school is managed by a committee and employs five staff members to work with the children. Three staff members have appropriate early years qualifications to Level 3. This Level 3 award is imminent for one member of staff and another has a Level 2 qualification. The committee also employs an administrator and a cleaner. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Alliance and receives support from the local authority. It is placed on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school has a close working relationship with the neighbouring primary school.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Provision at Necton Little Oaks is good. Children make good progress while enjoying themselves because staff have a good understanding of how children at this age thrive and learn best. Children from varying backgrounds and with varying abilities learn equally well because all are included sensitively and appropriately in all activities. Welfare and safety arrangements are meticulous and contribute extremely well to keeping children safe. Good leadership and management have ensured good improvement since the previous inspection and the setting is well placed for further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- implement plans to record formally the outcomes of regular self-evaluation activities
- use consistently clear and measurable next steps for children to enable them to make even better progress towards the early learning goals.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Good leadership and management successfully promote effective teamwork between staff members. Parents appreciate this and recognise that it means that children receive consistently sensitive support from staff and messages about what is expected of them. This makes a significant contribution to the speed with which they settle, grow in confidence and are ready to learn.

Strengths in leadership and management ensure that staff share a high commitment to ensuring children's safety and welfare. There is a comprehensive range of safeguarding policies to cover the extensive variety of activities on offer to children. For example, there is a safety document regarding visitors with animals, such as snakes. Most importantly, the policies influence practice. At the time of the previous inspection, there were very occasional lapses in routines to ensure health and safety. Since then the team has become more vigilant and good improvement has been made. For example, there is now a high door chain that ensures children cannot get into the office. The team works extremely hard, effectively and smoothly to ensure that children can move freely around the accommodation, both inside and out, safely taking full advantage of the many exciting and stimulating resources on offer.

The system of key-workers for small groups of children works very well. All the parents spoken to valued the work of their child's key worker highly. They appreciate the dialogue between the key-worker and themselves. They are confident that their child's individual needs and interests are taken fully into account in the planning of activities. They are also confident that if they have any concerns their views will be respected and supported. They feel very well informed and particularly enjoy looking at their child's learning story.

Good leadership and management are also evident in the team's shared commitment to continued improvement. All key-workers keep a working diary of notes relevant to their children at weekly team meetings. This ensures that all staff keep a close eye on how well activities are working for each child, and contributes to a practical on-going system of self-evaluation. There is a good understanding of the pre-school's strengths and a strong desire to identify what could be done better, evident in recorded notes that have been made in the recent past. However, the manager recognises that using the latest format to formalise the setting's self-evaluation is at an early stage of development. This means that some ideas about improving practice can be missed. Staff conscientiously keep records of what children are achieving and they plan individual next steps for each child in all areas of learning. These vary in their usefulness because some are clearer than others. Some serve more as reminders to staff of what to provide, than as clear learning intentions for children. This means that it is not always easy to use them to evaluate what a child has learned and what they need to learn next.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make good progress in this secure and stimulating environment. Staff take particular care to support children with learning difficulties. For example, they use picture symbols to explain routines and reassure children with autism. They take full account of national requirements for children with significant learning needs, and work closely with other professionals such as speech and language therapists. Individual education plans provide a useful record of priorities for children with particular difficulties, although some of the targets are more readily measurable than others. Great attention is paid to children's health and safety. Staff provide children with paper towels to dry their hands when they are playing outside so there is no risk of infection from using a shared cotton towel. Routinely, great care is taken to mop up water that spills from the water tray and so minimise the risk of a child slipping.

Staff are good at taking children's interests as the starting point for learning. For example, staff recently observed that some boys were playing imaginatively on the climbing frame as pirates. They quickly adopted pirates as a theme, which involved activities such as an outside treasure hunt, treasure stories and making pirate hats. Those girls who preferred to be mermaids were also accommodated. Staff develop key skills in all areas of learning effectively because they have well-pitched expectations of children arising from close observation and an astute understanding of each child's needs. They are effective facilitators and make useful comments to affirm children's learning and extend their thinking. They are skilled at incorporating mathematical ideas into a range of activities, for example, by encouraging children to use their knowledge of number during snack time. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted effectively through a variety of activities, such as controlling the computer mouse or foraging through grass, sand and twigs to make close observations of what they find. Children have plenty of opportunities to play imaginatively and staff support well, for example, by helping to join equipment which must suddenly become a fire hose for a fire-fighter. Children's physical development is helped when they use large movements and brushes for large 'water paintings' outside, and far more precise movements when they use the tongs to select a piece of fruit at snack time.

Children's response to snack time is impressive. They are extremely willing to try fruit and vegetables, helped by the attractive way that they are presented to them. They readily make their choices from a vast selection, which includes strawberry, pineapple, cucumber and carrot. They pour their drinks carefully and independently, knowing they must aim to half fill the beaker. Staff make very good use of this time to encourage a variety of skills and learning, while remaining relaxed and sociable.

A key feature of this successful pre-school is the extent to which staff achieve a balance between promoting good learning without over-directing children. Children are happy and fully involved. Their personal development is successfully promoted because of the extent to which they make choices and are purposeful in their selection of activities. They work comfortably alongside each other or independently and have a good understanding of how to use equipment sensibly.

They develop a strong sense of justice regarding sharing resources and adult attention and so increasingly make a positive contribution to their setting.

Strengths in leadership, management and teamwork contribute to a positive, happy ethos where children's ideas are highly valued and staff respond flexibly to accommodate children's interests. Consequently children report that adults are 'really nice' and launch themselves enthusiastically into their endeavours.

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?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	1

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?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
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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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