

Little Vikings Children Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY335247
Inspection date	18/06/2009
Inspector	Denise Franklin

Setting address	Knights Templar School, Liddymore Road, WATCHET, Somerset, TA23 0EX
Telephone number	01984 633 655
Email	RBaker2@educ.somerset.gov.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 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

Little Vikings Children Centre is a Sure Start Nursery in a Sure Start Children Centre, which has evolved from a pre school, to a Sure Start neighbourhood nursery to provide wrap around education and care for children from birth to five, based on the school site.

It re-registered in 2006 and operates from Little Vikings Children Centre, a purpose built building in the grounds of Knights Templar First School. It is situated in Watchet, a small coastal town in west Somerset. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 until 17.00, except Wednesday when it is open from 08.00 to 16.00, for 51 weeks of the year.

All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There is a separate small covered area outside for children under two years. There are currently 93 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 32 children receive funding for early education. Children come from Watchet and the surrounding villages. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there is good disabled access.

There is an overall childcare manager and a deputy who also acts as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Somerset County Council employs 19 members of staff to work directly with the children that includes a children centre teacher who works in two Children Centres. Of these, one holds a level 4 qualification, 14 hold a level 3 qualification, one holds a level 2 qualification and two staff who transferred from the original pre school who are unqualified. Staff are supported by an administrator and a cleaner. The Children's Centre provides family support and courses in the form of information, guidance, advice and training. The nursery is also registered to provide a crèche for parents attending training courses within the Children's Centre. This provider is on the Early Years Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Excellent care is provided for children who attend Little Vikings Children Centre and they make good progress. The centre is effective in meeting the needs of all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, because good assessment procedures are used well to plan a range of interesting activities and to identify children who need additional support. There are outstanding partnerships with parents and others and this supports children's learning and development well. The strong leadership team work closely together and have a holistic approach to supporting the children and their families so that they can provide high quality provision and care. Staff are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating practice and therefore the setting has good capacity to continue to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase the number of opportunities for children to develop their communication skills in small groups
- further develop the outdoor area to provide more challenging experiences, particularly to support children's physical development

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership team has a clear understanding of the strengths of the setting and the areas for development. There is a common sense of purpose between all adults who work closely together for the benefit of the children. Self-evaluation is effective and the setting has rightly judged themselves good in many aspects. The leadership team regularly monitor practice through observations of staff and in discussions to identify actions for staff professional development. This enables leaders to plan training that is relevant and supports improvements. The recommendations from the last report have been successfully met. All safeguarding procedures are fully met and rigorously implemented. Policies are detailed and all staff are fully trained to ensure children are very well cared for at all times.

The partnerships with parents and others are outstanding. Parents regularly receive comprehensive information about events and activities. They feel very well informed about their child's progress and are comfortable to share any concerns with their child's key person or any member of staff. They have free access to their child's 'Memories' file and can contribute to these at any time.

There is an excellent programme to support children transferring to the primary school. This means they are familiar with staff, the environment and other children. During the inspection children enjoyed visiting the reception class and having a story told to them. Very good links with outside agencies ensure that children and families with specific needs receive the maximum support to which they are entitled. Excellent use is also made of specific funding to support families. For example, some children and their families are involved in a project to raise awareness of using the local environment to support their children's learning, development and enjoyment. Adults work very closely with other settings to share good practice, for example, staff are involved in a buddy project, which is bringing staff working with birth to seven-year-olds together.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

All children attending Little Vikings have a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities available for them, both inside and outdoors. Provision is good and children are making good progress in all aspects of their learning and

development. Planning is comprehensive and staff are becoming more confident with planning, both from the child's interests and ensuring that all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework are covered. Staff effectively review both the interests and individual learning and develop needs of each child using the 'Unique Child's Sheet'. Information about the child is recorded in discussion with the child, parent/carer and key person. Staff make good use of detailed assessment information, which is clearly linked to the development matters of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This information includes observations of individual children, samples of their work and photographs. Staff track each child's progress effectively by keeping detailed records of each child's achievement, dated regularly using different coloured pens and also by building up a portfolio of each child's achievements called 'Memories of my time at Little Vikings Children Centre'. Children and parents are very pleased to receive these folders when their child moves to school. Detailed information is also passed to the school.

Children clearly enjoy themselves. In Puffins, children from birth to two years enjoy developing physical skills by throwing and catching balls and pushing small toys up a ramp. One child was observed being held in the sand tray, enjoying the experience of feeling the sand on his feet. Older children, in Penguins, enjoy describing the texture of powdered mash potato and painting outside, riding bikes and taking on the roles of nurses. Adults are well deployed to support children by modelling play and questioning satisfactorily to extend children's vocabulary. However opportunities for children to develop and extend their communication and language skills in small focused group work are limited. The outdoor area is used well for children for a range of activities to support all areas of learning. The setting has rightly identified that they want to develop this area further to provide more challenge for the more able and to extend children's physical development.

During the inspection the children experienced a visit from the fire brigade. This is a regular visit and effectively helps to ensure that children learn about being safe. Excellent safety procedures in the centre ensure children are safe at all times and very good procedures were observed when children were moving from the centre to the school. All other welfare requirements are fully in place and there are excellent systems to ensure that the care and welfare of the children is high quality. The children have a good understanding of the need to be healthy and enjoy a range of healthy snacks and meals whilst at the centre. Behaviour is outstanding. Children are polite, listen carefully to instructions and respond extremely well to adults and other children. They are developing good independent skills and are being well prepared for the future.

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?	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?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
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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