

The Wendover Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Susan Marriott

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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*.

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Description of the setting

The Wendover Pre-School was established in 1969 and registered at its current premises in March 2005. The setting is run by a voluntary management committee. It operates from the meeting room at the Wendover Memorial Hall. Children have access to a secure garden area to the side of the meeting room for outdoor play.

The setting receives funding for early education. It is open each weekday during term-time and sessions are from 9.00am to 12.00pm. A lunch club is available from 12.00pm to 1.00pm, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 29 places and there are currently 33 children attending who are within this age group. The setting serves the local and neighbouring communities. A small number of children attend other settings such as childminders and other pre-schools.

There are seven staff members, of whom, six hold relevant childcare qualifications. The pre-school is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This is a very friendly and inclusive setting where the children make good progress in their learning and development. Staff sustain consistently good quality interaction with children to draw learning from play and promote positive attitudes to learning. Most aspects of children's welfare are promoted well and observation and assessment systems are emergent. Strong partnerships with parents and carers and planned home visits mean that staff have a good knowledge of each child's needs. The manager and staff have an extremely positive approach to continuous improvement and are steadily developing self-assessment procedures to support the ongoing review of their work.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the planning and organisation of snack time to maximise the learning opportunities and ensure that every child receives an enjoyable experience
- improve the quality and frequency of observation and assessment, using the information gained to ensure that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities, with particular reference to the needs of more able children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is promoted well as the setting has effective safeguarding procedures. Staff attend regular training and review their procedures to ensure that they keep up-to-date with this area of work. Stringent checks are carried out to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Regular risk assessments and daily checks are recorded and ensure that hazards are minimised. Good daily practice, such as ongoing explanations from staff, reinforces children's understanding of safety issues. For example, children are reminded that wet floors can be slippery and are directed to use an alternative toilet whilst excess water is mopped up from the floor.

The setting has appointed a new manager who is very proactive in addressing issues which impact upon the quality of provision for children. She has a clear vision for the future, involving staff, parents and children in reviewing the setting's practice. Staff work well as a team and are actively supported in attending further training. This helps create a positive environment, where children feel secure and happy. The generally good organisation of the limited space in the indoor play area means that children are offered a wide range of activities that promote their development and the outdoor play area is fully utilised to offer children an extended range of opportunities.

Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well-supported in their achievements because staff have a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager has already taken steps to increase the links between planning and assessment and the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, recent improvements are not sufficiently embedded in practice to secure children's progress. The children's learning records are not yet completed with sufficient frequency and observations do not link closely to the Practice Guidance document to inform activity planning and ensure that children achieve as much as they can.

Managers and staff have a clear understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to implement appropriate policies and provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. They work with parents and carers to ensure that they understand each child's background and culture and are therefore able to meet their needs and promote children's awareness of individuality. Good communication with parents means that staff are able to work well in partnership with them. Parents receive thorough information about the setting and their child's progress, for example, through newsletters, daily talks with staff and review meetings with key workers. The children's Learning Journey books celebrate their experiences and over time, they tell a story about each child; their learning, their friends and the activities they enjoy sharing with others. Staff watch and notice each child at play in order to understand and support their individual well-being and development, enabling each key person and family work together. The setting also works well with other professionals such as speech therapists, other pre-school settings and the local school, further promoting consistent and appropriate care for children.

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

Staff give children a really warm welcome on arrival at the setting, greeting each one as an individual. They introduce visitors to the children and this helps children to feel safe and secure, knowing who the stranger is and being reassured that this is an approved person. Children are encouraged to take an active part in registration time, counting how many adults are present and offering their 'number' to the staff member recording attendance. Staff offer praise for those children who have helped to 'make orange glue this morning' and offer reassurance to children who express concern about forgetting their library book. Staff ensure that children are aware of the range of activities on offer at each session and invite the children to have fun. Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel safe. They confidently select resources and play independently or with other children and staff.

The environment is attractive and set out with defined areas which support the six areas of learning. Equipment is generally accessible, enabling children to make independent choices. For example, children playing on the car mat extend their play by choosing additional figures and a construction set. Children's enjoyment is enhanced and their learning effectively extended because staff join in appropriately with their play and discussions. As children participate in a printing activity, staff speak clearly and calmly at all times, continually affirming children's achievements with praise and promoting children's independence. They include teaching about colours and counting in their commentary, so that children learn effectively through play based activities. Group activities and songs contribute significantly to the quality of the provision. For example, the children excitedly join in with 'Five Little Muffins in the Bakery Shop', sung to a very lively and catchy 'rap' beat. They mime the actions of putting the honey and nuts on the top and begin to calculate how many muffins are left, supported by staff use of visual aids and numeral cards. Children also learn to identify and clap the number of syllables in their name.

Generally good organisation and mainly expedient use of the key worker system, including planned home visits before the child starts, means that staff know the children well and can therefore provide appropriate support. Parents help to prepare 'Comfort Sheets' with pictures of familiar family members, pets and happy memories. These provide effective support for staff when comforting children who become vulnerable or who may become distressed at being left by their carer. Snack time provides some good opportunities for children and staff to interact in small groups but ineffective organisation of this session leads to some learning opportunities being missed. Music plays calmly in the background and the children help to set out the plates and cups. Name labels placed at the tables help with name recognition. However, children bang their cups on the tables and noise levels rise as the children wait for too long for everyone to be seated and served with snack.

Confident staff encourage children to explore and develop their own play,

sensitively intervening to extend children's thinking and understanding. This means that children take an active role in their own learning and develop positive attitudes to this. Children's self-esteem is promoted as they are offered opportunities to talk about themselves, their families and recent experiences. Parents are strongly encouraged to share excitement and pleasure in their children's learning through the Learning Journey book. They can add family photographs and items of significance for their child and complete 'speech bubbles' with snapshots of information from home. Regular looks through the book then provide staff with a starting point to discuss shared memories with children. Staff listen carefully to children's conversation and respond with great sensitivity. For example, children talk about not being able to get to sleep at night because they have a sore throat. A member of staff suggests taking lots of drinks of water during the session and perhaps 'telling mummy' when she collects them.

Children's behaviour is managed well and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs. For example, children who are running out of the room are challenged and referred to the golden rules displayed on the door. Staff remind them that 'we walk in pre-school, we do not run'. Children learn about the relevance of healthy lifestyles and develop skills for the future as they become independent, share ideas and work together. For example, staff encourage children to try to fasten their own coats rather than doing the task for them.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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