

Characters Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY332113
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Inspector Sara Jane Frost

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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*.

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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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.

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Description of the setting

Characters Day Nursery opened in 2001 and is privately owned. It operates from five rooms within a two storey building in the Stoke area of Plymouth, near Central Park. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The nursery is open each week day from 8.00am until 6.00pm for 51 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years. The nursery offers full day care for 40 children between the ages of three months and five years. There are currently 55 children aged from 6 months to under five years on roll. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are 10 members of staff, most of whom hold an early years qualification NVQ level 2 or above. The manager has a level 4 qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are well cared for and make good progress in relation to the age and ability. Staff clearly promote children's welfare and learning, and confidently demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of each child's individual needs. Children are safe, secure and clearly enjoy their time at the nursery. The nursery staff have worked hard to develop a strong partnership with parents and continue to develop links with other agencies, to ensure all children received appropriate help and support of their development. The manager has identified and acted upon areas for development within the nursery. Future plans demonstrate the capacity to improve the service the nursery provides.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure children's independence skills are fully promoted particularly when planning organised activities and during snack and meals times
- provide regular opportunities for outdoor play
- ensure all required documentation is fully maintained, including parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and records of all staff checks.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff ensure children are kept safe from harm as they demonstrate a sound understanding of signs and symptoms of child abuse and are able to follow the

procedures in the child protection policy. The nursery has a designated member of staff who is responsible for child protection.

Staff working at the nursery have undergone or are in the process of the appropriate vetting procedures. The nursery manager ensures staff whose checks have not been fully completed are not left alone with the children. However, the checks completed for one member of staff are not fully recorded. The manager has developed an induction process for new staff members; regular appraisals and supervision are in place to monitor all staff's professional development, suitability and to ensure the needs of the nursery provision are fully met. The manager of the nursery is usually supernumerary, however, to ensure the required ratios were met today the manager was working in the toddler room due to staff illness.

Staff clearly know the children well and ensure that all children particularly those who require extra support to leave their parents or carers, receive the appropriate care and individual attention to settle in the nursery environment. Children are well cared for and make good progress in relation to their age and ability. Staff clearly promote children's welfare and learning, and ably demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of each child's needs.

The nursery staff have worked hard to develop a strong partnership with parents and continue to develop links with other agencies, to ensure all children receive the appropriate help and support in their development. Information is shared with parents on a daily basis both verbally and in written format; parents also have regular access to their child's developmental records. Parents are invited to share their thoughts on their child's progress and on the targets that key staff have set for the next steps in their learning. In addition, newsletters are provided to inform parents of the term's planned topic and items they may wish to bring in from home. A range of leaflets for parents are accessible in the porch area with an active parents information and notice board displayed in the reception area showing, for example, photographs of staff, their role within the nursery and their qualifications. Parents state they are very happy with the care their children receive and how approachable and receptive all staff are and that their children are eager to come to nursery.

The nursery is a safe and secure environment. Entrance to the nursery is via a finger pad recognition system, those not recognised are required to ring the bell to gain entry. This provides additional security for the children and staff within the nursery provision. Risk assessments are carried out in all areas of the nursery and a range of checks are carried out throughout the day. Thermometers are used throughout the rooms to ensure suitable temperatures are maintained. However, the toilet area was noticeably cold.

Staff ensure all children are well supported as they have developed effective links with other professionals. The member of staff responsible for the co-ordination of special educational needs throughout the provision has recently taken on this role. She has already accessed short courses, identified further training and has developed close links with the local authority for additional support and guidance. All staff have an understanding of individual education plans and the nursery uses the Boosting Language Auditory Skills and Language (BLAST) programme.

The nursery manager has identified the provision's strengths and weaknesses. The recommendations from the previous inspection have been fully met; by introducing more natural materials such as large cardboard tubes and thick rope encourages children's hand/eye coordination whilst threading. All six areas of learning are regularly covered ensuring children receive the appropriate balance in their learning and development. The embedding of a relatively new staff group was a priority, which, the manager states is now in place, enabling the nursery to move forward, for example, by accessing the Bristol Standards Quality Assurance programme, which the manager feels will further enhance the nursery's practice.

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

Children clearly enjoy their time at the nursery. From entering the building they settle well, both in the baby and toddler room and within the pre-school room. Older children, seek out their friends and become involved in their play.

The range of resources provide children with plenty of choices and opportunities to follow their interests. For example, children engage in small world play, and develop further by accessing additional props to prolong their imaginative play. Some activities are led by staff, such as, today's planned craft activity of making Christmas crackers. Staff use this opportunity to discuss shape, size and colours. Although scissors are provided for the children to use safely in the allocated craft area, their independence is not always fully promoted as the paper to cover the cracker was cut for the children by staff. Older children are confident in recognising letters within their own name in other words. Some are able to recognise other letters. Children access the book corner independently where they handle books appropriately and listen to staff reading stories. The respect for books is further encouraged as regular visits to the nursery are made by the local library services. Staff promote children's understanding of similarities and differences through a range of activities, such as festival celebrations; staff use every day opportunities to expand on this, for example, discussing child's recent holiday abroad to visit extended family. In addition, children have access to a selection of play resources that reflects positive images of the wider world. This creates an inclusive environment that encourages children to feel a sense of belonging and promotes their self-esteem. Children learn to take responsibility for animals as they look after some stick insects. They learn to keep themselves safe, as they move around the rooms with care, and talk about how to keep themselves safe when out shopping in the city.

Children are very confident and inquisitive, and babies take pleasure in accessing interactive toys and listening to the various sounds. They enjoy snuggling into staff as they look at picture books. Toddlers clearly enjoy movement to music and show great delight when dancing and shaking small musical instruments. Their manipulative skills are promoted well as they use cutters with the play dough. Older children use the computer, mouse and follow simple programs; those with more confidence help others. This encourages them to develop skills that contribute to their future economic well-being.

Staff encourage younger children to develop good manners as they commonly use please and thank you. Children's self-esteem is regularly fostered as staff constantly praise achievements both verbally and by use of actions such as clapping and smiling. At various times throughout the day children come together such as at mealtimes; this enables children to become familiar with all areas within the nursery and different staff. Therefore, transition, for example, from the toddler room to the pre-school room is not so daunting for a young child.

Children's health is promoted as they are provided with a range of healthy foods at mealtimes. At snack time children have access to a range of fresh fruit such as pear, banana and orange. By staff distributing the pre-prepared fruit and pouring out drinks for the older children it reduces opportunities for children to develop their hand/eye co-ordination skills and their independence. Staff follow good hygiene practices in all rooms; no outdoor shoes are worn throughout the nursery, staff ensure protective clothing is worn when nappy changes occur, and surfaces are wiped clean before and after use. Children are encouraged to wipe their noses and use the bins provided. Most of the staff hold a relevant 1st aid qualification; accidents both within the setting and those occur which outside of the provision are fully recorded.

Staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and use a key person system to support children to achieve good outcomes. All children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Systems are in place to monitor children, although the process of recording is changing as the nursery is developing a new system of learning journal for each child; observing them at play, assessing their level of development and then targeting the next steps in their learning along with further involvement from parents and carers. Observations are used to plan the nursery's weekly programme incorporating children's individual interests and learning styles.

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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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