

# Litlington Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspection date** 02/02/2010  
**Inspector** Lynne Kathleen Talbot

**Setting address** Village Hall, Meeting Lane, Litlington, Royston,  
Hertfordshire, SG8 0QF

**Telephone number** 07984 935193

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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

Litlington Pre-School registered in 1992 but has been operational since 1985. The provision operates from the village hall in Litlington. The building is accessed via a ramp. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The provision is open each weekday during term-time only, and sessions are from 9.15 am to 12.00 pm on Monday to Thursday and from 11.45 am to 2.45 pm on Fridays. A maximum of 26 children may attend the provision at any one time. The setting receives funding for Nursery Education and is registered on the Early Years Register.

There are currently 40 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years age range. 30 children attend other settings, such as the early years unit of the local primary school, other pre-school groups or childminders. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and children for whom English is an additional language. There are eight staff members, of these, six hold relevant childcare qualifications and one is completing training to achieve a recognised Level 2 childcare qualification.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is led by the ongoing assessments of children's interests and stages of development, using a good range of resources and inventive activities, ensuring that children receive experiences that foster good progress overall. Staff create a very welcoming environment, using effective safeguarding procedures, risk assessments and welfare routines, ensuring that they have an accurate knowledge of each child's needs and that each child is fully included. Partnerships with parents and carers are well-developed and involve them in the day-to-day well-being of their children, whilst partnerships with other settings that children attend are in the process of being developed. Procedures for self-evaluation are being established, resulting in a provision that seeks to make continued improvement and enhance outcomes for children.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the planning to identify challenge and differentiation for children and provide opportunities for children to consistently practise and extend their skills with particular reference to health and hygiene awareness, problem solving and the development of independent learning to enhance their good progress towards the Early Learning Goals
- develop further the links with all other settings providing for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and involve parents within the learning programme and planned learning for children to ensure continuity and

- coherence to support outcomes for children
- develop further the use of self-evaluation and quality improvement processes as the basis of ongoing internal review.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Broad safeguarding procedures ensure that children are fully protected. Designated staff update their training regularly to fully protect children. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that only vetted persons have access to children, and ensure that the collection of children is closely monitored to ensure safety. A recent review of policies to limit the use of mobile phones and cameras adds to the secure environment. Defined recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so and hold the required checks. Staff use effective risk assessments to minimise hazards. This includes daily and generic checks, assessments for outings undertaken, and regular reviews by staff and committee to ensure that safety remains paramount.

Managers have clear expectations for continued development and work with the staff group and committee to evaluate each days activities. Staff work very well as a team, contributing to planning and daily sessions. Training is given an emphasis, with staff using appraisals to help towards their personal training and development log. They ensure that they are up-to-date with information by using a staff liaison book to share information. Self-evaluation processes are being developed, but have yet to be fully used to form the basis of ongoing internal review. The free-flow play, both indoors and outside, is facilitated by staff who closely monitor ratios. Children's individual learning styles are respected, as shown by the opportunities for active learning in all areas, thereby ensuring that all children achieve. Parents comment that the pre-school is 'excellent', and that 'it is a brilliant resource for the community, helping the whole family to be involved'. The environment is conducive to learning, safe and well-cared for, and receiving continued review and development, such as the planned all-weather surface in part of the outdoor area. Resources are largely well-used, but staff sometimes miss the benefit of spontaneous child-initiated play to pursue learning objectives rather than planned adult learning. Consequently outcomes for children are good overall.

Staff work well with parents and the active committee to ensure that a forward thinking approach is maintained within the partnerships. Cohesive methods of communication, such as questionnaires, newsletters, a suggestion box and the parent-liaison officer for the committee, support the relationship. However, there is not yet a clear system to show parental involvement in the planned learning for their children and this means that potential opportunities to develop may be overlooked. The setting places the promotion of equality of opportunity and children's personal, social and emotional development at the heart of all work, consistently promoting diversity and social awareness in order to tackle unfair discrimination. Parents play an integral role in helping to share home languages and cultures, and to offer their knowledge and skills about the wider world, enabling children to become socially aware. For instance, children have explored

both 'Australia Day' and Portuguese customs with the help of parents. Staff have worked to develop the relationships with other settings that children attend and provide summary development sheets for children to share with those settings. However, there is yet to be an ongoing system established to fully support cohesive and ongoing learning whilst children remain within more than one setting.

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

Children are offered a range of activities that help them make good progress overall in their learning and development. Assessment through recorded observations is clear, and the information gained is used effectively in planning. Systematic and spontaneous observations track progression closely, whilst next steps are developed for each child and monitored. However, planning does not yet identify how planned activities may either support or challenge individual children and some activities fail to fully develop children's independent learning or capitalise on spontaneous learning opportunities. For example, within mark-making during activities or providing facilities to enable children to lead an activity such as planting. This means that children may not always be supported to achieve their full potential.

Children have some ownership of their health and hygiene, choosing where to play, fetching their own coats and boots for outdoor play, and using defined routines for hand washing before snacks. They are creative and spend extended periods of time developing games together, both indoors and outside. For example, they explore free digging in the raised bed outside looking for buried treasure and digging for worms. They extend their games into the play houses and develop their imagination. Children regularly care for living beings, such as stick insects, frog spawn and ants. They grow some vegetables, such as potatoes, tomatoes, carrots and green beans, enjoying tasting sessions after picking them. Balancing beams are popular, as is the 'living Willow' tepee, and children explore their developing physical skills. Children are creative and eagerly take part in musical activities, using tape recorders where they dance and follow instruction, and singing to the piano played by a regular visitor to the group. They sing confidently, clapping and stamping to rhythm and beats, with these activities supporting their health. However, they are not always helped to make links between their own health or general hygiene by being involved in daily routines, such as preparation for snacks. Children engage in conversations easily with each other and adults. They focus for extended periods of time drawing and colouring; as they do so they share easily, saying, 'can you help me to write my name after you have done yours?'. Children are identifying initial sounds and letters. For instance, when seeing a list held by staff, children are seen to name the initial sound of their own name and find it on a list understanding the beginning and end of the list and linking it with the alphabet showing pre-reading awareness. They use computers regularly, learning how to manage technology and explore number, shape and size.

Children take an avid interest in what is around them and are learning to be part of the community. For example, they learn about recycling each day as they collect

food scraps to be given to a staff members chickens, learning about not wasting food. They take part in fund raising on a regular basis, such as a charity 'Toddle', and have raised funds to support Leukaemia charities after first hand contact within the group. Staff use these opportunities to extend children's learning, and they have enjoyed visitors to the setting to share information concerning health, such as looking at bloods, skin health and sun safety. Children's behaviour is good, they respond to requests from staff and often praise each other saying, for instance, 'that's a nice one you have done'. Children are clearly showing social and learning skills that will help in their future lives.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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