

Star Playschool and Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Gordon Jackson

Setting address

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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).

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

Star Playschool and Nursery opened in 2005. The playschool, nursery and after school/holiday club operates from a detached, self-contained building in the grounds of Chiltern Primary School in Basingstoke, Hampshire, with which it has close links. It is registered on the Early Years Register, and on both the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 54 children may attend the setting at any one time, aged under eight years. The fully inclusive setting is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 99 children aged from two months to under five years on roll. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two to four. Children attend from a wide geographical area. The setting supports a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs 15 staff. The staff are suitably qualified, ten of whom have at least Level 3 early years qualifications, and all of whom are further developing their childcare qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. The playschool and nursery setting provides an excellent source of education and care for its children, based on the work of the outstanding manager, the very well qualified staff and a very effective committee. The setting has an open access policy and welcomes children of all abilities and from all backgrounds. The setting fully endorses and follows the guidance provided for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the carefully thought-out practices are fully embedded in everything the staff do. These ensure that the needs of all the children are very well met, and enables them to make excellent progress. Based on the exceptional quality of the current provision, and the many improvements made since the previous inspection, there is excellent capacity for continued improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- to extend and improve the covered play area in order to facilitate all-weather play activities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager has utilised her considerable previous experience of working with young children, together with recent educational and care and guidance initiatives,

to ensure that all the children's needs are very well met. In particular, safeguarding procedures are exceptional, with comprehensive vetting procedures ensuring that staff are suitably qualified to work with children. She is well supported by her two deputies and the team of other well qualified staff, and they provide a wide range of activities for the children. All activities develop both educational and social skills and are fully geared to both meeting the guidance provided for the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensuring that the relevant stepping stones to the early learning goals are accomplished. The manager has completed a clearly thought-out and detailed self-evaluation for the work of the setting, which very accurately identifies strengths as well as areas and points for action. This illustrates well the ambition the setting has to improve further. The committee provides an important monitoring role in ensuring that the setting provides the best possible provision for the children.

Overall, as the result of the provision made for them, children make very good progress in acquiring a broad range of valuable skills and knowledge, and they also develop self-confidence. Particularly important is the opportunity given to them to make choices for themselves in a variety of areas. At various times in the week, each age-group of children has the opportunity to use the main hall in the adjacent infant school, which provides useful space for developing physical skills, and also helps build confidence relating to future transition to the Reception class. Staff interact very well with the children, and, as a result, very good levels of progress are made in terms of the children's development. This progress is carefully monitored at all times, and very good, detailed records are kept which parents and Reception teachers in the infants school find useful. These records also ensure that staff provide the children with suitably challenging new tasks, which well suit their needs.

Regular formal and informal staff meetings ensure that a full interchange of information occurs relating to children's work and progress, and both short term and long term planning provides fully for the varying needs of the children. Staff are at pains to ensure that all children are fully included in all activities. Staff training has a strong focus on ensuring that all staff are fully conversant with their roles and responsibilities, and any new initiatives that might arise. Outstanding partnerships are established with parents. In addition to the normal 'meet and greet' opportunities and formal parent meetings, a termly newsletter is used well to maintain communications with parents. Comments received from parents indicate that they hold the setting in high regard, and they especially appreciate the exceptional care and guidance provided for their children.

The manager and her staff, ably assisted by outside advisors, regularly review and evaluate all procedures and the activities provided, and they look enthusiastically for new learning opportunities. They share a common goal in trying to identify new and exciting learning experiences based on the children's interests and enthusiasm. They also encourage parents to contribute to this through recommended home learning activities.

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

The manager and her staff have a very thorough understanding of the importance of creating a safe and welcoming environment. The welfare of the children is seen as a priority. As a result, children entering the setting for each session feel at home and quickly settle to a wide range of productive activities which have been carefully set out round the various age related rooms. Children are guided to use resources safely, and staff ensure that any risk is minimised. As a result they are very safe. There is a wealth of good resources, and the children are provided with both teacher-led activities, as well as the chance to choose for themselves. This greatly benefits their learning. The outdoor area is used well to support learning in all areas of the curriculum, whenever possible. Staff know the children very well, and ensure that activities are adapted to suit their varying needs, ensuring that they all take a full part. For their part the children are keen to participate, and their behaviour is excellent.

The setting's facilities are very good, and they are staffed appropriately. Consideration is given to enabling the younger children to have sleep opportunities as needed. Staff ensure that all children have access to fresh air at various times during the day, through the provision, for example, of pushchairs and other toys in the outdoor area. Hygiene is given due importance and nappy changing facilities are separate from play areas. The staff are clearly dedicated and caring and they ensure that the younger children quickly settle and are given very good learning experiences. A good example is the provision of a small 'tented' area equipped with visual and tactile activities. Soft background music provides a calming environment which helps to settle the children, in addition to providing pleasant auditory experiences. Staff constantly interact with the children, using a good range of stimulating photos and pictures on the walls, and the children are happy to talk with them.

The children have very good relationships with the staff, and, following suggestions from them, will readily move from one chosen activity area to another. Children using the main computer and other keyboard type activity toys are carefully monitored to ensure that all have access as required. The computer programs are fully educational and contribute well to a variety of learning and skill areas. Children enjoy books and stories, and activities such as counting, painting and construction tasks take place throughout the day. Health aspects are given a high priority, with children understanding the need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating food.

Children feel safe in the knowledge that they can trust staff. During activities, the staff sit with them and this helps to encourage conversation. At snack time, the setting provides a variety of healthy eating options, and staff use the opportunity to discuss with the children healthy eating practices. No undue pressure is placed on the children at such times and they are clearly happy with the arrangements. Water is readily available at all times for the children to take when required. As a result the children have a very clear understanding of how to be healthy.

Children are very friendly, and they co-operate exceptionally well with each other. One example related to a child giving another a ride on a trike, and another case concerned two children interacting well as they played together on the computer. This shows how well they contribute to their own community. The children are particularly keen to show the result of their craft-work activities, and good wall displays exist of finished paintings. The setting provides a very wide range of carefully selected learning activities linked to the weekly theme. Although there is a reasonably large and well-equipped outdoor area adjacent to the building, this only has a small covered area, which limits the opportunity for children to play outside during bad weather. On occasions, children are given the opportunity to undertake 'environmental exploration expeditions' around the main school grounds and to go on supervised walks and other trips, so providing them with a sense of adventure. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported in the setting. A trained specialist advises staff appropriately when required. Overall, the children in the setting are very well looked after and supported by skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff. They encourage the children's curiosity, provide a wide variety of experiences and tasks and allow them the opportunity to make very good progress in the various areas of learning and development. Consequently the children are prepared exceptionally well for their move to school and for their future learning.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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