

Little Otters Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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*.

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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.

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Description of the setting

Little Otters Pre-School has been registered since 1994. It is a committee run group which operates from the village hall in East Budleigh, East Devon. The pre-school has use of a hall, entrance lobby and toilet and kitchen facilities. There is an enclosed outdoor play area, with an all-weather surface. The pre-school is open term time only. Sessions run from 9.15am to 3.15pm on Monday and Friday, from 9.15am to 11.45am on Wednesday, and from 9.15am to 12.45pm on Tuesday and Thursday.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 22 children on roll in the early years age group. The pre-school is registered to receive government funding for early education and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A total of seven members of staff are employed to work with the children, a majority of whom hold relevant early years qualifications. These include a teaching qualification, Early Years Foundation Degree and early years qualifications at level 3 and 4.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment by well qualified and enthusiastic staff who know and support them extremely well as individuals. Children are involved in a broad range of activities, both inside and out, which are planned according to their own interests and ways of learning. The excellent partnerships with parents and other providers contributes towards the effective assessment system and children's progress. The inclusive self-evaluation methods successfully identify areas for improvement. Staff are committed to training and improving qualifications, which ultimately benefit children's experiences.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- promote literacy skills further in the outside environment, by making mark-making resources more readily available in this area
- develop further systems for monitoring consistency in the completion of children's assessment records.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are enthusiastic and work well together as a team. They communicate effectively so that the sessions run smoothly and children settle quickly. Staff

implement clear policies and procedures to promote children's welfare and safety. Detailed risk assessments are completed to ensure children move around freely and play in a safe environment. Overall, staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children, which includes how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures for follow if there are concerns. They keep their knowledge up to date through training, and existing injuries are recorded as routine. This all helps to protect children from harm. There are clear recruitment procedures to check that staff are suitable to work with children.

Staff work hard to create a welcoming environment as they arrange the hall on a daily basis to provide various areas of play. The outside area is utilised well so that children can choose to play inside or outside according to their own preferences. However, there are not always mark-making materials readily available for children to extend their literacy skills in the outdoor environment. Staff know children extremely well as individuals and make appropriate resources available according to children's interests and preferences. Children with additional needs are very well supported to ensure that they are fully included and make good progress. Children develop a positive attitude to people's differences through the excellent example set by staff, and as they use resources that reflect positive images of diversity.

Staff promote excellent partnerships with parents, carers and other connected professionals. Parents receive comprehensive information about the setting by way of a detailed prospectus and starter pack, regular newsletters, a website and displayed notices. New parents and children enjoy a flexible settling in process and there are daily opportunities for exchanging information in order to meet individual needs. Communication diaries are completed by staff, parents and other settings that children attend, which contribute towards promoting children's learning and development effectively. The strong links with local schools support children's smooth transition to reception classes, as they have opportunities for becoming familiar with teachers and the physical environment before they start.

Overall, the self-evaluation methods are successful in helping to identify areas for development, including feedback from staff, parents and children. However, the completion of the children's progress records is sometimes inconsistent between different members of staff. Children benefit from the staff's commitment to continuous improvement by attending training and studying towards further qualifications. The recommendations set at the last inspection have been addressed, which has improved aspects of children's health and learning.

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

Children are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy their time at pre-school in a welcoming environment where they make excellent relationships with staff and each other. Children behave very well. They know what to expect through familiar routine and clear explanations. Children are constantly busy and focused on their self-chosen activities, which they can complete to their own satisfaction. Children receive regular praise and encouragement for their effort and achievement, which helps boost their self-esteem and confidence. Children develop a strong sense of

belonging to a community. They regularly visit a local school to use the facilities, where they are welcomed and enjoy seeing their friends and siblings.

Children are highly valued as individuals by a team of staff who have an extremely good understanding of the importance of, and how to promote, individual learning through play. They successfully identify children's interests and different ways of learning. Staff plan activities to encourage various areas of learning through children's choices and preferences, using a clear assessment system that identifies children's stages of development and plans for their next steps. Children hear and use mathematical language during their play and everyday meaningful situations, such as counting how many children and adults are present. Most children use language well to communicate, organising their play and making their needs known. They like to participate in familiar stories, sometimes being involved in making up a story about 'Little Otters'. Children's creativity is well promoted. They use their imaginations very well and can easily access a wide range of materials to express their ideas. For example, a group of boys pretend to be sharks swimming in the sea. They recall a recent story about a 'shark in the park' and decide to make telescopes to look through for 'miles and miles'. They easily access materials such as cardboard tubes, scissors and tape and work very well together, discussing and negotiating how to solve problems to complete their self-chosen project. Staff offer sensitive interaction and effective questioning, which helps children recall, solve problems, develop vocabulary and understand the world around them.

Children enjoy a healthy lifestyle. They learn good procedures for their personal hygiene, and have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise. Children make choices in what they eat from healthy options offered at the café-style snack area. Children develop good independence in practical skills as they spoon chopped fresh and dried fruit onto a plate, and pour their own drinks from a choice of milk or water. Children learn about aspects of their own safety as they are reminded to be aware of others during physical play, and understand how to use equipment safely. They know how to stay safe when out walking through discussion and the good example set by staff. Regular practises of the fire drill means that children know what to expect in a real situation.

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	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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	1
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	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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