

# Yeovil Opportunity Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	143103
<b>Inspection date</b>	11/01/2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Carol Johnstone

<b>Setting address</b>	Balidon Centre, Summerlands Hospital Site, Preston Road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2BX
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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

Yeovil Opportunity Group was founded over 30 years ago and has been registered since 1992. It operates from within the Balidon Centre, part of Summerlands Hospital in Yeovil. The group is a registered charity and is run by a management committee. Children attending have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The children have use of a main playroom, three smaller rooms, a sensory room, and kitchen and toilet facilities. There are four separate outside play areas.

Yeovil Opportunity Group is registered on the Early Years Register. They may care for a maximum of 26 children aged from one to five years. There are currently 28 children on roll. The group is open Monday to Friday mornings from 9.00am to 12.00pm and from 1.00pm to 3.30pm on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons in term time only.

There are six staff employed plus an administrator and a qualified teacher oversees the day to day running of the group. All staff working with the children have appropriate childcare qualifications. In addition, the group have volunteers supporting them on a daily basis. Drivers and escorts are also employed to manage the mini bus which transports children to and from the group. The team is regularly supported by therapists and health care professionals who are situated nearby. The group also receive support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's individuality is respected and valued by this warm and caring staff team. Children's specific care needs are met sensitively and effectively and the staff get to know the children and their families very well. There is a strong emphasis on promoting children's communication and independence. The manager and staff team carry out a regular process of self-evaluation to identify areas of practice that could be further developed. All staff demonstrate a genuine commitment to the continuous enhancement of the children's enjoyment and learning. Their engagement with parents and other professionals to help support this is outstanding.

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

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- keep a clear daily record of children's hours of attendance (Documentation) 11/01/2010

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

- develop the assessment records to more clearly show children's identified next steps and how they will be facilitated through the planning of activities
- ensure that the trees in the outdoor area do not present a hazard to children.

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

The manager and staff have a very clear understanding of safeguarding issues. They are able to recognise the types of child abuse and the signs to be aware of. There is also a regard to the particular issues that may present when caring for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and some staff have received specialist training in this area. Consequently, a child at risk of harm would be quickly identified and the appropriate support gained for them. The safeguarding policy is regularly updated to give staff clear guidelines and it is made available to parents. Thorough recruitment procedures which include police, health and reference checks ensure that staff working with the children are suitable to do so. Volunteers who regularly work in the setting are also police checked. In addition, they are never left alone with the children and are not permitted to carry out toileting duties. Staff complete a probationary period during which time they are closely monitored to ensure their suitability. Following this, there are regular appraisals for all staff to identify any training needs or performance issues.

Regular risk assessments are carried out of all play areas and of any outings. However, a tree in the outdoor play area has very low hanging branches which may be a potential hazard for children. Security of the premises is very effective and no access can be obtained other than through a locked door which is monitored by reception staff. A regular fire drill is carried out to ensure that staff and children are clear of what to do in an emergency. However, the current procedures for recording children's attendance do not give a clear picture of arrival and departure times which could be detrimental in an emergency.

Recommendations made at the last inspection have been met and the team are very keen to make continuous improvements to their practice. In addition to the self-evaluation process, activities are evaluated to monitor their effectiveness and to see how they can be improved.

All the necessary documentation to support children's welfare is in place. For example, the accurate recording of medication given and any minor accidents. Staff ensure that parents are informed of these and notification is sent with the children on the bus home. Policies and procedures outlining all aspects of the group's practice are regularly updated and made available to parents.

The group's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff are totally committed to involving parents in the care as much as possible and in supporting them in whatever way they can. Home visits are made before children start in the group so that children can get to know the staff in their own environment. A detailed baseline assessment is carried out jointly with parents. There are regular review meetings with parents and for those who are unable to get to the group independently, these are carried out by staff in the child's home. A daily

communication book is sent home with each child to tell parents what their child has enjoyed or achieved that day and there are also regular newsletters. A comprehensive parent prospectus gives details about the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and explains which activities relate to each area of learning. Regular parent questionnaires are issued to invite feedback and suggestions. There are several drop-in sessions for parents which offer support and there is also regular training available to help parents share the communication methods used by staff within the group setting. For parents who have English as an additional language, there is additional support from an external translator and staff learn key words to help aid communication with the parents and the child.

Partnerships with professionals and other settings who share the care of the children are also outstanding. There are weekly visits from physiotherapists and speech and language therapists and staff follow the routines of recommended exercises for the children on a daily basis. There are two special educational needs coordinators working in the group who guide the staff team in the care of the children. A paediatrician regularly visits the group and there are frequent review meetings held which include all professionals caring for the child and the parents. When a child attends another pre-school in addition to attending the group, staff visit before the child starts to discuss aspects of care and to ensure that the environment is suitable. This is followed up with regular visits to discuss children's progress and finally to coordinate the necessary transition information for when the child starts at school.

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

Children have access to an excellent range of adapted toys and equipment. The group also have a dedicated sensory room where children can explore a range of interactive resources. Recently, the group obtained a range of specialist IT equipment so that children can use computer programmes independently to help their motor skills and hand/eye coordination. Good use is also made of natural resources, for example, staff found a block of ice outside in the cold weather which was used by the children for exploration and investigation.

A range of activities are available each day which cover the six areas of learning within the EYFS. Staff try to base as many of these as possible on the interests of the children. Recently, some children were showing particular interest in water play. Staff extended this to set up pipes, tunnels, tubes and wheels in the water area for children to explore. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points within the EYFS and there is a weekly meeting to discuss the children's progress. However, some of the written assessment records are not completely up to date and some do not always clearly show children's identified next steps in learning. The written planning does not always clearly link in with facilitating children's required next steps and staff are currently reviewing the way the planning is done to help address this.

Children have good opportunities to develop their gross motor skills and they particularly enjoy playing outdoors on the adapted swings and climbing frame.

There is also large play equipment within the play rooms where children can stretch and climb. Children are encouraged to practise their fine motor skills during activities and there are always crayons, brushes and cutting equipment available for them to try out. Children are given lots of choice in the group. For those that cannot communicate verbally, there are choice boards and photos which help them express what they want to do. Staff are very imaginative in finding ways to help the children express themselves and are sensitive in quickly picking up children's non-verbal communication when they are frustrated or upset.

Children are offered a variety of fruit each day and there are special 'being healthy' days when parents come in to make vegetable soup and fruit salads with the children. Recently, the group introduced cafe style snack time for children to independently choose when to come and have a drink and some fruit. However, for children who prefer a sense of structure and routine, a more regular snack time is used to help them feel secure. Children learn that they need to wash their hands before snack time and there are adapted facilities so that they can do this independently. Staff maintain good hygiene practices, using disposable gloves and separate bags when nappy changing. The play tables, snack table and toilet facilities are cleaned regularly.

Children have visits from the local fire brigade and police officers when they get to try the equipment and hear about how to keep safe. Staff also talk to the children about being careful when waiting for the bus to come and not to talk to strangers. Each child has an individual risk assessment carried out, based on their individual and specific needs. This ensures that they are safely cared for and their particular supervision needs are known. Staff ratios are high, and, in addition, there are regular volunteers who support the staff each day. This good level of adult support means that the children have lots of individual time and attention. The flexibility and cohesiveness of the staff team also helps the children feel safe and secure. Children are always reminded to say please and thank you. There is also a strong emphasis on them learning to be responsible individuals, taking turns and sharing. Children receive frequent praise and staff celebrate all of their achievements with them, for example, clapping when they complete a puzzle correctly and displaying certificates on the wall. Children are very comfortable and relaxed with the staff and there is a consistently happy, warm and friendly atmosphere in the group.

## 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	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	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

<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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