

Sticklebricks Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Sticklebricks Pre-school is privately owned, and has been registered since 2000. It operates from its own premises, comprising a large play room, kitchen, toilets and reception area, situated close to Sticklepath Primary School, on the outskirts of Barnstaple.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children under eight years at any one time, all of which may be in the early years age range. There are currently 38 children in the early years age group attending at different times. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. The setting also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years. This provision is registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The setting opens on weekdays during school term times, from 8am to 6pm. There are four members of staff working with children, all of whom have appropriate childcare qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are met. They benefit from an inclusive environment where staff work well with parents and others involved in supporting individual children. Processes of self-evaluation are appropriate and enable the setting to identify areas for improvement. However, some gaps in monitoring systems result in inconsistency with regard to some areas of practice and record keeping. Action plans have focused on improving children's learning and development experiences, and children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. However, significant weaknesses in reviewing documentation such as regulatory policies and procedures has resulted in specific legal requirements not being met.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the safeguarding policy to include the procedure to be followed in event of allegation being made against a member of staff (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 10/09/2010

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

- develop the systems in place to confirm the ongoing suitability of staff to work with children, in order that children remain safeguarded and protected from harm

- review information provided to parents to ensure it is up to date and reflects current practice within the setting, for instance, by ensuring they have access to policies and procedures that reflect the current regulatory framework
- provide opportunities for children to use and experience their home languages in their play and learning, in order to demonstrate that linguistic diversity is valued and that children's individual cultural backgrounds are respected
- further develop the systems to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the provision, with particular regard to ensuring children's developmental records are accurately maintained and written policies and procedures regularly reviewed to reflect actual practice

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Effective staff management has resulted in an enthusiastic staff team who demonstrate a secure understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff know how to follow procedures in order to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, and have experience of working with other agencies to support vulnerable children. However, safeguarding duties are not met because the written policy does not include the correct procedure to follow in the event of a safeguarding allegation against a member of staff. This has resulted in a breach in welfare requirements relating to safeguarding, and to keeping suitable documentation to support children's safety and wellbeing. Employment procedures and systems of undertaking suitability checks are appropriate and ensure those working with children are suitable to do so. Systems to ensure the ongoing suitability of those working with children are in place, although these are currently informal. Visitors record the times they are present, and are supervised at all times. The premises are secure, and there are suitable risk assessments in place. These are supported by the thorough daily checks conducted by staff to ensure all areas remain safe for children.

Self-evaluation within the setting is developing, and overall is effective in identifying most areas for improvement. Team meetings are used well to involve staff in reflecting on practice and to plan for the future. For example, the staff team have conducted a major review of the learning environment, evaluating how resources could be used more effectively indoors and outside to promote individual learning. They ensured feedback from their planning sessions with children was included. The result is an extended learning provision where children use resources and equipment creatively, moving confidently between different areas as they develop their play.

Staff have identified shortcomings in reviewing all policies and procedures to ensure they include the required detail and reflect current guidance and practice. For example, the sickness and behaviour management policy have not been reviewed since 2006 and consequently make reference to national standards that are no longer regulated. Plans are in place to address this. The setting supports children who are bilingual or who have English as an additional language. Overall, staff ensure they are supported appropriately. However, there are inconsistencies in opportunities provided for children to use their home languages in their play and

learning, and there is little in the setting to show that linguistic diversity is valued. For example, most examples of writing in the setting are in English, such as the labelling of resources, and captions on displays of children engaged in activities. Parents have different views on how their children's fluency in English should be promoted, and some prefer that their child's home language is not used in the setting. Staff respect parents views, however this results in inconsistent experiences for children, some of whom have their languages and cultures celebrated while others do not.

Staff work effectively with parents to gain information regarding each child's individual needs, so these can be supported. They ensure parents have ample opportunities to discuss their children's progress and development, and encourage them to take part in their children's learning. For example, children took seeds they had planted in pots home with them to be nurtured prior to being planted in the settings' garden. This project relied on parental involvement and was most successful, providing a meaningful link for children between learning at pre-school and at home. The setting displays some information for parents effectively. For instance, reminders about sun protection are prominent, and information about how to make a complaint and where parents can contact Ofsted are clearly displayed. However, information included in written policies and procedures is not always accurate as these are not always reviewed to reflect current guidance and practice. The setting has worked effectively to establish relationships with other professionals involved in supporting children's wellbeing. Children with specific learning needs benefit from effective communication between the setting, parents, and other agencies, for example, speech and language therapists. This ensures consistency in setting aims and objectives for children.

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

Children's welfare, learning and development are supported appropriately overall. Health promotion with children is effective. They show understanding of the importance of personal hygiene, for example, washing their hands appropriately, and using tissues and disposing of these in the correct bin. Children learn about the importance of a healthy diet, and helping to plan the snack menu ensures they develop awareness of foods that are 'good for you' and those that are treats. Children enjoy the health benefits of being physically active. Space and resources are well organised so that children can engage in vigorous activity indoors or outside, according to individual preference. They are extremely enthusiastic participants in their 'sports day' and demonstrate good co-ordination and bodily control as they take part in events. For example, children manage very well as they balance a bean bag on their head and negotiate their way round the course, and race to the finish line. Children enjoy being part of a team, and they enthusiastically cheer their friends on in each event. There are winning teams, but staff also ensure all children's enthusiastic participation is rewarded and children are proud of their certificates and medals.

Children take part in activities that raise their awareness of personal safety. For example, they practice the settings emergency evacuation procedures in order to

learn how to conduct themselves in the event of a fire, and they understand the safety rules relating to the use of different types of equipment and resources. Children clearly feel themselves to be safe within the setting, and their positive interactions with staff demonstrate that they feel emotionally secure.

Children are keen and enthusiastic learners who make steady progress towards the early learning goals, relative to their individual starting points. They benefit from a balance of adult led and child initiated activities, and children have a meaningful role in planning the learning programme. Short meetings are held with children throughout the week to discuss their thoughts and ideas and to identify themes and topics of interest. For example, children have identified a general theme of 'the seaside' as being of interest, and have suggested a wide range of related topics to explore, such as holidays, sea creatures, and rock pools. Systems of monitoring children's progress towards the early learning goals are effective overall. Staff show clear understanding of individual children's stages of development, and identify objectives for each child, in order to further their progress towards the early learning goals. However, records of children's achievements do not always accurately reflect children's progress because they are not consistently updated. Children's next steps in learning are not consistently noted in their records.

Children enjoy a balance of activities that support their learning and development in all areas. They demonstrate good levels of self esteem in their confident interactions with each other and with adults. Children are well behaved overall. They share and take turns well, and they show kindness towards one another, for example, older children help younger friends to get a drink from the water cooler. Children show a good understanding of number. They count purposefully and accurately, and can do simple calculations such as 'one more' and 'one less'. They use their problem solving skills well, for example, children build ramps to race cars down, considering that each ramp must be 'the same' in terms of height and length. They identify which cars go 'fastest' and 'furthest' and consider different types of vehicles such as cars and lorries. Children communicate well with each other and with adults. For example, a child who is extremely competent using the computer carefully explains to another child how to use the mouse, and how to select and use different programmes. Children gain an understanding of diversity by taking part in activities that teach them about different religious and cultural celebrations. Where possible, these are linked to the traditions of children attending the setting. However, inconsistencies in supporting the home languages of each child means that children do not learn that all languages are valued equally.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
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	3

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	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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