

Blackboys Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Liz Margaret Caluori

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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

Blackboys Pre-School is run by a voluntary committee. It has been in existence for more than 20 years and was first registered in 1992. It operates from a hall situated close to the centre of the village of Blackboys, near Uckfield, in East Sussex. Children also have access to a secure, outdoor play area.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and may care for a maximum of 24 children in the early years age group at any one time. There are currently 32 children on roll attending on both a full and part time basis. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is open five days a week during term time. Opening times from Monday to Thursday are 9.15am until 3.30pm and on Friday from 9.15am until 1pm.

There are four members of staff employed to work with the children, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications. They are supported by bank staff and volunteers.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Most children are making extraordinarily good progress in all areas of their development as a result of high quality adult input and an impressive range of resources and activities. The tendency for some elements of the routine to be slightly too adult directed has been recognised by the setting and is being addressed. Positive relationships are maintained with parents and carers and communication systems are being developed with other early years providers in order to support the provision of care which is coordinated and consistent. Effective self-evaluation ensures that improvements are prioritised to meet the specific needs of the children attending and their families.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further improve the organisation of the sessions to offer greater opportunities for children to take the initiative and work independently
- explore ways in which to reflect children's individual levels of ability and understanding in the risk assessments undertaken within the pre-school, in order to ensure that their independence is effectively promoted whilst continuing to provide a safe, secure environment
- develop the systems for engaging with other professionals involved in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to the children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is given extremely high priority within the pre-school. A range of policies and procedures are made available to parents and carers outlining the pre-school's duty to safeguard children. The deputy takes lead responsibility for coordinating child protection concerns and has attended training to support her in this role. She is confident in her ability to recognise the potential signs and symptoms of abuse and understands her responsibility to report any concerns that she may have. Appropriate recruitment procedures ensure that staff are suitably qualified, experienced and fully vetted. Risk assessments are undertaken and the required written records are maintained. A range of precautions are in place around the setting, including bolting internal doors and undertaking regular head counts. These are effective at ensuring that children are safe but the numerous procedures in place do not always reflect their differing levels of ability and need to develop independence.

Effective reflection and self-evaluation supports the committee, manager and staff team to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the service provided. The views of parents and carers are actively sought and taken into account to ensure that improvements are aimed at reflecting the evolving needs of children and their families. Parents receive a friendly greeting as they deliver and collect their children and are provided with written information about all aspects of the service provided. They are regularly informed of their child's individual progress and are invited to contribute observations from home. The pre-school maintains a positive relationship with the local primary school to ease transitions for the older children. The setting is also working to develop an effective system to share information with other early years providers involved in the care of the children attending.

Children are given some support to learn about diversity through a range of activities to look at special days and festivals celebrated in England and the wider world. This is an area which has been identified for improvement by staff. Plans indicate that additional toys and resources are to be obtained in order to place greater focus on encouraging children to consider, and learn about, people of differing abilities and from different backgrounds. Appropriate procedures are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school maintains all of the records and documentation required for the safe and efficient delivery of the service. Staff with first aid training are present each day and appropriate procedures are in place to care for sick children and to administer medication if necessary.

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

Children play and learn in a very attractive, stimulating environment. They enter happily and very enthusiastically take part in activities. Staff are skilled at engaging children's interests in activities and give a very good level of information and support to extend their learning. As a result, children are making exceptionally good progress. Whilst the pre-school is generally very effective at delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to the children, there are times when the organisation of routines does not reflect a child-centred approach. For example, staff do not always remember to explain to children why they are moving from one room to another or to invite their opinions or suggestions. This does not offer sufficient encouragement for them to become independent learners. However, action has recently been taken to address this issue and is beginning to show significant improvement. Children have responded very well to the increased opportunities to make choices and decision, for example choosing whether they would like to play outside or in the group room.

Activities are set out each day to promote all areas of children learning. They are given particularly good support to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make very good use of the resources set out to encourage them to explore and investigate the natural world, including torches, binoculars and magnifying lenses. They are also caring for a hamster and monitoring a tank of mini-beasts. Children enjoy lots of opportunities to express themselves creatively through playing in the well resourced role play area and taking part in arts and crafts activities. There are times when planned activities, such as making gifts for Fathers Day or putting together wall displays, have slightly too much adult direction. Practices such as cutting out templates for children to use do not encourage them to plan and implement their own ideas. However, overall, children demonstrate very high levels of imagination and produce very individual artwork.

Children are extremely confident, friendly and sociable as they play with their friends and interact with the staff. Most children behave extremely well and effective arrangements are in place to work positively with any child who displays more challenging behaviour. Humour is used very effectively by staff to reinforce children's learning. For example, it was suggested by one member of staff that it was time for her to dip her hands in a muddy bowl ready for snack time. This caused hilarity amongst the children and resulted in an amusing but very informative child-lead discussion, with the staff member being reminded to wash the invisible germs from her hands before eating.

Health and hygiene is given a good level of focus within the pre-school. Children are developing good toileting routines and take turns in helping staff to clean the table and set up for snacks. They enjoy a range of nutritious snacks mid-way through each session. Those who stay all day bring in lunches from home. In addition, all children have constant access to drinks. Children engage in a range of activities aimed at promoting their physical development. There is a fully secured, outdoor play area which they have access to for most of the day. In addition, they take part in a lot of exercise in their group rooms, for example, dancing and taking

part in action rhymes.

Children are very confident to speak out in front of large groups, for example during circle time when they take part in 'show and tell' or sing songs on their own. They are extremely considerate of others and listen well to their peers, offering support and encouragement when needed. This, along with more practical skills such as self-care, using the computer and their very good developmental progress, supports their transition to school.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	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	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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