

Merchistoun Minnows

Inspection report for early years provision

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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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Description of the setting

Merchistoun Minnows Pre-School is run by Horndean Community Association as part of a range of childcare facilities. It opened in 1998 and operates in Merchistoun Hall, a community building in Horndean, a residential area of Hampshire. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The group share the premises, although have sole use of the main areas used whilst sessions are running. Children have additional use of an enclosed outside play area, the adventure playground and a large hall. The pre-school opens Tuesday and Friday 9am - 12pm with a lunch club from 1pm then an afternoon session until 3pm. On Wednesday and Thursday the pre-school opens at 9am - 12pm with a lunch club until 1pm. These sessions are available during school term time. Additional sessions are available some weeks of the school summer holiday.

The pre-school has arrangements in place to support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who may have English as an additional language, although none currently attend. The pre-school is registered to provide care for a maximum of 20 children at any one time. The provider is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 30 children from 2 years to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for nursery education. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions.

The association employ a qualified leader to be responsible for the day to day running of the group. In addition, two staff work with the children, of which one is qualified and the other is currently working towards a child care qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff promote the needs of every child and effectively meet their learning and welfare needs. Children play and explore within safe, stimulating boundaries in an atmosphere of fun and excitement. The partnerships with parents, and with various professionals and organisations, help to ensure the specific needs of the children are addressed. The on-going self-evaluation process means that the setting builds on its strengths and knows exactly how to improve. The pre-school has addressed all recommendations from the last inspection, reflecting the setting's good capacity to improve. This helps to promote effective outcomes for the children attending.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to develop systems of self evaluation within the setting to identify

and maintain continuous improvement

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff in the setting have a secure understanding of safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they should have concerns about a child. They are aware of the possible signs of abuse to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children who attend the setting are met. The management of the provision implement rigorous recruitment procedures to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff risk assess the setting and take appropriate action to reduce hazards, and children are safe and secure in their care. They agree collection procedures with parents and only release children to named adults. This safeguards the children.

The setting and management involve staff and parents in the evaluation of their provision and act upon feedback. They meet with external agencies and other settings, which is helping inform the development of continuous provision, planning and observational assessment of children's learning and development. The staff team and management have a very clear understanding of the provisions strengths and weakness and have begun to complete a written self-evaluation, there is an on-going action plan in place to help systematically develop the pre-school. All recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed. The setting implements appropriate systems, policies and procedures that benefit the children and help it run smoothly. The staff team and management are enthused and are a committed team who are keen to develop themselves and the pre-school professionally. Staff training is an ongoing priority, which helps to enhance children's learning and development. This reflects a sound commitment to continual development.

All children have access to a wide range of resources, activities and experiences during their time at the pre-school. Equipment and play materials are stored at a low level, ensuring all children can access them independently, increasing their freedom of choice and decision-making skills. The layout of the room enables children to self-select and take part in small and large group activities. They are able to move around freely and enjoy a range of table top and floor-based activities. Staff are skilled at differentiating the activities to reflect the varying ages and stages of children, ensuring they can participate fully.

Equality and diversity is promoted within the setting and written policies underpin the group's understanding. Children are taught to respect and care for one another. Each child has equal access to the learning experiences provided, including those promoting positive images of diversity. Children have access to a sufficiently broad range of activities to gain a fuller awareness of cultures, religions and the lives of others.

Parents receive information about the pre-school and its aims through documentation, introductory visits and its website. They complete documentation that helps staff identify and support children's starting points and individual needs. Parents speak to staff at handover and share children's new interests and

achievements as well as their care; this helps parents continue children's learning at home. Feedback from questionnaires suggest that parents feel their children are settled and really enjoy coming to pre-school. Staff establish good links with other feeder schools and other provisions involved with the children who share information.

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

Staff provide children with a variety of activities that helps them make good progress in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They record observations of children's progress and use their knowledge of the children to provide activities that children find stimulating and enjoyable. Children's achievement records and planning systems have been improved since the last inspection; they systematically identify children's individual developmental aims in order to plan and support activities. The pre-school is open plan, with clear labelling and low posters to engage children, and easy access to messy play and other designated areas for continuous provision. Staff interact well with the children and learning opportunities are maximised because the staff are aware of what the children are working towards.

Children settle and behave well, they show they feel secure with staff and learn to develop control as they climb the stairs safely, balance on swaying wooden logs and look for support and guidance when climbing over the top of climbing nets in the wooded grounds. Children enjoy the interaction of staff during their activities as staff ask questions that encourage them to communicate and think clearly. They show fantastic imagination as they ask to make a road using a roll of wallpaper, they put on aprons, choose their paint brush from varying sizes and squeeze coloured paint of their choice into a paint pot. Other children join in and laugh as they mix paints, paint their hands and flick paint with their brushes over the paper. Children remark on the different colours they can see and have mixed. Staff observe and let the children initiate the activity. New children love to look at books independently and with staff, when they help tell the story and count together. They explore confidently in the role play area pretending to make a drink with a real kettle and toast with a real toaster.

Children use binoculars and phones to understand how technology works. They have access to a computer on a daily basis; and are learning to use a mouse to operate educational programmes. All children have access to a fully secure outdoor nature play area, which has been developed after consultation with the children. Children have opportunities to top up squirrel feeders with nuts, observe spider webs in spider frames, look under large logs for mini beasts to collect in bug boxes and attempt at climbing trees. Larger wooden equipment provides challenge for the children to swing, balance, climb on scramble nets and jump, these develops their large gross motor skills Children grow plants and care for them. This promotes children's learning about exploring the natural world and their curiosity.

Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe through discussion and daily routines. For example, children are gently reminded to sit down properly

on chairs in case they fall. Children know what to do in an emergency because staff and children practise regular fire drills to ensure the building is evacuated with ease. Children's self-care skills are developing well as they wash their hands independently at appropriate times. Children are beginning to learn about the importance of healthy eating through the provision of nutritious snacks. Children can help themselves to water when they are thirsty. Staff talk to them about the types of food that are good for them. They are beginning to learn about exercise, through moving to action songs, describing how their body feels and how it is beneficial to be healthy.

Behaviour management strategies used enhance children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff praise and encourage the children, building sound relationships. They are encouraged to think about one another and they share and take turns well throughout the setting. Children communicate well with each other and the staff during their time in the provision. They share ideas and explain their thoughts openly during their play. They are able to communicate with the staff expressing their needs clearly.

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

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	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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