

Watery Lane Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	25/03/2010
Inspector	Eira Gill
Setting address	Watery Lane, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 5NY
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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

Watery Lane Pre-School is managed by a Committee and opened in 1990. It operates from an Elliot style building on the St. Michaels First School site in Minehead, Somerset, and serves the local area. There are links with the host school and the headteacher is the Chairperson of the Pre-School Committee. The pre-school is on the Early Years Register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It supports children with special needs as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

The playroom is equipped with toilets, an office, kitchen facilities and a sensory room. There is a large, fully enclosed outside area for physical play and the children visit Forest School once a week for outside activities within the local community. The pre-school is able to use the host school's swimming pool during the summer term and also the school hall for games and other activities on very wet days.

The pre-school is open each weekday from 08:00 until 15:30. A Breakfast Club is available if needed for the children from the host school and for children who attend the pre-school.

A maximum of 20 children from two to five years may attend at any one time. There are currently 49 children aged from two to under five years on roll in the nursery. Of these 38 are funded. There are two children on roll who are under three years. Usually, the older children attend the pre-school in the mornings and the younger ones in the afternoons.

There are five members of staff employed to work with the children including the manager. Both the manager and her deputy are very experienced and hold National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Early Years as well as Forest School Leaders' qualifications. The three other members of staff all hold Level 3 qualifications. The deputy manager has gained a teaching assistant Level 3 award. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The provision is outstanding and very effective staff teamwork ensures the children make first rate progress. The uniqueness of each child is fully considered by all members of staff. Partnerships with parents, the host school and outside agencies are outstanding. The excellent systems in place ensure the children enjoy a very wide range of activities and the practice is worth disseminating beyond the setting. There were no issues for improvement from the previous inspection but the manager has ensured that sharply focused improvements have been made and the capacity for further improvement is excellent.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- ensure that more resources are provided to suit the particular interests of the present group of children in the pre-school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Members of staff work seamlessly as a team and have worked together for a number of years. The children benefit greatly from this continuity. Required policies and procedures, including safeguarding, are regularly reviewed and updated. All assistants are carefully vetted for their suitability and are alert to health and safety issues. Children are very well protected. All members of staff respect their different backgrounds and have an excellent understanding of their needs.

The manager has completed the self evaluation form and, together with her deputy and all staff, has identified and already put into place several improvements such as creating a library of photographic resources to help children make choices. In addition, members of staff recognise that they need to obtain the resources needed to match this particular group of children's imaginative and role play interests.

The planning system has been further improved to ensure 'next steps' in learning are identified in more depth by key workers together with parents. Parents and staff complete a 'Unique Child' document ensuring children's interests are fully reflected in planning. The system is flexible and can change if the focus of children's interests moves on, for example, from pirates to dinosaurs. Key workers note children's achievements on sticky labels which are logged against the six areas of learning and this quickly enables assistants to identify children's progress towards their targets.

The pre-school is taking part in a Communication, Language and Literacy programme and is very well supported by local consultants in this initiative. Resources to support this area of learning have improved and are easily accessed by children. The programme highlights how children are progressing towards their targets and the information is shared with the reception teachers. Children's skills and knowledge have improved noticeably and those very few who are not making quite as much progress are given extra support when they move into the reception class.

Parents are very complimentary about the pre-school and say, 'my boy is very happy and can't wait to get here', and 'communication is very clear. Staff are very supportive and we have great relationships'. Excellent links with the host school

make a significant contribution to the children's first rate progress. The reception class teachers visit regularly throughout the year. The children visit the school often with their key workers and become familiar with the environment.

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

Children who arrive early enjoy a nutritious breakfast with their friends and a few older children. All ages enjoy playing together with the very wide range of activities set up for them. These reflect both the children's backgrounds and the wider community. Children's welfare is promoted exceptionally well. The inspection took place on the day all staff and children visit their 'Forest School' which is about a 15 minute drive from the pre-school. These weekly visits, whatever the weather, are very well established.

Adults consistently give the highest priority to safeguarding all groups of children. They rehearse with the children how they are expected to behave on the bus. When the children were asked when they should release their safety belts one said, 'when the driver says we can!' Before they leave, children are helped to put on their wellies and wet weather gear. This is a very well established routine. The children are very secure and confident because they know exactly what is going to happen on the journey and when they arrive in the forest. There is an excellent ratio of children to adults.

On arrival, the manager again ensures that children rehearse the safety aspects of the visit. The children are very familiar with the wooded slopes and huge trees and gullies and begin to climb and explore. They found special treasures and brought them to the magic carpet. Carefully rehearsed activities reinforce how children can help each other to be safe and, in this way, they make their own contribution to the pre-school. For example, two assistants with half the group deliberately moved out of sight and began to sing, 'where are we, where are we? Come and find us?' The response was very quick, 'we can hear you! We're coming to find you.' At intervals, when the children were all together, they counted each other to make sure there were still eleven.

The forest is a rich and enabling environment for the children to be completely free and enjoy the textures of plants and tree bark using all their senses. They enjoyed scrabbling in the holes left by felled trees going through the detritus of old leaves and twigs looking for insects. They used their imaginations and made 'tree spirits' by flattening a large ball of damp soil on to the rough bark of a tree. The manager and assistants modelled sensitively while the children decorated the face of their 'spirit' with pebbles for eyes and fern fronds for hair. Hand held magnifying containers helped the children to learn that a woodlouse has several pairs of legs.

At snack time, children sat along a huge log and staff ensured they had clean hands using wet wipes and hand gel. The children enjoyed their hot chocolate and pieces of fruit while the assistants ensured they were warm and comfortable. Excellent relationships and constant chat between staff and children ensure children are extremely happy. Children play a dynamic role in their learning and

respond to challenges with great enthusiasm. They make outstanding progress in all six areas of learning which will help them considerably in the next phase of their education.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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