

Little Dolphins Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Anthony Anderson

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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

Little Dolphins Pre-School was registered in 1997 and is managed by the pre-school committee. It operates from rooms within Dolphinholme Church of England Primary School in the village of Dolphinholme, a few miles south of Lancaster. The children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm during term time only. It is on the Early Years Register and on both parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 16 children aged under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. The setting currently takes children from two to five years of age. There are currently 19 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Of these, 19 are in receipt of funding for early education. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. There are currently six members of staff, all of whom hold relevant early years qualifications. Of these, two are qualified to level 4 and four to level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Care systems and procedures are good overall and help to support the children's welfare. Observations of young children learning through play are used well by staff to monitor and evaluate their progress over time and to plan for their next steps of development. Partnerships with parents and with other early years professionals are good and help to enhance the children's development and progress. Management implement informal, but underdeveloped systems and procedures, to monitor and evaluate the performance of the setting. Their capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further and extend methods of self-evaluation in order to ensure consistent and clear identification of the settings key strengths and areas for development
- ensure that full details of the regular fire and evacuations drills are consistently recorded.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider has committed an offence by failing to notify Ofsted of a change to the individuals who are members of the management committee. This is a specific legal requirement in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Ofsted does not intend to prosecute on this occasion. Staff recruitment

procedures are implemented appropriately, so that children are cared for by suitable, qualified adults. For example, appropriate checks are carried out and references obtained. Welfare policies and procedures, such as the appropriate care given to children in the case of occasional minor accidents, are good overall and appropriate records are maintained. However, although regular evacuation drills are undertaken in association with the host school, the pre-school's management do not maintain any records of these drills or of their analysis of the outcomes. All staff have an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding children issues. Resources and the premises are well maintained and suitable for their use, as the staff effectively monitor and update the detailed risk assessment. Staff are effectively deployed within the setting which is well organised with different areas of play set out to enable children to make free choice. Shared celebrations of world faiths and festivals, such as, a recent focus on Easter helps the children to learn about diversity in the wider world. Regular and detailed observations of children at play are used well to monitor their progress and to identify and promote their next steps of development.

The pre-school's relationship and communication with parents is good and the walls and display areas are effectively used to provide a wide range of helpful information. Parents are kept informed of their child's development through regular and informal discussions with their child's key person. Well maintained learning journey folders are made available to enable parents to monitor how much progress their child is making towards the areas of early years learning. The pre-school's relationships with external agencies and other Early Years Foundation Stage providers, such as the host school and the after school club, are good and are used effectively to further enhance young children's development and progress. However, the pre-school's systems of self-evaluation and assessment of the quality of its provision are underdeveloped and lack clarity and consistency of focus, particularly towards the areas for further development.

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

The majority of activities in this warm and friendly pre-school setting are child-led and this contributes to their enjoyment, for example, in the way children dress up and join in role play activities. Staff are trained to observe children at play and to use the information gained to create learning journey files and to plan for their next steps of development. This information is frequently shared with parents who are also sent occasional questionnaires to invite them to share their views or express ideas for the future. Good use is made of the external facilities where children play a variety of games and enjoy a range of activities which support their physical and creative development. Some like to ride on a pedal bicycle or scooter and others enjoy playing with water and sand situated in a small and imaginatively set out hut. Good use is made of a number of large planting boxes to encourage and help children to learn about plant life and growth as part of their developing knowledge of the world around them.

The internal setting is used well to provide access to many areas of play and learning. Recently taken photographs show children playing an interactive game on

a computer and another demonstrates how children enhance their creative development by making hand prints, in vivid blue paint, on a large sheet of white paper. The children enjoy rolling out dough and then pressing out different shapes which staff encourage them to identify and name. They confidently ask staff for an extra book in which they can practise letter formation in addition to drawing and colouring. The current theme in the pre-school is transport and recent planning shows links to a garage and workshop, types of transport for holidays, a build your own car game and singing time with 'The wheels on the bus'.

Healthy eating is strongly promoted by staff and children are encouraged to help in the preparation of a mid-morning snack which includes bananas, apples, bread-sticks, rice cakes, water and milk. Lunch times are treated as social occasions as children enjoy the packed lunch provided by their parents. As lunch is eaten in the main hall of the host school young children are provided with further good opportunities to integrate with older children. The children demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviour and this reflects the consistent encouragement and support provided by staff. As a result of the dedication of staff and the wide range of support they provide, children make good progress towards learning skills for the future.

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

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
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

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

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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