

Great Bardfield Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Martyn Richards

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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

Great Bardfield Pre-School was registered in 1999. It operates from a purpose built unit, which is shared with the after school club, in the grounds of Great Bardfield Primary School. The pre-school serves the local area and has close links with Great Bardfield Primary School.

The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children from two to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage at any one time. There are currently 38 children on roll, and 23 were present at the time of the inspection. The pre-school receives funding for nursery education in respect of some children. Children attend for a variety of sessions during the week. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although at present it does not have wheelchair access.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9.05am until 11.45am and there is an optional daily lunch club from 11.45am until 1.10pm.

Seven members of staff work with the children on a full or part-time basis. Three, including the manager, hold relevant early years qualifications, and other staff are currently concluding training in childcare. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Great Bardfield Pre-school provides a safe and welcoming environment for the children. It is at the heart of its village community, very well supported by parents and its management committee, who rightly appreciate the quality of care and learning provision it makes for their children. It is an inclusive and well-managed pre-school. All the children are known as individuals. Their varied needs are identified and met sensitively and effectively. Consequently, they are confident and happy, and achieve well. It is a self-critical pre-school with staff always alert to ways of improving even further. It has successfully implemented the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and has responded well to the recommendations of its last inspection. It makes good use of support and training through the local authority and has a good capacity to continue improving in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- refine the self-evaluation system to make it more rigorous in evaluating the pre-school's effectiveness, and identifying priorities for the future
- ensure that all risk assessments for trips pay full attention to travel to and from venues.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding measures at the pre-school are good because staff set the highest priority on ensuring the children's safety. The suitability of all staff working in the pre-school, or applying to work there, is carefully checked. Recent changes in staffing have meant that at the moment levels of staff's qualifications fall marginally below the required level, but this will be rectified when current training is completed shortly. The manager and her assistants have all received training in child protection, and are fully aware of their responsibilities to ensure children's welfare. They know the action to be taken if they have any concerns. Several have a high level of additional first aid training. Regular fire drills are undertaken, and the outcomes carefully recorded. Staff carry out daily checks of the accommodation and the surrounding areas to make sure there are no unnoticed dangers to the children. When children go on trips, to a local farm, for example, and to Audley End House, full use is made of the risk assessments provided by the venues. However, these do not always fully address issues specific to this group of children, such as, their travel to the venues.

The accommodation and outdoor activity areas are secure from intrusion or from children slipping out unseen. Visitors are checked on arrival and on leaving the pre-school. The pre-school has rigorous procedures for circumstances in which a child is not collected at the expected time, or is met by an unauthorised adult. Staff keep detailed notes of children's individual health or dietary needs, and ensure these are met through the well-selected healthy snacks provided. All minor accidents are recorded, and notified to parents.

Several members of staff have additional qualifications in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are very thorough in liaising with parents, and with specialist agencies to make sure these children receive consistent support. As a result, they make good progress as they move through the pre-school. Very strong and effective links with Great Bardfield Primary School help ease children's anxieties about transition, and ensure that all important information is made available to the school before the children arrive. All the children benefit from an effective key person scheme, which means that a named adult has special oversight of the welfare and development of each child, and can act as a particularly well-informed contact with parents.

Links and relationships with parents are excellent because the pre-school has established effective communication channels with them. An informative regular newsletter keeps them abreast of pre-school activities, whilst an annual survey enables them to make suggestions about how the pre-school could be improved. Parents speak in glowing terms of the contribution the pre-school makes to their children's development. One said, 'it's a joy to see him run into pre-school and I'll

always be grateful for that', and another commented, 'we'll never forget what it's done for him'.

The indoor facilities are bright, roomy and inviting for the children. The outdoor area is especially well-used as a vegetable garden as well as for active play. Staff are deployed effectively, so that all children have an adult to chat with while they play. Staff are sensitive to this role, aware of the learning possibilities inherent in the play, but aware also of the risks of diverting children's attention away from their self-selected activity.

Staff work very well together as a team and they willingly undertake extra training to enhance their skills. The setting is committed to continuous improvement and a range of improvements have been implemented in the pre-school since its last inspection. For instance, they have revised their approach to planning children's activities, and are in the final stages of implementing a very thorough assessment process, enabling them to show clearly the progress individual children make over time. They are committed to making the pre-school as good as it can be, and have identified several initiatives for the future, including planning activities to engage children across the full ability range, and improving ways of delivering activities based around children's learning of sounds and letters. They plan to establish a more systematic and reliable process for self-review and although this is still at an early stage, it is well supported as the initiative will be supported by staff from the local authority.

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

Children come happily to the pre-school, and are met with a cheery welcome from staff. They settle quickly to the activities provided for them, choosing to either browse through books, enjoy the sensory herb garden they have established in the outdoor area, or play with construction toys or puzzles. Later, outside, they play in the large sand garden and enjoy vigorous activity on large wheeled toys. Some children choose to play independently and explore the texture of shaving foam in a water tray, before they all join together in a group to sing, wash their hands and enjoy the healthy morning snack provided.

At this time of the year, the well-maintained garden is a particular attraction. The children have planted (and cooked, and eaten) their own potatoes and have sown beans, courgettes and sunflowers. They know that a seed will grow into a plant in the right circumstances, and that many of the things we eat come originally from the soil. They have also watched caterpillars pupate, and turn into red admiral butterflies, and have been fascinated by the growth of tadpoles. In this rural environment, they were delighted by baby chicks and lambs which visited the pre-school. They are learning about how people get about and have looked at the differences between buses, cars and cycles. They have seen how traffic lights work, and talked about where they have been on their holidays. Children are also learning about using information and communications technology and can find their way around a computer screen, although some find the intricate movements required to use a mouse very challenging. Their interest in these engaging

activities leads to good learning and brisk progress.

The children enjoy stories, and handling books for themselves. They know the right way to hold a book, and that pictures and text have different purposes. They are orally confident, and can hold a pencil correctly, and many write their own names recognisably. Staff help the children to understand the meanings of words and consequently they understand terms, such as, 'longer' and 'heavier', and can count to 10 or above. They identify common regular shapes, such as, squares and circles.

The children achieve well in physical areas through the physical activities they participate in. The children are improving their manual coordination well through using tools, such as, scissors and brushes, and refining balance through play on large outdoor toys. They learn about the properties of paint during artistic sessions, and take great pleasure playing percussion instruments when playing music. They like singing together, and enjoy the outdoor scenery, especially in the antique rowing boat permanently moored in their outdoor area.

The children enjoy their activities in the pre-school, and the very good assessment systems being introduced paint a clear picture of the good progress individuals make. They feel safe in the setting, confident and at ease in their relationships with staff, and sensible and mature in their behaviour. They know some of the foods which are good for them, and some remember to wash their hands without needing reminding. As well as this, children are courteous, positive and helpful, for example, in sharing the tidying up. Staff eating snacks and lunch with the children set an unobtrusive example of good manners.

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	1

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