

Red Balloon Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Jim Bostock

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

The Red Balloon Pre-School group was registered at the current premises in November 1999. It is owned and run by a parent committee. The children are accommodated in a mobile classroom in the grounds of Tweedmouth West First School, which is located close to the centre of Berwick town. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and a maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. It is open each weekday from 8.55am to 12 noon and from 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm on Mondays and Fridays, term time only. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday a lunch service is provided within the school hall from 12 noon to 1.00 pm. The children have access to the school hall, Reception class and a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 27 children aged from two to under five years on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage and 17 children are in receipt of funded education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas and care is provided for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting employs six members of staff, including the manager. Four staff are qualified to level three and one is qualified to level two in early years.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The provision is effective in meeting the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children feel valued and enjoy the experiences offered as staff successfully provide a happy and caring environment. The manager has a strong commitment to the ongoing development of the quality of the provision. Whilst systems for self-evaluation are still in the early stages of development, overall the setting shows a good commitment to continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the policies and procedures for the administration of medicine
- develop further the activities, toys and playthings which promote positive images of difference and diversity
- extend systems for formal self-evaluation and identification of targets for further improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting runs smoothly. Systems for ensuring that children are safeguarded are up to date and complete. Staff assess risks daily to ensure children are safe and secure and, for example, ensure that visitors are closely supervised so that they

are not left alone with children. All required policies, records and procedures, including suitability checks for staff, are in place. Most are used effectively to promote children's welfare but the policy for administration of medicines is unclear and records kept about this are not fully confidential.

Positive links with parents and carers ensure that children's individual needs are well met. Parents and carers are very happy with their children's progress and enjoyment at the setting and appreciate the care provided by staff. The manager is committed to the continuing development of the planning and assessment systems to ensure children are assisted and challenged to progress. All recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. Staff work as a cohesive unit, providing a stable environment for children. They know how well individuals are progressing, and are beginning to record the achievements children make while in the setting. The staff team is committed to improving the provision, but has only recently started formalised self-evaluation to ensure consistently effective identification of strengths and weaknesses in order to implement improvement.

Good organisation of resources, toys and activities means that children can easily access them. This encourages them to develop personal preferences and independent skills. The provision effectively supports and promotes inclusive practice by ensuring that all children are warmly welcomed and successfully encouraged to participate in activities. A particularly good system of photo identification of activities helps children with special educational needs to communicate. All children learn Makaton which further aids this process. However, there are few activities or resources which provide positive images of difference and diversity. This limits children's ability to develop their knowledge and positive attitudes towards others. The setting enjoys a positive and constructive dialogue with the primary school which helps children move on. Staff are hoping to establish such partnerships with other providers to ensure that there is a consistent level of understanding for the needs of all children who attend the setting.

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

The setting is most welcoming. Staff listen to the children and develop warm and caring relationships with them so that they develop a sense of being a respected member of the group. The children behave very well because they know the rules of the setting. The adults supervise very well, model accepted behaviour and respond quietly and calmly to any inappropriate behaviour.

Children understand the importance of washing their hands before eating and thoroughly enjoy the social experience at meal and snack times. They demonstrate good table manners when they eat, and know that fruit is good for them. This is because adults involve children in conversations and reinforce appropriate behaviour through praise. Relationships between all children are very good. For instance, while playing outside children cooperate as they push wooden blocks together to make a 'fire engine'. They put on helmets and make up a story about going to hospital while one uses a bucket as a steering wheel and the others sit on

the blocks behind. Children listen to staff, readily line up before going outside and respect the rules of the setting. This helps them to develop the necessary personal and social skills to support their skills for the future.

Staff actively involve children in activities, making learning fun and enjoyable. They plan activities so that children are involved in decisions while they have every opportunity to progress in the six areas of learning. Children have daily opportunities to use a wide range of resources outdoors in the school grounds, including growing fruit and vegetables. Children are learning about staying safe as staff talk to them about acting responsibly. They enjoy their time outdoors which helps them develop strength and agility.

Apart from items to develop children's appreciation of diversity, the setting is well resourced. Activities are arranged to stimulate interest and they support good progress in skills of communication, including use of information and communication technology. For example, children have free access to the computer and have the use of a timer to ensure they self-regulate so that every child can have a turn and share this equipment. Children count regularly and develop good speaking and listening skills during the frequent discussions throughout their play, at snack and at 'carpet time'.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	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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