

Toadstools Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Anne-Marie Moyse

Setting address	St Francis of Assisi Church, Little Dock Lane, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 2LP
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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

Toadstools Pre-School is a committee run group. It opened in 2000 and operates from the church hall adjoining St Francis of Assisi Church in Honicknowle, in Plymouth. A garden is used for outdoor play activities. The setting is open on a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9.30am until 12 noon with a lunch club operating from 12 noon until 1.00pm, and on a Monday from 9.30am until 2.30pm during term time only. A maximum of 26 children aged from two to under eight years may attend the setting at any one time.

There are currently 26 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. They live locally and some children also attends another early years setting. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are four members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and all are currently attending additional training. Two regular volunteer helpers also work with the children. Two members of staff are working towards their Foundation degree in Early Years and Education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and offer children a warm and welcoming environment. They have adequate knowledge of children's interests and their differing needs from ongoing relationships developed with parents and family members. Staff plan and offer children a wide range of toys and resources enabling them to make choices and follow their own preferred play ideas, although some children are not always challenged sufficiently to extend their learning. All requirements are in place and documentation is under review to help improve the quality of the provision. The committee and staff are working hard to address issues raised at the previous inspection and continue to develop their systems to review and identify areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further develop the observation and assessment systems to ensure that all children's next steps are identified. Ensure that this information is well used to influence the planned activities and staff are guided in supporting and extending every child's learning
- improve the safety of children by ensuring that all documentation is

accurately completed and that the requirements for fire safety procedures are fully in place

- continue to develop the processes for self evaluation in order to ensure that all aspects of the provision (especially deployment of staff, resources and activities) are monitored and any weaknesses identified and acted on to improve the outcomes for children
- continue to establish partnerships with parents and others to improve the consistency in children's learning and development

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

At the previous inspection, the setting failed to have suitable confirmation that all staff had undergone appropriate checks and were suitable to work with children. The setting now keep appropriate records on site and have improved some of the systems used to ensure staff remain suitable to work with children. New policies and procedures have been drawn up and are implemented appropriately to keep children safe when other users are in the building. All regulatory documentation is in place, although some records, such as the children's details, are not always fully complete. Risk assessments are in place and daily checks are conducted on the premises to minimise hazards to children. While children participate in regular fire drills from the main room, the fire detection systems in the building and procedures for evacuation are not well practised when children use the alternative small hall. The staff have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and their responsibility to follow the procedure to report any concerns in line with the Local Safeguarding guidance.

Generally, the setting organise the toys and resources well for children, so they can be easily accessed. The room is divided up into areas to promote the six areas of learning, and a high number of adults are available to support the children. Staff now implemented an adequate system to make observations and assessments on each child's interests and stage of learning. Even though most children now have identified 'next steps' in their learning on their files, this information is not currently used effectively to inform the planning systems and documents. Consequently, staff and volunteer helpers are not given sufficient information on how they can best extend and support each individual child during their play. At times, this leads to some children being simply occupied rather than extending their learning purposefully.

Most activities are suitably organised and promote children's independence and skills. A review of the snack routine enables children to be involved and develop self-care skills in preparing their own snacks. Children now pour their own drinks and develop their manipulation skills as they spread butter or toppings on to bread. However, the organisation of this activity does not always provide children with the time or resources to achieve this successfully.

Parents are given a warm welcome, and are encouraged to become involved in all aspects of the group. Useful information is displayed on the notice board and they have the recently reviewed the prospectus and policies to keep them informed on the operation of the pre-school. Initial information on each child is now obtained from parents to give staff an awareness of children's interests and starting points when they join the group. Parents are invited to share information on children's

learning and progress at home and be involved in contributing to children's development files to ensure consistency between the home and the pre-school environment, but this is not yet fully established. Verbal information is gathered from parents on practical aspects of children's care and wellbeing, but this does not extend to children's changing interests and achievements at home, which influences children's learning and development in the setting. The staff are aware of the benefits of developing their links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage that children attend, to ensure more consistent learning for each child.

Staff are continuing to seek help and support from local authorities, and have made improvements on all issues identified. The setting are working towards more accurate self-evaluation procedures in order to identify weakness and drive improvements themselves, but this is an area which requires further development. The management committee are in the process of enlisting more parents to be involved in putting their ideas into the future of the setting, and drive improvements. Staff training needs are identified and supported through the appraisal system and they are willing to attend further training to develop their knowledge and understanding.

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

Children arrive happily and are confident in separating from their parents and carers, quickly choosing what to play with and meeting up with their friends. Children behave well and understand the need to respect others, apologising without prompting when they accidentally knock over a friend's construction. Children are confident to move safely around the hall, self-selecting and developing their independence as they set up and play with resources which interest them. Some staff are quick to notice children's interests and offer additional resources and materials to support some children's immediate fascination. For example, a child spends time washing his hands in the bowl, and playing with the water, staff observe this and set up the water tray to extend this activity. As a result children practise their pouring and measuring skills, they make comment as the water turns the wheels and explore the properties of water. In addition to this they learn about safety and the need to mop up spilt water to prevent accidents.

Children access the book area independently and at times staff sit and read with the children. They join in with singing nursery rhymes and familiar songs and are able to access mark making equipment, both inside and in the garden area. Small groups of children are involved in a daily programme to develop their speech and language skills, but this is not always well supported when children are in the main room playing. Staff link in with other agencies to ensure that children with any concerns are given some appropriate support. Children enjoy developing their imagination as they play in the role play area using broad range of resources which promote their understanding of others in the community and of other cultures. Children have opportunity to paint, and engage in creative play, make puzzles and construct. Some children become engrossed as they build a tall tower of bricks, which is measured and compared with the height of children in the setting.

Children's physical development is promoted through the use of the spacious indoor area and access to the garden at set times. Indoors, a large section is set up with a wide range of bikes, scooters and ride-on cars. Children enjoy using their muscles and co-ordination to drive around the area, developing their balance and spatial awareness as they avoid other equipment. They develop their imagination as they use the tools from the workshop area, and become fire-fighters. However, there is little interaction from staff in this area to extend and support children's play ideas and physical skills. Children are very enthusiastic about going out to the garden, dressing appropriately in warm clothes and understanding the rules of walking safely to the garden. Outside they play with hoops, ribbons and climb on the fixed role-play equipment. All the children are intrigued with the white board and the new markers set up in the garden, and are keen to find a space to make their marks, draw and express themselves. Children are excited as they explore the environment finding various bugs and insects, showing care and concern with the mini-beasts. Their health is further promoted as they are able to access drinking water when they are thirsty and are offered a substantial healthy snack. Before eating children use anti-bacterial gel to clean their hands, but following messy play they use a communal bowl of water and towel to wash their hands. This does not prevent cross contamination or promote good hygiene routines to children. Packed lunches are stored appropriately and children are encouraged to eat savoury items first, to develop their understanding of healthy options.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

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	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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