

First Friends Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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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*.

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Description of the setting

First Friends Pre-School is a registered charity run by a committee and opened in 2005. It operates from purpose-built premises in the grounds of Great Waldingfield Primary School in Great Waldingfield near Sudbury, Suffolk. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 26 children in the early years age group can attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens between 9am and 3.30pm each weekday in term time, except Friday when it closes at 1pm. Children attend for a variety of the sessions on offer. There are currently 40 children on roll who are within the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for early education and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as children who speak English as an additional language. There are seven members of staff, of whom six hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting has close links with the host school and with the local authority advisor.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Good and trusting relationships mean children are happy, inquisitive and confident in this well organised pre-school. A wide range of fun activities are offered, which are based on children's interests, an understanding of each individual child and close partnerships with parents. As a result, children's welfare and learning needs are met well. Staff actively promote positive attitudes to diversity and learn new skills, such as signing, so that all children are included in all that the setting has to offer. The capacity to improve is good because staff work as an effective and reflective team that constantly seeks to develop new ways to improve the provision and benefit the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance children's communication and language skills by engaging them more in conversation and extending their language development while they are playing.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are kept safe because staff fully understand their roles in safeguarding children from possible dangers, abuse or neglect. Effective policies and procedures, shared with parents, and up-to-date training ensure staff know how to recognise child protection issues and to take appropriate action confidently. Staff are long serving and, along with members of the committee and volunteers, have been checked for their suitability to work with children. Robust recruitment and

induction procedures are being developed in case a new member of staff needs to be recruited. Children are safe because staff are vigilant about ensuring the premises are secure and that no unauthorised person can gain access to the building. Good staffing levels mean no child can leave unattended and they are always well supervised, especially when playing outdoors. Thorough risk assessments and daily checks minimise potential hazards.

Staff provide a colourful, attractive and stimulating environment where each child's individuality is valued. The good range of toys and equipment is attractive to the children and contributes to their progress. The key person system is very effective in developing close links with the children and their parents and carers. Parents and carers receive good, useful information about the pre-school to help them understand what their children have been doing and how they are making progress. In turn, parents provide helpful information about their child's likes, dislikes and particular needs. Consequently, staff know the children well, check their progress and plan interesting things for them to do. Parents and carers are very happy with the provision in the pre-school, and value the opportunities to talk to staff at the beginning or end of the session. Close links with the local school ensure that the transfer from pre-school to school is smooth.

The manager and her team are determined to provide high quality provision for the children. The new premises have been established very well. Considerable thought has gone into the organisation and use of space so that it offers a warm welcome to parents and children and is an enjoyable place in which to learn. Self-evaluation processes include the review of most aspects of the pre-school over the year. Staff meet formally each week to review the quality of provision, what worked well and what could be done better. Parents contribute their ideas for change through questionnaires and children suggest their ideas for the curriculum. Through this reflective self-evaluation process the pre-school has become involved in a project to enhance children's communication skills. When children have particular needs that require specialist skills, such as signing, staff attend training, which enables them to meet each child's needs. Close links with other agencies ensure the needs of vulnerable children, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language, are recognised and met. Children, though quite young, learn about different countries, the food, festivals and stories.

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

Children enjoy being in the pre-school as there are many interesting and fun things for them to do on their own, with their friends or with an adult. This is because staff have good knowledge of the way in which children in the early years age group learn. At the beginning of the day, some activities are set out ready for them, but they also choose independently from a wide range of accessible resources. Staff plan activities on a theme, based on a season of the year, or a favourite book and make sure that all the areas of learning are covered through a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children really enjoy using a range of media to express their ideas. For example, they paint self-portraits and

illustrate popular stories. Role-play activities encourage children to try out their emerging skills in making marks that represent letters or words. The emphasis on learning the sound and letter of the week, as well as words on display around the room, gives children an early foundation for reading. This is backed up by games on the computer that help children learn more about the letters of the alphabet, to count and to listen to stories. Staff play alongside the children, asking questions and giving support. However, staff recognise that they do not always extend children's speaking skills by engaging them in conversation while they are playing. A nature table with leaves, fir cones and magnifying boxes contains insects and encourages curiosity. Children enjoy making bird feeders and are fascinated by the way the seeds stick to the soft fat that they then wrap around a twig and hang in a tree in the garden. Outside, children really enjoy riding tricycles, playing ball games, digging, and growing their plants and vegetables. Children are often involved in problem-solving tasks, such as planning a path with bricks on which they have to balance. Visits to local farms and the church add much to children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

Mid-way through the morning, children take responsibility for tidying up before joining their friends to enjoy a healthy snack. They independently pour their drinks and pass the plates of fruit to one another to choose what they would like to eat. Staff make good use of this time to help children learn good manners, but use it less well to help them develop their conversation skills. Before they go home, children, if they wish, sit as a large group to listen to a story, or sing songs that promote language as well as counting skills. Children's welfare is promoted well. Visits from the police and fire brigade help them to learn to keep themselves safe. On visits out children are taught about road safety. The good levels of staffing and the strong relationships children have with their key person mean there is always someone on hand to help a child who has a worry. Many of the activities provided promote exercise and children spend good amounts of time outside in the fresh air. Good personal hygiene are well-established.

Children make a good contribution to the community through their good behaviour, consideration for each other and willingness to play together. Staff incorporate their good ideas about what they want to learn, such as how to cook cakes, into planned activities during the week. By the time they leave the pre-school children make good progress in most of the areas of learning, but especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Staff keep detailed records of observations of what children have learned and can do. Photographs show children's enthusiasm for learning and their achievements, as well as confirming the increasing levels of challenge presented to the children as they develop. Through their computer, literacy and numeracy skills, as well as their positive attitudes, children are acquiring good levels of skill that will assist them in their future lives.

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	2
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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