

Stowupland Pre-school & The Mighty Oaks

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	11/11/2010
Inspector	Susan Rogers
Setting address	Church Road, Stowupland, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4BQ
Telephone number	01449 678550
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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

Stowupland Pre-school and The Mighty Oaks is managed by a voluntary management committee with charitable status. It was registered in 1999 and operates from a purpose-built premises within the grounds of Freeman Community Primary School in Stowupland, Suffolk. A maximum of 26 children aged from two to five years may attend the pre-school at any one time and a maximum of 20 children aged from four to under eight years may attend the out of school club at any one time. Older children may also attend the out of school club, however, at present the out of school club is not operating. The pre-school is open Monday to Thursday 8.45 am until 3.45pm, and Friday 8.45am until 12.45pm, term time only. The setting is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register.

There are currently 68 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The setting is in receipt of funding for early education. Children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Children come from the local community and attend for a variety of the sessions on offer. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are seven members of staff, including the manager, who work with the children. Of these, one holds an appropriate level 4 qualification in early years, five hold a level 3 qualification and one is currently working towards a level 3 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's learning is promoted well in a safe and well-organised environment. Staff have a good understanding of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They use their knowledge to plan effectively and provide a good balance of adult- and child-led play. Inclusive practices are mostly effective, with staff endeavouring to meet the individual needs of the children they care for. Documentation is robust, regularly reviewed and reflects the needs of the children that attend. The system for measuring the effectiveness of the setting is used well and demonstrates that the pre-school has a good capacity for sustained and continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reassess the existing arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and of the importance of reporting any concerns to the relevant agencies promptly. Robust policies enhance the setting's good practice and provide additional safeguards. All staff are vetted for their suitability and these measures, together with a considered induction for new staff, protect children's welfare. Detailed risk assessments are in place and carefully document any potential risks to children, which keeps them safe. The premises are welcoming and staff provide a range of learning opportunities through careful planning of the generous space available. Staff respond well to the changing needs of children, by adapting the environment to facilitate greater learning opportunities. The most recent change has resulted in the enhancement of children's communication skills, as they now readily access the creative play areas and devise their own imagined scenarios.

Effective systems are in place to support the professional development of staff and regular training opportunities further their skills. The setting demonstrates a good understanding of where the areas for improvement are and is committed to changes that will benefit the children who attend. Targets set are honest and realistic and build on the good practice already established. Opinions of staff, children, parents and carers and other agencies are taken into account, demonstrating the setting's commitment towards improvement and further development.

Equality and diversity is promoted effectively and children are encouraged to develop an awareness of the society they live in. For example, children access a good range of images and resources that positively reflect the wider world. Their understanding is further promoted by staff providing comprehensive explanations and by celebrating different festivals. Inclusive practice enables children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to enjoy care that meets their specific needs. However, the arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices are not always robust enough. For example, although staff offer individual care to children who speak English as an additional language they sometimes have difficulty communicating with their peers, which limits wider opportunities for their learning.

Links with outside agencies and other early years professionals to access additional support and ensure continuity of care is developing well. Staff liaise well with parents and effectively include them in their child's assessments and further learning. The system for recording children's progress is well developed and matches observations and assessments against individual areas of learning. Regular discussions between staff and parents and carers ensure that the planning of activities reflects the needs of the individual, is informed by learning journey records, and successfully identifies children's individual next steps in learning.

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

Children are confident, happy and settle well because staff strive to provide learning opportunities that enable them to enjoy their time at the setting. Positive interactions with staff and other children promote their learning and understanding about the needs of others. Children's independence is promoted well. They confidently put on their coats and boots before outside play and cut and peel fruit at snack time. They are practised in the daily hygiene routines which protects them against illness and infection. A good combination of child-initiated and adult-led activities allows children to explore and experiment with imagined scenarios as well as developing their listening and communication skills.

Children's numeracy skills are promoted as they use matching beads to appreciate sequencing and shape and are learning to add and subtract numbers. They respond well when working as a team recognising colour and number through using board games. Children proudly create a range of self-selected images as they cut glitter paper, paint and glue to complete a design of their own choosing. Staff are effectively deployed throughout the setting and support children well, asking questions that encourage children to think about what they are doing and further develop their play ideas. Spontaneous opportunities are used effectively by staff to enable children to learn about the world around them, such as, observing and discussing the changing weather conditions.

Children's self-esteem is promoted through praise and encouragement, and sensitive reminders encourage children to be kind, share and be helpful. Their transitions are well supported, as they move from the setting into mainstream school, because staff maintain good lines of communication between the school and themselves. Relationships between children are good and they play together cheerfully, sharing ideas and equipment. They discover the natural world through exploring adjoining fields and hedgerows. They eagerly collect and discuss leaves, twigs and conkers as they work in groups.

A good range of physical equipment promotes children's enjoyment of outdoor play. They happily balance, splash in puddles, and manoeuvre wheeled toys. They find resolutions to problems as they build with large scale equipment. They skilfully and safely use small tools as they paint, cut and stick and dig in the sand. Staff are effectively deployed throughout the setting. Activities in all areas are set out to promote self-selection which ensures that children enjoy activities according to their individual interests. Children's behaviour is good and is supported through clear behaviour management strategies with staff acting as positive role models.

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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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