

Vandyke Road 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*.

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

Vandyke Road Pre-School is based in purpose built premises in the grounds of St George's Lower School, Leighton Buzzard. It was registered in 2005 and provides care and education for children aged two years and above. It is registered to care for 30 children from two to five years. There are 29 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age range. The pre-school receives funding in respect of some of the children. The accommodation contains an office, staff facilities, a large playroom and toilets, together with children's centre facilities for community use. The children also have access to an enclosed, part-covered outside area. The pre-school has suitable access and facilities for disabled children, although there are none on roll at the present time. It is open from 9.15am to 12.15pm Mondays to Fridays, and from 1.45pm to 3.15pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, during term time only.

The staff team consists of six members who work with the children. The manager and one assistant are qualified to level 3. The remaining staff members hold a qualification in child care to level 2. The pre-school is registered with Ofsted 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 satisfactory.

Vandyke Road Pre-School is a welcoming, caring and safe setting. Children enjoy coming to the pre-school and have confident and trusting relationships with the staff. It is an inclusive pre-school, where staff work towards meeting children's needs. It successfully promotes children's understanding of healthy lifestyles and some of the activities it provides can be adapted to match the ages and abilities of the children. These qualities ensure children's learning and development needs are satisfactorily met, and they make steady progress through their time in the pre-school. Staff engage in self-evaluation and are able to identify some of the pre-school's strengths and weaknesses and because of this they are able to improve in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide a fuller range of planned, adult-led practical activities to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world
- promote children's creative development by encouraging them to show originality and imagination in their artistic play
- further develop self-evaluation processes so that it evaluates the impact of the pre-school's provision on the learning and development of the children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is seen as the pre-school's top priority. The suitability of all adults working with the children is checked and recruitment processes are reliable. The accommodation is secure from intrusion and prevents children leaving the premises unsupervised. The outside area is also secure, with sound fencing and effective gate bolts. Visitors are required to check into, and out of, the pre-school, and registers of children and staff are thorough. Staff are trained in child protection, know how to identify indications of possible ill-treatment and what to do in such circumstances. All are trained in first aid and systems for administering medicines and reporting minor accidents are effective. Fire drills are held regularly and carefully recorded. Emergency exits are kept clear and exit routes are clearly marked. Careful and regular checks are made of all the facilities and of any new activities that may be planned, to ensure there are no hazards for the children.

The pre-school has implemented many changes since its last inspection and the records of staff appraisals and additional staff training undertaken are examples of this improvement. The recommendations made in the previous inspection have been acted upon and a successful start has been made on improving the planning of activities and the recording of children's progress. Staff recognise, however, that there is more to be done in these areas. A good key person scheme has been introduced and this means that there is a named adult with responsibility for each child, overseeing children's progress and liaising with parents as necessary. Staff have recently introduced a systematic process of self-evaluation. The resulting document provides an account of the range of opportunities the pre-school offers, its safeguarding processes and its links with parents and the community. However, it has little detail of the impact of its provision on the children, or indication of the learning that results from its activities. Consequently, it is not yet as powerful as it could be for identifying key areas for future improvement.

The pre-school is located in an attractive, light and welcoming building. Indoor and outdoor equipment and resources are in good condition. There are sufficient staff to ensure that all activity areas are adequately supervised and that all children have access to an adult if necessary. The availability, and range, of resources, and their deployment help the children make sound progress in their learning. Staff take care to ensure that all children have full access to all the opportunities the pre-school provides. Play activities suit the full range of ages and do not discriminate between boys and girls. A book collection includes stories and illustrations with a varied cultural background, which help children to appreciate the cultural diversity of society.

The pre-school has sound partnerships with parents and with its adjacent lower school. Parents appreciate the pre-school. One commented that staff are well trained at helping children to settle. Another commented on the ease of communication with staff in the event of any difficulty. There is a periodic parents' newsletter and a survey of parents' views. The survey is currently under review as recent responses have not been as high as staff had hoped. Plans are also in hand for a regular open evening for parents to discuss their child's progress. The pre-

school is developing its links with the adjacent lower school and works with the adjoining children's centre to provide additional support to local families and children. School links are being established and senior staff from the school have visited the pre-school to meet staff and children. There is an established partnership with the adjoining children's centre and the pre-school is active in encouraging parents and families to make use of its provision.

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

Children make steady progress as they move through the pre-school and they enjoy the opportunities offered. The activity plans produced by staff show a satisfactory balance of indoor and outdoor activity and also indicate when new adult-led activities will be introduced. They ensure that children experience all six areas of the required early years programme and identify the range of continuous activities available for children to access independently each day. These currently include play with dinosaurs on a floor mat, modelling with salt dough, looking at books, making jigsaw puzzles and drawing in a Christmas stencil outline. Later, children can also choose to play outside, although frost and ice prevent the use of larger apparatus. Children happily settle to their own choice of play. Plans do not give a full indication of the learning challenges expected from continuous activities, or clearly define what the role of adults are when they sit with the children. While the children enjoy topical Christmas activities, their overall programme does not provide enough new, exciting adult-led learning to stimulate and feed their intense curiosity about the world around them and therefore help them to make better progress in this area.

The staff have introduced a new system for checking and recording the progress each child makes in each of the six areas of learning. These records, together with observations of their play, show that most children are making steady progress in their language and problem solving development. They converse confidently with adults, recognise their own written names and some of the sounds made by the letters and enjoy browsing through the pages of picture books. They can count to 10 with reasonable accuracy, understand comparative terms, such as 'more than' and 'less than' and recognise simple regular shapes such as circles and squares. They know about the people in the community who help them and about Christmas celebrations and traditions. The activity room computer is not fully used at present. Children make good headway in their physical development. They practise fine motor skills with pencils, scissors, and carefully use adhesives to fix cotton wool to their Father Christmas models. They enjoy vigorous outdoor play, and show typical levels of skill and confidence in running, hopping and balancing. While there are opportunities for them to exercise and develop their creative skills, too many craft activities offer too little challenge, because children have little more to do than fill in adults' outlines. This impedes children making decisions about their own art work.

The children generally behave calmly and safely. They seldom run in the activity room and they await their turn for attention patiently. Gentle reminders and explanations from staff ensure that children have a growing awareness of how to

stay safe. They choose play activities with little fuss, rarely quarrel, and sometimes independently offer to help tidy away the snack cutlery and plates. They thoroughly enjoy their snacks. They can name the foods that are good for them and help themselves to a drink of water when they want one. Most wash their hands before eating without needing reminding. They enjoy physical activity, and are keen to play outside even in poor weather conditions. For their ages, they have a good practical awareness of staying healthy and understand the importance of eating sensibly and exercising. The skills and attitudes the children learn in the pre-school will stand them in good stead in their future education.

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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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	2
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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