

Bright Start Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Gill Little
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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

Bright Start Pre-School opened in 1974 and is run by a management committee made up of parents and members of the local community. It operates from the main hall in Brownes Hall in the centre of Carterton. The pre-school has use of the adjacent recreational field.

The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 40 children in the early years age range at any one time. It currently cares for 67 children in total who all come from the local area. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The pre-school offers morning sessions for three and four year olds during school term times from 9.15am until 12.15pm. Afternoon sessions are available for two year olds from Monday to Thursday from 12.45pm until 2.45pm. A lunch club operates from Monday to Thursday inclusive.

The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four. Partnership arrangements are in place with other early years settings, including childminders, pre-schools, nurseries and schools.

The pre-school employs nine staff all of whom hold relevant qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children generally enjoy their time in this safe and friendly pre-school where they are able to make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are aware of children's individual needs and monitor their progress closely. Good partnerships are in place with parents, outside agencies and other early years settings which enhance continuity and consistency in children's care and learning. Self-evaluation procedures highlight areas of good practice but do not effectively acknowledge some weaknesses in the provision, including noise levels in the hall, limited opportunities for outdoor activities and the late timing of children's snacks during some sessions. The pre-school has met recommendations from the last inspection, which demonstrates some ability for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider how to reduce noise levels in the hall in order to create a calmer and more settled learning environment which is reassuring and comforting for children

- provide opportunities for children to play and learn outside on a daily basis all year round
- provide snacks at an appropriate time during each session.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding children procedures, such as possible signs of abuse and how to respond to concerns. They all receive relevant training in this area and have their own copies of published guidance for reference. All staff have appropriate background checks and hold relevant childcare qualifications. Most staff hold first aid qualifications and they deal with any accidents effectively. Staff carry out routine risk assessments to ensure that the environment is safe and secure at all times.

The indoor environment provides a wide range of interesting and accessible resources and activities. However, the organisation of some activities results in very high noise levels throughout some sessions, which has a negative impact on other activities. Some children are able to spend time outdoors but this option is not available to all children on a daily basis. This limits opportunities for fresh air and to benefit from the space and learning potential that the outdoor environment provides.

Staff promote equality and diversity appropriately. They actively support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities by working closely with outside agencies and integrating all children within the pre-school. Close monitoring of children's development ensures that they are all able to make some progress. However, the noisy and somewhat chaotic nature of some sessions is not particularly suited to quieter and more timid children. In addition, the lack of opportunity for outdoor activities limits the potential of all children, particularly those who learn more effectively in the outdoor environment.

Good partnerships are in place with parents who indicate that they are happy with the pre-school provision. The pre-school sends out regular questionnaires to gain the views of parents and acts on any suggestions. Parents are able to take home their children's 'learning journeys' on a weekly basis, giving them good opportunities to reflect on their child's development and add any of their own comments and observations. In addition, staff regularly encourage parents to support their children's learning at home by providing a 'home-link' letter with suggestions for various activities. Staff use the learning journeys as a communication diary with other early years settings who share the care of children, and this enhances consistency between the different provisions. Where children show a keen interest in particular resources, the pre-school loans these items to their childminders so that they can build on individual interests.

Self-evaluation procedures include the views of staff, committee, parents and children and contribute to a detailed written document. In addition, half termly evaluations link to the Early Years Foundation Stage 'Principles into Practice' cards, which enables staff to review all aspects of practice on a regular basis. However,

there is a lack of awareness of the importance of daily outdoor activity and of the impact of noise levels during some sessions on the quality of learning.

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

Children enter the pre-school happily and enthusiastically. They eagerly explore the wide variety of activities on offer, but with few staff initially on hand to support them in their chosen play, the atmosphere quickly becomes noisy and somewhat chaotic, with several boys chasing each other around the hall. Staff remind them not to do this but they continue with this game on and off throughout the morning. Staff have to shout to gain children's attention for registration, and although this is done in good spirits, it only adds to the noise level. Following a quieter registration time and with all staff on hand for support, all children are able to take turns in large groups to engage in a physical activity at one end of the hall while other activities continue. The physical activity includes climbing apparatus and several ride-on cars and bikes. Children know to ride around in one direction in order to avoid collisions and they take care on the climbing apparatus. However, this activity creates very high levels of noise as a large number of children choose to engage in this for most of the morning. Staff support some learning opportunities within the activity, but mainly act in a supervisory capacity and so the activity has limited value.

The remaining activities provide a wide choice for children covering all areas of learning. Some children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, engage keenly in a painting activity with support from staff using brushes and sponges to create their own pictures. Some older girls pretend to make pizza as part of their Italian theme for the week. One group of children, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities, make paper aeroplanes with a member of staff and later take these outdoors to see how far they can fly them. Other children explore musical instruments, modelling dough, construction toys and a toy camera and staff help them to use these in different ways and to learn new skills. Some boys enjoy looking at books independently or sharing stories with staff; other boys enjoy exploring a train set and building up a train track. However, the noise from the children engaged in the physical activity continues throughout most of the session. This inevitably impacts on concentration levels and the quality of interactions. In addition, although behaviour and attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory, some children, particularly boys, at times become tearful or aggressive and this is not always noticed or addressed. A story time at the end of the morning finally brings a more settled and calmer atmosphere to the session. Children enjoy singing 'happy birthday' to one of their friends, and staff use the opportunity to help them understand that candles are hot and must always be handled by an adult.

Children have some opportunities to develop an understanding of a healthy lifestyle, such as washing their hands after using the toilet. They are able to help themselves to drinks of water and they enjoy healthy snacks, including fruit and vegetables. However, during some sessions staff do not provide snack time until

the end of the morning, which is a long time for some children to wait for food. Children are able to engage in a variety of physical activities but have limited opportunities to be outdoors.

Staff routinely monitor children's progress keeping detailed observation records, along with photographs and examples of children's work in their learning journeys. They take account of children's interests and developmental levels and use this to inform future planning. In addition, staff use tracking sheets to ensure that children are making progress in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, in practice, the day-to-day organisation of the sessions has some limitations on the quality of learning.

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	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	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	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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