

Merlin Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Fiona M Robinson

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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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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

Merlin Playscheme was first opened in 1997 and is run by a committee. It operates from Highweek Primary School, close to the town centre of Newton Abbot. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. There is support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. It is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register.

A maximum of 40 children aged from five to eight years may attend at any one time. There are currently 50 children on roll. The play scheme is open from 8.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, during school holidays. It also operates a breakfast club between 7.50am to 8.50am, during school term times. Children attend for a variety of the sessions on offer.

There are seven staff working directly with the children; four have a National Vocational Qualification at level 3; one is working towards level 2; two are working towards level 4; one holds a National Vocational Qualification in Autism; and one member of staff is currently taking her qualification in teaching. The provision receives support from the local authority and holds a quality assurance award.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The provision at Merlin Playscheme is good. Children enjoy the wide range of well-organised games, activities and experiences, and achieve well. There are good links with parents and carers and the host school, and information is shared effectively. Children are fully included in indoor and outdoor activities and behave well. The manager and staff have a good knowledge of the provision's strengths and areas for development, such as refining assessment systems and further developing resources. They demonstrate a good commitment to further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop systems for recording the development and achievement of the youngest children
- develop further the range and use of technology in activities to support children's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is protected well, because staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and child protection issues. They ensure that clear and comprehensive policies, procedures and documentation are in place. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to minimise danger, and are carefully recorded. The provision is kept safe and secure and parents and carers follow robust procedures when collecting their children. There are rigorous staff recruitment and vetting procedures in place to make sure all those having contact with the children are suitable. Children are well supervised, both indoors and outdoors, to keep them safe. Evacuation procedures are practised regularly so that staff and children are familiar with the routine. Children use a good range of equipment and resources that are safe and suitable for their age. Outings are well planned and organised and well written risk assessments are in place for these.

The leadership and management of the provision is good. The manager and staff value the views of parents and children. They take these into consideration when identifying priorities for activities and visits. Good progress has been made in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection. In particular children access a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities often linked to themes, such as 'Animals' and 'Under the Sea'. There are good self-evaluation systems in place, which ensure that improvements have a positive impact on the children's experiences. Staff clearly identify what works well and outline areas for improvement, such as developing the systems for recording the experiences of the youngest children. Opportunities to use the computer are welcomed; however the youngest children do not make full use of information technology resources, such as the digital camera, in their activities and learning. Staff plan together and make effective use of a good range of resources to meet the needs of the children. They attend training opportunities to enhance their qualifications and expertise. Staff actively promote equality and diversity in activities and ensure children are fully integrated into activities such as team games and sporting activities.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good. They are familiar with the policies and procedures of the provision. They receive comprehensive information through informal discussions, the parents' notice board, the website and newsletters. Parents say they are kept well informed of special events and activities. They are pleased with the variety of activities and outings available and feel their children enjoy coming to the play scheme. Key staff are beginning to develop 'learning journeys' for the youngest children and keep parents informed of their children's achievement and progress through informal discussion. There are good links with the host school and the play scheme benefits from the use of the school's well-maintained indoor and outdoor environments. Staff are experienced in caring for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and liaise regularly with children's parents and the host school. They ensure children experience a smooth transition at the beginning of the school day.

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

Children benefit from well-planned activities and achieve well. Staff value their ideas and interests and include these in the topics and choice of activities. Themes such as 'Dinosaurs', 'Africa' and 'China' enrich children's experiences and give them a good appreciation of other cultures. They self-select and make their own choices of play activities with support from staff. Staff evaluate their planning; however systems for recording the achievements of the youngest children are not fully developed to show their progress over time.

Children behave well and show care and respect for one another. They share resources sensibly and help with the tidying up routine. They work well together when they play football and team games and learn to cooperate as they play pool and participate in tabletop games. Staff are very good role models and have a consistent approach to managing the children's behaviour. Children help to draw up rules for behaviour and move sensibly from the indoor to the outdoor environment.

Children develop a good understanding of keeping healthy and safe. They understand the importance of exercise and are keen to practise their balancing skills on the stepping stones, beams and bars in the adventure playground. Their physical skills are developed well through team games such as football, dodge ball and hockey. They learn how to make healthy choices at breakfast time and snack time and help to prepare fruit kebabs and smoothie drinks. They learn to use equipment safely as they make pizzas with healthy toppings. They benefit from talks on fire and road safety from the fire and police services, and water safety from staff.

Children are keen to attend the play scheme and respond well to the care and support given by staff. They show an interest in computer games, pool and tabletop games. They concentrate well as they draw, paint and colour in pictures. Their creative skills are developed well by staff, resulting in colourful panels for their outdoor areas on Africa, America, China and India. Communication, language and literacy skills are developed well as they listen to stories such as 'Anansi and the Storm Boy'. Children enjoy learning about different countries customs, food and sports, and festivals such as Diwali. They create colourful Rangoli patterns; make elephant masks and design interesting henna patterns for their hands. They also sample a tasty range of Indian food. Children cooperate well with one another as they build models of dinosaurs and decorate their money boxes. They benefit from a visit to a dinosaur exhibition and help to create a bright, stimulating environment. Children use their computer skills well to play games; however the youngest children do not make full use of technology resources, such as the digital camera, in their activities for learning and for recording their own work. They enjoy building dens indoors and outdoors and cooperate well when playing parachute games. They also enjoy role play in the hairdressing area. Trips to the zoo, seaside and forest are well organised and enhance their experiences. Overall, children are prepared well for life outside the school day and future learning experiences.

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

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