

Prelude Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 24/02/2011
Inspector Margaret Barnsley

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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

Prelude Day Nursery opened in 1999. It is privately owned and operates from a former Victorian school building in the centre of the village of Osbournby, Lincolnshire. The offices and staff room are on the first floor and the nursery rooms are on the ground floor. There are a variety of rooms for different ages, including a soft play activity room. There are three areas for outdoor play; one is grassed, one has a hard surface and the third is for the babies. There is also an all-weather covered area for continuous outdoor provision. There is a car park for the cars of both staff and parents. The nursery is within walking distance of the village shops, post office and local school.

The nursery is open daily from 7.45am to 5.45pm throughout the year, closing only for bank holidays and for Christmas. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered for 72 children under eight years of age and currently has 64 on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. Of these, 20 children are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery has experience of working with children who have special needs, learning difficulties or disabilities.

There are 13 members of staff working with the children and, of these, 10 hold Level 3 childcare qualifications. Two staff have Level 4 qualifications and one member of staff has a Level 6 qualification. One member of staff is currently undertaking an early years degree. The nursery also employs a cook and a handyman.

Prelude Nursery is supported by the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

This is an exceptionally warm and welcoming nursery. It is a vibrant and stimulating environment, which fully promotes inclusive practice and recognises each child for their uniqueness. Children have excellent opportunities to learn, both indoors and outdoors and make rapid progress in all areas of learning. Outdoor space is organised extremely well in most areas. Comprehensive procedures, policies and partnerships are highly effective and fully ensure that children are protected and that their welfare needs are met to an exceptional standard. Self-evaluation is highly reflective and improvements are extremely well targeted to drive improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- make better use of the space for the Little Squirrels outdoor area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management prioritise children's safety and welfare as paramount. They have highly effective systems and procedures in place to safeguard children. All staff have completed safeguarding training and are fully aware of their duty to protect children and of the correct procedure to follow if they have concerns about a child. They are kept extremely well informed about safeguarding matters. Issues relating to this are discussed as a mandatory element of the agenda at every staff meeting. All policies and procedures that are required for the safe and efficient management of the nursery are in place and are consistently implemented by all staff. Risk assessments are comprehensive and there are highly effective safety measures in place which are reviewed through robust daily checks. The supervision of children is vigilant and further ensured through the use of a camera link to the main office. Staff fully ensure the security of the children through highly organised systems and practice. This is a very strong staff team who are extremely well deployed and who work efficiently together. The channels of communication are well established and everyone knows what their delegated duties are, for example, answering the door and undertaking verification checks. All adults who have close contact with children are vetted for their suitability, or never left alone during their visit.

Self-evaluation is a robust and continuous process that involves parents, staff and children. Priorities for improvement are targeted extremely well and acted upon through further consultation with parents. All parents are provided with initial questionnaires to seek their views. Staff compile and analyse the data and organise this effectively according to areas that have the most significant impact on the children. All parents are then consulted regarding the proposals for the identified developments before final decisions are made. Parents are also able to contribute their ideas through the newly established parent's forum, daily discussions and through the many open days, family events and parent's evenings that the nursery organises. Children are consulted through ongoing discussion about what they like and what they do not like, observations of them at play and through their daily planning and review sessions where they express their views. Self-evaluation is excellent and a great many examples of improvement are evident throughout the nursery. The success of these and the continuous drive to improve is attributed to the new manager, new deputy and the, mostly new, staff team who work extremely well together. The management have high ambitions and aspirations for quality which are shared by all the staff. This shared vision and hard work has brought about many changes that have extremely positive outcomes for children and fully promote equality of opportunity. The two recommendations from the last inspection have been successfully met to a standard that exceeds expectations. Systems for planning around children's individual needs are now highly effective and fully promote inclusive practice. The whole nursery has been re-decorated and transformed into a homely, relaxed and tranquil environment with the use of muted colours and domestic furniture that reflects children's home environments. Staff have implemented the 'Beginning with babies' approach to the

environment and the nursery now has bedrooms, kitchens, playrooms and lounges which are equipped with leather sofas, fire places, photo frames and wallpaper, as children would see at home. Many other improvements have been made to the environment, for example, the outdoor areas and improved access for wheelchair users. A thorough staff development programme has been established. Significant focus has been placed on partnership working with parents and with professionals, such as, the local health team, local schools and other settings that children attend. Every aspect of the nursery has been considered in the development plan and the improvements that have been made, in addition to those that are planned for the future, are to be commended. The staff team demonstrate an exceptional understanding of the importance of self-evaluation and show commitment and an excellent capacity to drive ongoing improvements.

The nursery places equality of opportunity and inclusive practice at the heart of the setting. Extensive information is both gathered and shared with parents in many different ways to ensure that this commitment is fully achieved. Parents are highly respected as their child's first educator and their contributions to children's learning and development are actively sought and included in planning for children's individual needs. Children with special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities are extremely well supported. Relationships with parents are excellent and their positive comments about the nursery reflect the effort that the staff team make. Parents feel extremely happy with the care and education their children receive and those spoken to recognise the rapid progress that their child is making and comment on how happy and confident their child is. Parents feel they are very well informed about their child's nursery life and other nursery matters and that they have excellent opportunities to be included in all aspects if they wish. Partnerships with other settings that children attend or will attend in the future are firmly established and significantly contribute to children's wellbeing, continuity in their learning and transition to school.

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

This is a highly industrious and stimulating nursery where children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals. They learn and develop their skills extremely well because the staff have expert knowledge of the learning and development and welfare requirements. This is a highly qualified and experienced staff team who have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and develop. They observe children extremely well to identify their preferred learning styles, interests and needs and translate this information effectively into purposeful plans that provide children with challenge in their learning and move them towards their next steps. Children are highly respected for their uniqueness and have every opportunity to make their own decisions and express their views. They access resources independently and the staff use their expertise to skilfully incorporate children's next steps and progress them in their learning through the choices that the children make. Staff know that children learn best if experiences have meaning for them and greatly involve them in the planning and organisation of their day.

The conversations and discussions that take place are rich and purposeful. They develop children's vocabulary, their ability to think critically, to solve problems and also promote high levels of self esteem and a strong sense of belonging. Staff ask children lots of open-ended questions and they listen extremely well to what children have to say, giving them plenty of time to think and consider things. Children feel valued and make positive contributions, which staff recognise and respond to. Children's behaviour is exemplarily. They are responsible and have a very good understanding of the expectations for acceptable behaviour. They are mannerly, polite and extremely helpful.

Children have wonderful resources, both indoors and outdoors and use these extremely well. Significant focus is placed on taking indoor learning into the outdoor environment. There are three outdoor areas in total and each leads directly from a room so that children have free-flow continuous outdoor provision. All areas are extremely well resourced although the Little Squirrels area is only small and does not accommodate all nine babies when they attend together. This is overcome as another area is used instead on these occasions. However, there is some additional space available and plans to develop this and make the Little Squirrels area larger are at the proposal stage. Children are provided with waterproof clothes and wellies and have an all-weather canopy which provides protection in extreme weather. Staff have completed training on the outdoor environment and have introduced many new aspects which enable children to learn to take and manage risks safely, for example, when using large crates and tyres to build with and to balance on. They have herb gardens and grow their own vegetables which they tend, harvest and help prepare for meals. Children go for regular walks to places of interest, such as, the church next door, on nature walks and into the village. Planned activities cover all areas of learning and the resources are of an extremely high quality, which enhances children's desire to use them. Rooms are set out extremely well and provide children with plenty of space to explore and to be creative in their play. Books are used extremely well by children because they can look at them in well designed areas with soft, cosy cushions or on sofas in their lounge areas. They make excellent use of technology and many children are very skilled at using the computer mouse proficiently, understanding the purpose of the programme they are using. Babies have many electronic toys or toys that react to instruction They play with musical toys, early learning numerical and alphabet toys. All children are developing a full awareness of technology at their level, making excellent progress with their language, early writing and numeracy skills. They appreciate each other's differences and develop their ability to negotiate, reason and compromise well. They are learning skills that will contribute positively to their future.

Children's good health is fully promoted through the high levels of outdoor activities they participate in and the positive hygiene and care routines that they are fully familiar with. The nursery also has an indoor soft-play room, which is well resourced and used extensively by toddlers and babies so that they can climb in safety and develop their muscles. All children have the opportunity for a rest in the day if they wish and babies have a cosy bedroom, which is well equipped with cots and fresh bedding. Children are extremely well nourished as they have high quality, freshly cooked meals that are tailored to meet their individual needs. The cook has a wealth of expertise around healthy eating as she cooks on the 'Healthy

Eating Bus'; a mobile 'cooking bus' which visits other settings and promotes the Healthy Eating project endorsed by a celebrity chef. Meals for children with special dietary needs are prepared with great sensitivity. The cook takes great care to make them look as similar to those that are prepared for other children as possible, because all children come together at lunch time to eat as a group in the dining room. This practice is excellent for both children's social learning and as preparation for children moving up to school. This is one more way in which children are helped with their transition. Children behave in ways that are safe and responsible. They understand about fire evacuation and road safety and follow simple rules without being prompted. They are helpful, tidy away their resources, line up when moving from one area to another and are highly responsive to staff. Children play a dynamic role in this setting and are extremely active participants in their learning because they are secure and feel safe within a familiar routine and with staff who are attentive and encouraging.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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