

Fairhaven First Steps Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Susan Ennis

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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

Fairhaven First Steps Pre-school was registered in 1992. It operates from a large room in the village hall in the village of South Walsham in Norfolk. Children and families attend the pre-school from South Walsham and surrounding villages. There are parking facilities and the building is on one level with access to a secure play area. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time and there are currently 37 children on roll, all of which are in the early years age range. The pre-school is open term time only from Tuesday to Friday between 9.15am and 12.15pm. In addition, they offer an afternoon session on a Wednesday and an optional lunch club on a Thursday.

Five permanent staff and three emergency relief staff work with the children, two hold childcare qualifications to level 3, one holds a level 2 qualification and one staff member is awaiting a level 2 certificate. The supervisor is currently studying for an Early Years Foundation Degree and level 5 management qualification, and two staff are doing National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) to level 2 and 3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children settle very well in the pre-school and receive a good level of care because the committed staff work very closely with individual children and their families. Excellent systems are in place to ensure that all children's individual needs are routinely met. Overall staff have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and understand how children develop and learn through play. Exceptional partnerships between parents ensure individual children's needs are met and their protection assured. Extremely successful steps are taken to self-evaluate its provision for children and the pre-school demonstrates a strong capacity to make continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review aspects of the learning environment, with particular regard to the use of visually stimulating low-level displays, and re-consider the way some of the activities are presented to further encourage children to engage, explore and experiment
- encourage children to practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills by asking more challenging and open-ended questions which support and extend children's thinking and help them make connections in learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are well protected because staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and know when to take action to safeguard children in their care. Staff are aware of the possible signs of abuse and know what to do if they have concerns about a child. Children are protected as the established staff team keep the premises very secure and supervise the children at all times. All staff are suitable to work with the children because there is a robust recruitment process in place and the provider makes suitability decisions using secure evidence from a range of relevant sources. Detailed risk assessments are carried out to provide a very safe environment. The pre-school has excellent record-keeping systems and a detailed, well organised operational plan is in place to support the staff and give information to parents. The supervisor routinely makes excellent use of a wide range of monitoring systems, such as evaluation and 360 degree appraisals relating to the provision and outcomes for children, and the whole staff team are involved in the process of critical self-evaluation, drawing up a clear and achievable action plan as a result. Children's wellbeing is enhanced due to good organisation of this setting. This is because of the capable committee, the supervisor's dynamic approach and a dedicated staff team. There is a real collaborative learning culture, where the majority of the staff team are engaged in additional training to further enhance their skills and, as a result, morale is high, with both the committee and the staff embracing recent changes which have been and which continue to be implemented.

The excellent liaison with parents and carers contributes to improvements in children's achievement, wellbeing and development. The pre-school places great value in ensuring that parents have a sense of belonging. For example, the pre-school provides comprehensive welcome packs and copies of policies and procedures for new parents. In addition, it provides a wealth of good quality information and produces regular newsletters which inform the parents of what the children have been learning. Parents have completed questionnaires and the summary of findings has been published, showing how the pre-school has made real improvements to their practice as a result of the feedback received. Parents and carers are encouraged to share what they know about their child when they first start at the setting. They complete information sheets and forms about what their child can do and their individual likes and dislikes. This information helps staff to have a good knowledge of each child's background and needs. The parents have excellent opportunities to contribute to their children's learning when they volunteer on the parent helper rota, receive their children's learning stories on a half termly basis or make contributions to the pre-school newsbook.

Links with the local primary school, where many of the pre-school children will move on to, are very well established and the children have good opportunities to familiarise themselves with the school, routines and teacher, prior to starting in the reception class. The pre-school is currently working on improving partnerships with other early years settings where some children attend, in order to provide a more cohesive approach for individual children. Many parents speak very highly about the pre-school and state that the key strength is the friendly and approachable

staff team and the home-from-home ethos of the setting.

Staff make the most of diversity to help children understand the society they live in. They have built good links with their community and receive free fresh fruit and vegetables every week from the local supermarket. They also held a carol concert where children helped switch on the Christmas lights at the village public house. Throughout the year children go on outings into the local community, be it a trip to the nearby nature reserve or a visit to an animal park. This aids towards children becoming aware of the society in which they live. Good use of a recent monetary grant has been made and, as a result, the resources within the setting are very good, fit for purpose and support children in their development. However, the environment as a whole is not as rich as it could be. At times, not enough thought goes into the way that activities are presented and although the pre-school have recently purchased and plan to use low-level display boards, these are not currently in use. As a result, children are not fully stimulated to engage and play to maximum effect.

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

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff provide a wide range of activities that take into account children's individual learning needs. They provide a well-balanced session that contains suitable periods of time where children mainly follow their own initiated ideas as well as some adult-led activities. Staff meet on a weekly basis and make good use of their observations of the children to plan activities, which take into account each child's interests and learning needs. Children join in with the activities and their levels of concentration are good as they are allowed to spend time at their chosen activity and go back later to consolidate their own learning. At times staff really engage with children, developing their thinking, posing critical questions about the size and shape of the toy bricks, which they are using to build a farm. However, on other occasions staff do not go far enough to really extend children's learning, by effectively challenging their thinking, joining in and intervening as appropriate.

Outdoor play features on a daily basis throughout the year and the pre-school provide wet suits and spare Wellington boots so that children can still enjoy the fresh air in wet weather. Many of the children relish the free flow outdoor play and are keen to get their coats on so that they can peddle on bikes, throw balls and dig in the sand. In warmer weather they will plant out vegetable seeds in the pre-prepared vegetable bed. Children's social skills and ability to communicate with others are well supported, so that they are developing the underpinning skills needed for their future success. They act independently when they fetch an apron to protect their clothes when they paint, help themselves to water from a jug if they are thirsty and wipe their own noses and discard the tissue in a flip-top bin. Children listen carefully when adults read them stories such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and confidently anticipate what the caterpillar eats next. They learn that print carries meaning as the pre-school uses written words, supported by images to help children to recognise their names and other familiar words, and they learn to value and enjoy books when they choose to take a book home from

the pre-school library to enjoy with their parents.

Children behave well as staff use appropriate strategies to encourage children's good behaviour, for example, distraction or praise to reinforce positive behaviour and giving children as special mention in the regular pre-school newsletter when they have been particularly helpful, brave or good at sharing. Children are building relationships with each other and have lovely warm relationships with the staff, which they willingly approach for reassurance or request as and when needed, demonstrating that they feel safe. They help and support each other whilst playing and are caring towards each other. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through the discussions and activities provided. They welcome visitors such as a police officer and a lollipop lady who come and talk to the children about keeping themselves safe, and they engage in regular fire drills where they learn about the dangers of fire. Children follow very good hygiene practices as they take increasing responsibility for washing their hands appropriately or using sanitizer sprays.

Staff make good efforts to encourage healthy eating and give parents different ideas on what to put in their child's lunchbox. The staff provide healthy snacks that take account of children's dietary needs and include a wide range of fresh fruits and vegetables, such as strawberries, raisins and bananas. In addition, as part of the pre-school themes which they follow, children are introduced to different foods from around the world, recently trying hummus and pitta bread and Chinese noodles. Children learn table manners and social skills as they sit together for snacks and meals with their key worker. Children use and develop their small muscles and hand-eye control when they competently complete puzzles, spread glue with glue spreaders and hold crayons appropriately. All children are starting to develop their awareness of diversity. They access a wide range of resources and find out about other countries of world in themed topics, which help them to positively explore and value differences and similarities in the wider world.

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	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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	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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