

Flamstead Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Hilary Preece

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

Flamstead Pre-School is managed by trustees and was registered in 1993. It operates from two rooms in the village hall in Flamstead, near St Albans, Hertfordshire. The pre-school serves the local area and surrounding villages. It is accessible to all children and there is a small enclosed area available at the front of the church hall for outdoor play.

The pre-school opens Monday to Thursday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.15am to 11.45am. There is an optional lunch club that runs until 1pm. Children from the village nursery can be collected to attend the lunch club on Tuesdays to Thursdays. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 23 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school provides funded early education for two, three and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five members of staff who work with the children. Of these, one holds appropriate early years qualifications at Level 2 and three at Level 3 or above. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Effective partnership working ensures children's needs are met. Children generally have a suitable range of opportunities and experiences that support their learning and development and enable them to make steady progress. Procedures that underpin children's safety and security are managed sufficiently well, although regulations with regards to risk assessments are not fully met. Self-evaluation is beginning to be effective in bringing about improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- review risk assessments to include all aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis and ensure records show when and by whom they have been checked (Suitable premises, environment and equipment).

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

- ensure that records of the risk assessment for outings show when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and any action taken following a review or incident
- review the safeguarding children policy and procedure in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance
- ensure the outdoor space offers a rich and varied environment to support children's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are managed sufficiently well. Two members of staff are designated to oversee procedures and have attended appropriate training. They have a reasonably secure knowledge and understanding of their roles in safeguarding children and would always seek appropriate advice if they had any concerns about the welfare of child or in the event of an allegation being made against staff members. However, the written safeguarding statement refers to agencies that are obsolete rather than current Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance. This is potentially misleading. The committee of trustees takes overall responsibility for recruitment of staff. They ensure staff have early years qualifications or a commitment to study, are vetted and undergo appropriate induction training to equip them with the skills to carry out their duties and protect and keep children safe. Staff are generally deployed well to provide appropriate support and supervision needed to keep safe and to enjoy their time at the pre-school. The range of resources and equipment to support children's play and learning is expanding. Overall the provider makes good use of the local community resources to extend children's experiences.

Policies that underpin the practice are currently being reviewed. Staff have due regard for children's safety within the premises and when they use the local environment. An annual risk assessment is made, together with daily checks of the indoor and outdoor environment and for outings. Records are brief and not all show when they were reviewed and what action was taken to minimise hazards. This refers to some potentially hazardous plants in the outdoor play area. Consequently, systems for monitoring children's safety are not totally effective.

Effective communication with parents and carers contributes to children's needs being met. Valuable information about children is gathered initially and used by key workers to get to know children and plan for their needs. Parents are provided with good quality information about the setting, its policies and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Further information is provided in fortnightly newsletters which are attractively presented and thus easy to read. These contain particularly useful activities or tips on how parents can support their children at home. This helps reinforce topics of learning in the pre-school and actively involves parents in their children's learning and development. Self-evaluation systems are developing well. The staff team regularly meet together to share ideas and reflect on practice. The relatively new manager and staff team are keen to develop better

ways of working and have identified some clear target areas for improvement, some of which are already leading to improved outcomes for children. Recently the observation, assessment and planning system has been reviewed to make it more effective in monitoring and tracking children's progress and they have highlighted some training to help them plan, specifically for boys' interests. Following a suggestion from parents, the pre-school is introducing a parent consultation evening where parents will have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with their key worker and view their records. This will compliment the already well-established system for sharing information whenever parents wish. Partnerships with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage are effective in supporting children's transitions. Teachers from the village nursery and school visit the pre-school to meet children before they move up and children's individual records are shared with them in order to help with planning. Children attending the nursery class are invited back to the pre-school to attend the lunch club, which serves a local community need. Appropriate systems are in place to identify and provide support for those children who have additional needs.

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

Children are effectively supported to learn and develop because staff have a sound knowledge of each child's needs. They plan an appropriate range of activities and experiences that promote children's progress towards the early learning goals across all areas of learning. Simple observations and assessments of children have been used until recently to show what children are achieving. The recent overhaul of this system is beginning to show more accurately the progress that children are making and is helping staff in planning for their individual needs.

Children use the resources and access all areas of the environment confidently. Indoors is bright and welcoming and children help themselves to what they want to play with. They enjoy the option of playing inside or outside which means they learn to make independent choices and remain motivated because they follow their interests. The outdoor play area, however, is less well equipped and so provides limited opportunities for children to explore and learn using challenging resources. Nonetheless, children enjoy being active outside in the fresh air. They develop a sense of place as they go on outings around the village to visit the church or the village shop. They are encouraged to use their senses to look for flowers or bugs and to listen for birds or aeroplanes. They thoroughly enjoy a pancake race around the local streets. They learn to appreciate their local environment when a farmer brings his tractor to the pre-school for them to see. Activities help children understand difference and diversity. At Chinese New Year they are invited to taste traditional Chinese foods such as lychees and water chestnuts.

Children settle well because they are gently reassured if upset. They develop secure relationships with their key workers and other adults and quickly learn what is expected from them. As a result, their behaviour is very good and the atmosphere is calm and relaxed. This helps children feel safe, secure and enjoy their play and learning. Children love to be recognised for doing something special

and consequently develop high self-esteem. This is evident as children respond with a beaming smile when they receive a smiley face sticker for 'playing nicely with their friends' or for 'lovely tidying'. Children sit well overall and listen attentively to group discussions and stories. They join in with conversations and some children are developing confidence to talk to the whole group at 'show and tell' time. They join in with songs and action rhymes in which they count and develop awareness of numbers and quantity. Children are quite content to sit in the book corner looking at books or listen to stories read by staff. They experiment with mark making by writing on clipboards using chalks and paints.

Children's health is promoted through everyday routines such as washing their hands before snack time and tasting a wide variety of nutritious fruits and vegetables. A regular food activity enables them to try a range of foods and new ways of eating them, such as when making fruit kebabs for their snack. Staff sometimes use such routines and activities to reinforce children's understanding of good health and hygiene. Their personal health and dietary needs are managed appropriately. All staff are trained in first aid and able to administer treatment promptly. There are some opportunities for them to develop independence as they help clear away their cups and bowls. They are shown how to look after their teeth when a dentist visits and the doctors role play allows children to find out about their bodies and how to care for them. Children develop appropriate gross motor skills when using large wheeled toys or balancing along a beam. They develop fine motor control in their hands by using glue sticks, scissors and mark making tools.

Children understand some rules that keep them safe and are beginning to show awareness of potential risks. For example, they adhere to the rule for 'safe walking' when inside and know that water from the tap might be hot. On outings they show they understand that they must hold onto the handle on the walking rope in order to all stay safe together. Staff remind them to be careful and to listen for traffic when they are by the road so they begin to understand basic road safety awareness. They use this knowledge in the playground as they respond to the stop and go road signs. Overall, most children make steady or good progress towards the early learning goals and enjoy their time at pre-school. This is illustrated by a child who states, 'I love it here'.

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	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	2
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

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