

Blofield Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 253952
Inspection date 29/03/2011
Inspector Dawn Pointer

Setting address The Margaret Harker Hall, Yarmouth Road, Blofield,
Norwich, Norfolk, NR13 4RH

Telephone number 01603 712498

Email

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Blofield Pre-School Playgroup was registered in 1972. It operates from a village hall in Blofield, in Norfolk. Children and families attend the pre-school from Blofield and surrounding villages. There are parking facilities and the main playroom is on one level with the reception room located up a few stairs. There is a secure outside play area. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The pre-school is managed by a voluntary management committee of parents and a maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 45 children on roll, all of which are in the early years age range. The pre-school is open Mondays and Thursdays from 9.30am to 3.30pm, Tuesdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm, Wednesdays from 12.45pm to 3.45pm term-time only.

The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Six permanent staff work with the children, five of these staff hold relevant childcare qualifications between Level 2 and Level 5 and one member of staff is working towards a Level 3 qualification. A parent rota operates to provide additional adult support at each session and the pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Overall, children's care and learning needs are met effectively as the pre-school works closely with parents and relevant professionals. Space and resources are generally used creatively to provide a very varied range of practical activities that help children learn whilst they play and explore. As a result, children make good progress in relation to their starting points. Children's welfare is well protected through some effective practices. Systems to evaluate and improve practice are in place but these are not currently up to date or assessed against a robust and challenging criteria.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the use of self-evaluation as a basis of ongoing internal review assessing what the setting offers against robust and challenging quality criteria
- work together with other practitioners and parents to further support transition between settings that deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage to current pre-school children
- review the way in which some activities and displays of children's work are presented to ensure that these further encourage children's interest and

curiosity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and welfare are maintained in the setting. The robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable to be working with children and hold appropriate qualifications. A suite of detailed policies and procedures are effectively implemented to ensure the smooth day-to-day running. Comprehensive risk assessments are completed on the premises and for outings to minimise the likelihood of accidents. Designated staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and capably describe procedures for working with relevant agencies to protect children from harm or neglect.

The premises are maintained to a satisfactory level and staff work hard to make good use of the indoor play area. Displays of children's work and inviting images help to create a welcoming child-friendly environment and activities are generally well presented; however many displays are at adult height and staff have overlooked the way the dressing up clothes are presented and how the exploration table is set out. As a result, children are not able to fully appreciate many of the displays or encouraged to respect the equipment and explore and experiment to full effect. The structure of the session ensures children have extensive daily access to outdoor play so that they benefit from fresh air and physical activity. The setting has recently developed this area to offer wider learning opportunities in addition to large physical play opportunities and staff are considering offering additional resources to enhance and extend their learning further.

A key worker works with each family to aid communication between parents and enable close bonds to form with children. Ratios of staff to children are well maintained with the additional support of a parent helping out on the parent helper rota; as a result, children receive good quality interaction. Staff develop secure knowledge of the children in their group enabling them to assess and plan for future learning. Individual interests are considered when planning themes, valuing diversity within the group. Parents receive a very good level of information about the setting. They contribute to their children's learning stories when they first start so that staff get to know the children quickly and can care for children according to individual needs and in line with parents' wishes. Parents have good opportunities to become involved in their children's learning and are kept well informed through termly newsletters and because staff make themselves available to feed back to parents as required.

The setting has developed some effective partnerships with other professionals to support individual needs. Communication with speech and language specialists and close working with parents ensures staff are able to fully support those at an early age of speaking. Good links are in place with the local primary school where many of the children will go which will support a smooth transition as children move on in their education. Links with other settings which deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage where some children also attend are in their infancy but the pre-school has clear plans to improve these relationships in order to provide an even

more cohesive approach to learning.

The pre-school supervisor and her staff team have worked very well with the support of the local authority to implement action plans to bring about improvements. Whilst they recognise the value of continuous improvement, their systems to evaluate their own practice against robust and challenging criteria are not up to date or rigorous enough to demonstrate sustained improvement. Regular staff meetings and frequent opportunities for staff development and focussed training ensure that all keep up to date with changes and are continually improving their skills for the benefit of the children. They have used monetary grants wisely to purchase new equipment and develop the outdoor area so that it promotes an increasing variety of learning opportunities to support all six areas of learning and development. Parents' views are valued and sought in the form of questionnaires; information from these responses is used to raise standards and make changes, such as further improving the healthy eating programme that the pre-school is following.

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

Good relationships are evident between the staff and children. Throughout the pre-school those who are unsettled or upset are appropriately comforted by staff, helping them to feel safe and secure. Children develop a sense of belonging as they see photographs of themselves and their artwork in displays and in their learning stories. Staff observe children during play and record their achievements. They use this information to highlight any gaps in children's learning and plan next steps for them to work towards. This method is effective and, as a result, children make good progress. A selection of activities are then planned to take account of children's interests and their individual learning needs. It is evident that children enjoy their time at pre-school when they freely access toys and activities which have been set out prior to their arrival.

Routines, such as snack time, are used effectively to encourage children's independence skills, for example, when they pour their own drinks and help themselves to the rich variety of fresh and dried fruit. Behaviour is good and children understand the need to share and take turns because they are supported to do so by staff. Children respond well when staff go over to intervene in any disputes and soon resort to playing harmoniously. Trips out into the local community, for example to the library in the village or the sea life centre provide opportunities for children to consolidate skills learned and enable them to develop a good awareness of the world around them. Opportunities to learn about other countries and cultural festivals and special events give children a sense of the wider world within which they live.

Effective methods are used to encourage children to adopt healthy lifestyles. Children follow mainly effective hygiene routines including handwashing and receive help with blowing their noses. Children take part in cooking activities where they taste what they have eaten. The pre-school promotes an awareness of healthy eating by giving advice to parents about what to put in their child's packed

lunch box and by providing snacks, which are freshly prepared and nutritionally balanced. These are further enhanced by the introduction of new healthy foods, such as pineapple, soda bread and banana and carrot cake for them to try each week. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that individual dietary needs are catered for in terms of allergies and preferences and give parents clear information on the ingredients in their children's snack each day.

Children develop a range of physical skills and benefit from fresh air through exercise and energetic play outdoors. Importantly staff recognise that some children learn more effectively outdoors, as a result they create increasing opportunities for children to use everyday activities, such as looking at books and playing with sand outside. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world when they help to plant some seeds and spring flowers in outdoor pots. They develop their imagination and language skills as they choose to dress up and they listen intently to stories, which are read by an adult. They develop hand-eye coordination as they paint at the easel, make marks on the chalk board or create a Mother's Day card for the special person in their life.

Indoors children also develop skills for the future through the range of activities. They explore technology, ably using the mouse on a computer to complete simple programmes, whilst at other times they learn about rhythm as they play musical instruments with gusto and pleasure. Simple mathematical and scientific concepts are introduced during sand play as children fill up buckets with sand and work out how much more they need to make it full. Children develop hand control needed for later writing as they use a range of tools in art and craft activities. Their language skills are developing well as staff engage in play with the children and take time to listen to them.

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
--	---

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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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