

The Forest of Dean Children's Opportunity Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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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

The Forest of Dean Children's Opportunity Centre was registered in 2009 after the registration of the holiday scheme in 1994. The centre is held in purpose-built premises that include a playroom, family room, quiet room, multi-sensory room, therapy room and two outdoor play areas. Children are taken to a forest school on site. The centre supports families living in the Forest of Dean area and provides care for children with and without special educational needs and/or disabilities. The centre is open each weekday, except for the Christmas period and bank holidays. Term-time sessions are from 9am to 12 noon and from 12.30pm to 3pm. The play scheme is open from 9.30am to 3pm during every half-term and school holiday periods. The centre runs a toy and equipment library for families and early years provisions in the locality.

The setting is on the Early Years Register and also makes provision for children older than the early years age group, as it is registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered to care for 35 children at any one time, including 35 in the early years age group. There are currently 57 children on roll aged from two years to seven years. The scheme currently supports a significant number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are 12 staff working directly with the children and of these six work only at the holiday scheme only. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years and/or play work qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The manager holds a Certificate in Early Year Education at Level 4 and one member of staff has Qualified Teacher Status. The centre has operational links with the primary school on the same site.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make very good progress given their age, ability and starting points as key persons know them very well and respond professionally to their individual and specific needs. Planning is effective and, overall, systems to monitor their achievements ensure that they remain focused and engaged. Children's safety is given top priority and most required documents are effectively maintained to support their well-being and welfare. Excellent partnership working supports the involvement of families so that children benefit from a consistent approach. Practitioners are fully committed to improving the centre and use in-depth reflection through well established strategies involving parents, children and staff members who all contribute to priorities for improvement which positively result in better outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the setting's written policies regularly to keep information about the children's welfare up to date.
- review monitoring systems to check the rate of progress that children make in each area of learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The opportunity centre is well organised. All required policies, procedures and records are in place and many are detailed though not all are reviewed regularly to keep available information up-to-date. The confident management well supports the skilful, key staff who enjoy their work, communicate well together and are clear about their delegated roles and responsibilities. Effective systems are in place for staff recruitment, induction and regular appraisal, ensuring adults' strengths and areas for development are identified. These have resulted in teams of staff and volunteers who are highly motivated, enthusiastic and keen to develop what they offer to the families using the centre. Children are comprehensively safeguarded through the staff's excellent understanding of responding to children about whom there is a concern. A large number of detailed risk assessments are carried out to minimise hazards and ensure the safety of the children.

The centre highly promotes equality and diversity for children and their families, staff and volunteers. Children's needs are, overall, very effectively met as to help them settle and develop. For example, staff use skilful signing to help children communicate and be considerate towards one another. The well-organised environment and wealth of quality resources are imaginatively used to support individual children's development and learning. Partnerships with parents and carers and other professionals are exceptional. There is comprehensive exchange of information about the children through home visiting, daily conversations with key persons, informative notices and well attended open days so that parents are fully involved in their children's development and learning processes. Parents speak very highly of the quality of care their children receive and of the caring, approachable staff.

The centre has outstanding links with external agencies and services so that children are fully supported through a multi-agency approach. There is excellent communication between the professionals working with the children and the highest continuity of service to respond to concerns or difficulties for these children and their families. Staff work very closely with other early years providers to provide integrated sessions within the local area so children benefit fully from informed, consistent care.

The centre's self-evaluation is very good and has recently included in-depth review

of many aspects of the provision. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been fully implemented to support the children's health and safeguarding. Views, comments and preferences of management committee, staff, parents and children are being given high regard to ensure that the service is inclusive. For example, a detailed business plan has been drawn up to underpin the centre's future areas of growth. Many areas are now identified for improvement, including updating the centre's information technology equipment and the development of an on-site, conducive education centre to support children's access to mainstream schooling.

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

Children make very good progress in their learning and development because their welfare is actively promoted and their individual needs are consistently met. Attentive and supportive key staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of each child. This allows them to plan effectively and provide activities that interest and engage the children. As a result, in relation to their levels of ability, children's all round development is well promoted. They are well supported to become equipped with skills needed for the future. The attractive indoor and outdoor learning environments are available throughout the sessions and a wide range of resources is stored at a low level for children to select and use for their own ideas. The holiday playscheme provides a welcome period of respite for families and children have great fun, for example, enjoying very messy play with paint and water and exploring a dark 'den' by torchlight. Firmly established programmes of observation, assessment and planning during term-time mean that children make very good progress towards each early learning goal. Attractive learning journals, to which all parents are supported to contribute, are well used to record significant moments in the children's learning. Staff monitor many aspects of children's progress in each area of learning though this is not fully up to date nor cross referenced to ensure planning is used to maximise children's learning.

Children enjoy the time they spend in the centre. Most leave their parents with confidence and enthusiasm at the start of each session and all form strong relationships with adults. Children make good use of the extensive role-play equipment and readily available books; they act out stories, such as 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' using a water bed as the river. They develop their mark-making skills to form patterns in cornflour mixture or wet and dry sand and explore sounds using musical instruments and letters in their names. Children set their own problems, for example, to count stacked toys and create structures with wooden planks and blocks. Opportunities to explore and investigate such as playing in the snow, bug hunting, catching bubbles, finding animal footprints and growing vegetables enhance their developing knowledge and understanding of the world.

Children feel entirely safe and secure in the setting. A warm and friendly atmosphere where children feel cared for and valued is provided. Children gain an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they have opportunities to gain high levels of confidence and self-esteem in excellent, weekly

forest school activities; they take small risks in controlled circumstances as they explore the undergrowth, create their own maps, climb trees and build with branches. They frequently practise fire drills so they know precisely how to respond in an emergency. Children have a growing understanding of healthy practices. They routinely implement good standards of personal hygiene, such as hand-washing routines. They enjoy healthy fruit snacks and are discouraged from bringing chocolate and fizzy drinks in packed lunches. Children choose to spend time outdoors in the fresh air and exercise, making good use of the garden areas as well enjoying local walks.

The children are very well supported to behave and to relate to their peers. They are consistently engaged in activities and experiences that interest them and some are able to concentrate and persevere for a long time. They benefit from clear, focused praise and encouragement. They confidently take on responsibility, for example, sometimes helping to prepare their snacks and clearing away their plates and cups. They have a growing understanding and respect for the lifestyles of others because of the strong value placed on these by adults in the centre.

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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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	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	1
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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