

Laurel Farm

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

04/05/2011

Inspector

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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

Laurel Farm Kindergarten has been registered since December 2010. The kindergarten is run under a registered charity, which is led by a board of parent trustees and operates from a separate building within the grounds of Laurel Farm, which is a sustainable educational centre situated in Carlingcott, Peasedown St John near Bath. Children have use of a main kindergarten room, entrance area and toilet facilities. There is an enclosed outdoor play area at the side of the premises and the farm grounds are also used for outdoor activities. The kindergarten follows a Steiner-Waldorf based approach to education.

Ofsted have registered the kindergarten on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 16 children aged from three to under eight years, of whom all may be in the early years age group at any one time. There are currently 10 children on roll, of whom all are in the early years age group. The kindergarten is in receipt of Government funding to provide nursery education for three and four-year-old children. The kindergarten is open term time only on Mondays to Thursdays from 9.30am - 1.15pm and on Wednesday afternoons from 1.15pm - 4.30pm. The trustees employ three staff who are qualified in childcare and early years education, one of whom is undertaking Steiner training. They receive support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed and valued at this friendly kindergarten and their individual needs are clearly recognized through the positive relationships staff form with their parents. Staff promote children's development through the provision of activities that assist their learning through discovery and exploration. Improvements are made as staff and management are keen to develop this recently registered provision, although evaluation systems are not yet fully established to effectively monitor all areas. For example, to ensure that all requirements for registration are fully met.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- carry out a full risk assessment for each type of outing, with particular regard to supervising children's access to any unsecured pond or spring areas, and include an assessment of required adult:child ratios.

25/05/2011

(Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

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

- develop further the systems of self-evaluation to ensure all aspects of the provision are consistently monitored to support aims for ongoing improvements
- review the organisation of some parts of the session to ensure children feel secure and able to consistently manage their own feelings and emotions with support from the adults around them
- carry out regular evacuation drills to ensure all children and adults are aware of procedures to follow in the event of any emergency

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is supported in most aspects as clear procedures are in place to follow any child protection concern arising and a detailed safeguarding policy has been formed. Clear recruitment procedures are in place to assess the suitability of staff, although Ofsted has not been notified of all changes to the individuals in the governing body of trustees. This is an offence as it is a specific legal requirement of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Children explore the naturally light, carefully arranged kindergarten room with interest. They can easily access a lovely range of natural resources, such as shells, small smooth pieces of wood or knitted toys, which promote their individual choice and spontaneous creativity in play. For instance, they like to sort through the baskets of pebbles and arrange some rounded white ones into a ring shape to use in their game or tuck their knitted and fabric dolls under some colourful blankets to have a rest. Children use miniature kitchen utensils in the home play area and examine the birds nest and spring flowers on the nature table with interest. This helps them develop their creativity and imaginative skills and their knowledge and understanding of their world.

Children are valued for their individuality and are supported very well in learning about other cultures. For example, they enjoy listening to songs and stories from different countries and learn to say 'hola' in Spanish and 'cze' in Polish to say hello to their friends. They remember how they made and decorated candles for Candlemas and show great interest as their Baboushka visitor talks to them in Russian and brings them some special bread. Children talk about their family at the lunch table, which helps their friends to learn about their lives. Consequently, they are effectively supported in developing positive attitudes to the diversity within their world. Clear focus is given to developing some aspects of the provision offered, for instance, parents helped in building the enclosed outside play area, which provides children with an area to grow their own vegetables and enables them to benefit from free flow play opportunities. Therefore improvements are made, although evaluation systems are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure all areas of practice are consistently monitored and reviewed for effectiveness. For example, risk assessments of the kindergarten and outside areas have been

formed, but sometimes on outings around the farm, children's access, such as to the pond or spring areas, is not consistently assessed to ensure suitable adult: child ratios and boundaries are consistently maintained, which leaves some impact to their safety.

Parental involvement is encouraged very well as staff provide ongoing communication links, such as newsletters, which keep them well informed of current and planned activities. Parents complete an informative child profile, which is discussed with staff and this effectively helps them in getting to know children's individual needs well to support them settling into the kindergarten. Liaison is also formed with other agencies involved in children's care, for instance with other providers they attend, which helps to maintain continuity for children. Parents are encouraged to share information on their child's development through daily discussions and meetings with staff about their ongoing achievements. As a result, children benefit from the strong relationships staff form with their parents

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

All children are involved in preparing the tasty vegetable soup and bread rolls that they share at lunchtime and this activity provides a wealth of learning opportunities. For example, children develop their social and language skills as they ask questions and talk with each other about what they are doing. They learn new words such as cuboid or cylinder to describe the shape of the vegetable pieces chopped up. They begin to use their small muscle skills as they help to grate carrots and chop potatoes to go into the saucepan for the soup. Children talk about the eyes of the potato and how this will grow when planted in the earth. This leads to more discussion about growing vegetables and children tell staff that plants need water and sunshine to grow strong and healthy. Children knead and mould the bread dough into different shapes and models, such as a heart, butterfly, dinosaur or ladybird, which encourages their physical and creative skills. They learn that the heat from the oven will make their rolls rise and change their shape. This helps them to understand how things work and processes of change. This overall activity of preparing their meal helps them in working together and helping each other, for instance by sharing out pieces of dough. Children begin to join in with the repeated refrains of a favourite rhyme or story and are encouraged to think of rhyming words themselves. This helps them to start linking sounds with letters and so helps their early reading skills. Children are keen to help count the number of children present and start to learn about more or less as they then count the number of adults too. They start to sort and group objects as they help to tidy up and make decisions about where resources will fit in, which helps them learn about space and size. As a consequence, they begin to start solving simple practical problems within their daily routines and this helps to promote their future developmental skills.

Children talk about the differences in the frog and toad spawn they see in the pond and enjoy exploring their 'magic glade' in the wooded area of the farm. They have fun as they hide together under the overhanging trees and find interesting

shaped leaves and stones. This helps them develop an awareness of their natural world. They pick up branches to take into their den area and learn to 'walk their sticks' by pointing them safely to the ground, although are not yet actively involved in risk assessing many potential hazards themselves. Children are given pieces of charcoal which are found in the cold ashes of the fire wok in the glade and use these to make marks on logs and branches. They explore colour and texture with interest within a range of effective creative activities. For instance, as they paint over an icing sugar and water mixture and see the lovely patterns and colours emerge. Staff observe each child's approach to the variety of experiences they plan and let them explore and experiment in their play. Staff are knowledgeable of children's abilities and use effective questioning well to encourage their curiosity in learning. This helps in promoting and consolidating children's existing skills, and systems to identify their next steps of development in all areas of learning are being established.

Children are encouraged to keep themselves safe as they are asked to sit nicely on their chairs and they start to look and listen for cars as they cross the farm track on their walk. Staff act as good role models and encourage children to respect one another by using kind hands and generally they play well together. However, at times, such as when there are changes within the daily rhythm of the session, some children become unsettled and stretch appropriate social boundaries. This then sometimes impacts on the effectiveness of some of the learning opportunities available. Children develop a clear enjoyment of healthy foods and are keen to share a plate of different fruits such as kiwi, banana, apple or strawberries. They sometimes try plums, prunes or mangoes and talk about the vegetables they want to grow in their outside area. This effectively supports their interest in foods that are nutritious and healthy for them. Children learn the importance of keeping themselves clean as they follow suitable hygiene routines and wash their hands before eating. Clear focus is given to how children use and develop their physical abilities within their play and they have opportunities to stretch and use their bodies in different ways. For instance, they swing their arms slowly and quickly, up and down and hop like little hares as they sing and join in with their action songs. As a result, they begin to develop clear control of their movements and start to gain more confidence in discovering their own abilities in play.

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	2
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	3
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	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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