

Little Valers Committee

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	22/06/2011
Inspector	Patricia Dawes

Setting address	Grove Vale Primary School, Monksfield Avenue, BIRMINGHAM, B43 6AL
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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

Little Valers Committee Pre-School was registered in 2010. It occupies a self contained unit within Grove Vale Primary school in the Great Barr area of Birmingham. There are no access issues to the unit. The setting operates from a self-contained unit containing a playroom and children's toilets. There is a fully-enclosed area available for outdoor play. The group serves the wider community.

The setting opens Monday to Friday term time only from 8.30am until 11.30am and 12.30pm until 3.30pm. Children are only able to attend either morning or afternoon sessions. A maximum of 24 children may attend the provision at any one time. There are currently 46 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register.

The setting employs three members of childcare staff. All of these hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at this warm and caring group where they make very good progress towards the early learning goals. Inclusive practice lies at the heart of this child-centred environment because practitioners recognise the uniqueness of every child attending. Practitioners establish and maintain outstanding partnerships with parents and work closely with other professionals to fully support children ensuring individual needs are met and their protection assured. The manager and the practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to ongoing continuous improvement and constantly strive to improve the experiences of children attending the setting. Overall, a welcoming and inclusive service is provided to both children and their parents.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve opportunities for children to increase their understanding of fire safety through regular evacuation drills, and keep a record of evacuation drills, including any problems encountered and how they were resolved
- support children's understanding of the wider world by expanding the range of visual displays and resources to positively reflect differing abilities of children and adults within and beyond the setting
- continue to use and develop self-evaluation and quality improvement processes as the basis of ongoing internal review.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded by robust recruitment and vetting procedures, including effective induction procedures for practitioners and students working at the setting. Criminal Record Bureau checks are in place for all practitioners to ensure their suitability to work with children. Practitioners fully understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding the children in their care. Policies and procedures are understood and followed and the safeguarding policy is shared with parents. The use of both visual and ticklist risk assessments ensure that potential hazards are identified and minimised. Additional in-depth written risk assessments are currently being reviewed and implemented to further ensure children's safety in all areas and on outings.

Children's health, safety and well-being are enhanced by the implementation of policies, procedures and practice to support the setting's good practice. Effective systems are in place to ensure children are safe and secure. For example, procedures for the collection of children ensure that no children leave the setting unsupervised. Recording procedures with regards to medication, accidents and children's attendance records are effective and accurately maintained. However, some documentation, such as fire drill log, does not include time taken to evacuate, problems encountered and how these will be resolved to demonstrate how practice is maintained or improved.

Premises are welcoming and promote a child-centred approach which enables children to be self-assured, independent and secure. Resources are well presented and easily accessible. The effective deployment of staff ensures that children are well supervised and supported at all times. Children take part in a broad range of activities that offer very good levels of challenge and are appropriate to their age and stage of development. They take responsibility for choosing what they do, are interested and motivated. Their delightful artwork and mark-making skills are displayed well to boost children's confidence and self-esteem. This is an inclusive setting where warm and caring practitioners have a good knowledge of each child's individual needs which enables them to promote all aspects of children's welfare successfully.

Children are cared for by experienced and dedicated practitioners. Procedures to support professional development are in place and practitioners regularly update their knowledge and experience by attending additional training. The manager understands the importance of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and can clearly identify areas for further development. There is a genuine commitment to improvement. Information from practitioners, parents and children has yet to be updated and included on the self-evaluation form to ensure that continuous improvement is maintained.

Partnerships with parents are exceptionally strong and children benefit from this. The setting obtains an accurate picture of the children from their parents on a home visit prior to admission. An 'all about me' booklet is completed to identify children's starting points. Parents are well informed about all aspects of their

child's achievement and well-being through daily discussions, planned open days and progress reports. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning by using 'Pip and Pop', two toy rabbits and their diaries. Parents record children's home activities and interests which can then be included in future planning. The setting also sends out regular newsletters, inviting parents to be involved in workshops and contribute to special events and celebrations. The setting has forged excellent links with the local children's centre and other pre-schools. Children's transition into full-time education is supported through 'stay and play' sessions which help to promote continuity of care and learning.

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

Children are eager to attend this welcoming and lively setting where they make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all aspects of their learning and development. Practitioners have an excellent understanding of the learning and they focus on children's enjoyment and achievement through an imaginative and creative balance of adult and child-led activities. This results in children becoming active learners, resourceful and able to think critically. Planning which covers all areas of learning is in place and both spontaneous and planned observations are carried out. Practitioners see assessment through observation as integral to supporting children's development, and use the information gained from observations to plan the next steps in a child's developmental progress. This ensures each child moves on at a pace suitable to their individual needs.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered very well. They develop good social skills and like to help with everyday activities, such as tidying away toys. Children greatly enjoy playing and working in small groups or pairs but are equally happy following their own individual interests. All children are provided with experiences and support which helps them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others. Children are encouraged to embrace diversity; they use a range of positive images resources and take part in activities to help them to understand the wider world. However, visual displays to positively reflect differing abilities of children and adults within and beyond the setting are limited and do not effectively promote the wider world.

Children's problem-solving skills are effectively supported through everyday activities. They talk about and observe numbers, colours and shapes around them. They measure and compare 'mini beast', identifying and sorting them by colour. They make 2D sandcastles and pirate treasure maps and 3D models from 'junk' materials. They talk to each other and compare sizes as they make bones for the dog or teeth for the shark using malleable materials. They connect dinosaurs to create 2 colour patterns and sequences and work out how many animals it takes to sink the boat during water play.

Communication, language and literacy are promoted very well. Children have part of the morning in their key groups where staff uses the Structured Activities for Language and Literacy in Early Years (S.A.L.L.E.Y) for activities focussing on sounds and listening. Staff used props, such as percussion instruments to tap out

rhythms, everyday items to spell out words and walking outdoors, listening to the sounds. All children have good opportunities to practise their mark-making and early writing skills using paint, chalks and crayons. Older, more able children, take great pride in showing visitors how they write their name on their paintings. Children are creative and play imaginatively as they love to dress up and make up their own games using the wide range of resources in the role play area. Children become engrossed as they sit well and listen attentively to stories joining in with familiar refrains.

Children learn about the importance of fresh air and physical exercise because good attention is given to their physical development. Children love being outside and confidently explore in a safe, supervised environment. They happily dig in the dirt and ride on bikes and scooters. Children use monkey bars, slides and see-saws to further enhance their physical skills. Children's information, communication and technology skills are fostered well and they use the programmable toys with growing confidence. They are provided with experiences which help them to understand about living and growing things. For example, they know how to plant seeds and tend to plants. These experiences help children to develop important skills for their future and help prepare them for the transition to school.

Children's health is promoted well. They knowingly follow good hygiene practices, such as washing hands before eating, after toileting and messy play. They are aware this is to protect them from 'germs'. Children learn about the importance of eating healthy foods and the setting's healthy snack policy fully reflects this. All children enjoy the benefits of nutritious and well-balanced snacks and drinks. Staff encourage children to dispose of orange peel and apple cores in the compost bin, promoting their understanding of recycling and sustainability. Children practise evacuation procedures and learn how to use the equipment safely. The support and care they receive from staff and the bonds they are forming with them enable children to feel secure and safe in their environment. Children's behaviour is managed well through clear and concise behaviour management strategies such as the 'traffic light' system. Staff act as positive role models. They foster children's self-esteem and offer praise and encouragement at all times as they sensitively remind children to share with their friends and to be polite and kind to each other.

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	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	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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