

Dartmouth Pre-School

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*.

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Description of the setting

Established over forty years ago, Dartmouth Pre-school is managed by a committee and runs from an old Victorian school room in the heart of Dartmouth, in Devon. The pre-school is the main user of the building and has sole use during session times. The group serves the local and surrounding communities. The group is registered to care for up to 24 children from two years to five years of age. Sessions are offered every morning between 9:00am and 11:30am during term time, with these sessions being followed by a lunch club 11:30am and 12:30pm. Afternoon sessions are offered on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12:30pm until 3:00pm. On Thursday afternoons a toddler group runs on the premises. At present there are 29 children enrolled, all from the early years age group. The group supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also those who have English as an additional language. A staff of seven support the provision. Two hold a level four qualification, a third is working towards this qualification, three more hold a level three qualification, and the final member of staff is working towards a level three qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The pre-school team have created a spacious, inviting environment for children's play and learning. There are warm relationships in evidence between staff and children, and while the process of feeding back to parents can be a little informal, there are also good relationships with parents and carers. There is effective support for children with emerging Special Educational Needs and / or physical disabilities, as a result of genuine partnerships with other professional agencies and community organisations. The team continue to grow in their capacity to offer children sufficient challenge through the routine identification of appropriate next steps, and are learning to make the most of each learning opportunity, while acknowledging that on occasion, the organisation of resources and the use of time may hinder them in the achievement of this important goal. Similarly, documentation which promotes the safety and welfare of children is in generally good order, and needs only modest amendment in order to make it fully accessible to parents and at the point of inspection.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- organise resources and the use of time in order to maximise the opportunities staff have to consolidate and extend children's learning
- adopt a more consistent approach to the identification of the next steps in each child's learning so as to ensure staff are continually able to promote

- progress
- improve the organisation of documentation so as to make it fully accessible to parents and at the point of inspection

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are kept safe in a setting where access to the provision is properly monitored and visitors are asked to record their presence promptly. The member of staff with responsibility for child protection is well trained and carries out her role efficiently and sensitively, her practice being underpinned by a sensible policy in this area. The building used for the care of children and the regular outings the group undertakes are all risk assessed effectively, and other documentation that promotes the welfare and safety of children, such as the record of fire safety checks and drills, is in good order.

The group has adopted an appropriate policy for the promotion of equality and diversity, and ensures children access a reasonable range of resources that promote their understanding in this area. Children with Special Educational Needs and/or physical disabilities, and those with English as an additional language, have their needs responded to promptly by a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator who demonstrates a good understanding of her role, and is able to access support for such children through outside agencies and professionals.

Children are cared for by a well qualified team who prioritise training throughout the year. They meet regularly to share their knowledge and to contribute to the picture of each child's learning journey. Both the staff team and the committee have endured a period of uncertainty in regards to the future sustainability of the group, which is now passing, and thus acknowledge that at times this has impacted on their ability to maintain a cycle of continuous improvement. However, they are readily able to complete self-evaluations which accurately identify areas for improvement and then, critically, take action, such as increasing parents' opportunities to contribute to the picture of their child through the recently introduced 'This is me' books, or improving the system for recording risk assessments. The team is generally well organised, while acknowledging that some aspects of the storage of documentation could be improved for the benefits of parents and inspectors. The provider confirms they are meeting the requirements of the Childcare Register.

The group maintains good relationships with the five local schools which their charges go on to attend, with a programme of visits and meetings to share information in place. The team also work closely with outside agencies, such as the local Children's Centre for the benefit of all children, including those with any emerging particular needs. Similarly, the team recognise the importance of working in genuine partnership with parents, and are currently developing ways to increase the flow of information between home and the setting, which, at times, is still a little too informal. Nevertheless, relationships with parents are good, and parents are keen to share their positive views of the group at the point of

inspection.

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

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. They play co-operatively building tracks for cars and using a ball run. They persist with an adult led task of creating a 'school classroom' engaging both with the staff team and each other as they 'write certificates' and talk about lessons. They are curious about the world around them, asking to use the camera to record their work and asking the inspector about the workings of a laptop. They enjoy story time and show familiarity with a range of stories. They contribute well to circle time, being willing to speak to the whole group as they reflect on the current project of 'jobs in our community'. They access regular mark making opportunities, and are cared for in a print and number rich room, that has a reasonable range of resources that promote problem solving and mathematical understanding. Children are developing an understanding of the natural world and the diversity of society through a range of planned activities, such as making lanterns and preparing food to celebrate Chinese New Year. They use their art and craft skills to help make displays about the work of the town's fireman following a recent visit to the Fire Station, and enjoy using other creative resources, such as sparkly play dough.

Staff build warm relationships with their charges and in response; children readily gravitate towards them for support or to share their achievements. For the majority of the time, staff organise resources appropriately and use their own time well, so as to ensure children are supported during activities. However, on occasion, there are delays to the completion of the organisation of an activity, which leads to some loss of momentum during the session. Nevertheless, planning is secure, and draws upon the sound knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage that the team possesses. Adults use this knowledge to encourage children to progress in their learning, and are confident enough to allow children genuine opportunities to direct the course of the session, as they request specific resources, or take adult led activities in interesting directions on their own initiative. Observations of children's progress are regular and are completed by the whole team, who recognise that at present, the process of identifying the next steps in each child's learning so that they may routinely be offered sufficient challenge still needs consolidation. However it is clear that the whole team possesses sufficient skill in order to readily remedy this modest shortcoming.

Children move with confidence and enthusiasm around the setting, and make good use of equipment that promotes the development of their physical skills, such as slides, bicycles, balls, large climbing equipment and other ride on toys. Their fine motor skills are also developing as they help to make sandwiches, and complete a range of craft activities that encourage their use of a range of tools. Children are also learning to keep themselves safe, knowing why they must take turns with some toys and wait if large equipment is being moved around by adults. They receive appropriate support as they gain an understanding of how to keep

themselves healthy, such as washing their hands before snack time. Documentation that supports children's health and welfare is in good order, and snacks contain plenty of nutritious items such as fruit, cheese and crackers.

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
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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	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	3

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