

Thurleigh Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 219207
Inspection date 15/06/2011
Inspector Geof Timms

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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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Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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Description of the setting

Thurleigh Pre-school opened in 1999 and is managed by a committee of parents. The pre-school operates from a classroom in Thurleigh Lower School in Bedford, Bedfordshire. The classroom has ensuite toilets for the children. There is a separate outdoor play area and the children have access to the school hall, playground and field.

The pre-school is registered to take a maximum of 16 children aged between two and a half years and five years of age. There are 17 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for early education places. It operates Monday to Friday, term time only, between the hours of 12noon and 3.15pm. The pre-school is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

There are three members of staff, including the leader, who work with the children. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and one holds an appropriate qualification at level 2. The pre-school works very closely with the early years teacher within the school. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children clearly enjoy their time in the pre-school. It meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage well and they make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff provide an excellent range of resources and a good balance of play-based activities. They have forged excellent links with the host school's nursery and reception classes. Staff demonstrate a good capacity for continuous improvement and a genuine desire to do the best for the children. The pre-school is fully inclusive and promotes children's understanding and respect for others well.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- update safeguarding policies so that they are more in line with Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidance
- provide opportunities for children to contribute their ideas during the planning of future activities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff are experienced and knowledgeable practitioners. They keep up-to-date with new initiatives and ideas and are continually seeking to improve their practice. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and thorough. There are a wide range of procedures and systems which parents acknowledge and through which children are kept very safe. The documentation is mostly appropriate and detailed, although this is not fully in line with Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidance. The correct checks regarding recruitment procedures and staff vetting are carried out robustly. The accommodation is located within the school and shares the same security systems. This provides children with a very safe environment in which to play and learn. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues, including the use of modern technology, such as mobile phones and social networking internet sites. Regular risk assessments and daily checks are rigorously carried out indoors and outside to help minimise any possible dangers. Supervision is good, especially outside where the excellent facilities are used very well to maximise children's learning in interesting and adventurous ways. For example, a realisation that boys needed more encouragement to write resulted in an activity which involved drawing around children's body shapes as they lay on the floor and then labelling them with their names. The reporting and recording of any accidents is rigorously carried out and has improved since the last inspection.

The activities are well planned by the staff team who work together very effectively. Planning is detailed and often based on shared topics carried out with the school's early years staff. During the inspection, for example, children were excitedly looking forward to performing African songs to parents in the school assembly, alongside the reception children. However, staff do not always give children sufficient opportunities to explain and explore their own likes and interests when they are planning activities. Assessments are made in detail using a system which supports the work in the school's nursery and reception classes. Observations of learning are recorded in depth, using photographs and written annotations. These are shared with parents and carers, and build into a clear record of children's learning over time.

The pre-school's self-evaluation is good and accurately highlights positive aspects of the provision, while also clarifying aspects requiring further development. For example, although role play has been used imaginatively to support specific events, such as visits to the doctors, the staff are aware this is an area that needs to be more consistently part of the planned learning activities. The resources available, partly due to the outstanding partnership with the school, are excellent and extremely well deployed indoors and outside. Excellent local partnerships have also been developed and the pre-school has a web page on the parish council internet site. Links with parents and carers are successful, as information is passed between them and the staff well. This ensures that children's needs and interests are understood by the caring staff team.

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

The excellent links with the school enable the pre-school to access very good resources and make effective use of the accommodation to provide a wide range of adult-led and child-led activities. Because of this, the children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children work and play together well. They get on very well and support each other in a number of activities. Children made paper aeroplanes as part of a project based on kites and hot air balloons after a local festival. They enjoy taking turns to fly these and comparing the distances they fly. The development of children's social, speaking and listening skills is strong. Adults interact with children and encourage them to talk and share ideas. The pre-school provides excellent opportunities for children to learn about healthy lifestyles by providing them with opportunities to discuss important issues and learn about nutrition. They are encouraged to make nutritious choices when selecting their snacks from lunch boxes. Social aspects are developed well when children eat lunch together. They show how well they get on together by choosing to have their snacks at the same time. This is a further example of how the staff give children good responsibility and time to make their own choices.

The close links with parents and carers have a positive impact on learning. The pre-school benefits from an excellent outdoor area, which staff use very effectively. In addition the children are able to access the school playground, hall and playing field. This includes a nature trail including a pond area which gives the children access to a wealth of resources to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. In addition, staff use stories well to teach children about the lifecycle of a butterfly, as well as the importance of healthy eating, from work on a story about a hungry caterpillar. Children's mathematical development is good and they can confidently discuss two-dimensional shapes, such as triangles and ovals, as well as colours.

Children's behaviour is good. They understand routines and follow rules well. This is helped by the adults' positive and calm relationships with children. Planning is detailed and assessment information is used when planning individuals' next steps across all areas of learning. Excellent links with the school mean joint topics are often followed. Currently, for example, children are learning about Africa as part of the school's international work. They have made masks and coloured flags, heard African stories and learned African songs that they are excitedly looking forward to performing. In addition, staff plan good themes based around special days and festivals, such as Father's Day. Children learn about how to stay safe as the staff are skilled at explaining how to avoid hazards and are vigilant in their supervision of the children.

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	1
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	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	1
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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