

Lawford's Little Pumpkins Pre-School CIC

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique reference number | EY409411 |
| Inspection date | 20/07/2011 |
| Inspector | Lynn Hughes |
| Setting address | The Ling Hall c/o Lawford C of E GM Primary School, Long Road, Lawford, MANNINGTREE, Essex, CO11 2EF |
| Telephone number | 01206 391412 |
| Email | |
| 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

Lawford's Little Pumpkins Pre-School CIC was registered in 2010 and is privately owned and run. It operates from a purpose-built classroom within the grounds of the local primary school in Lawford, Essex. A fully enclosed garden provides opportunities for outdoor activities. The pre-school is open from 8.30am to 4.30pm five days per week, term time only.

A maximum of 26 children under five years may attend the pre-school at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 60 children on roll. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

The pre-school employs 10 members of staff, of whom seven, including the manager, hold appropriate qualifications to at least level two.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children's welfare, learning and development needs are superbly met. Staff demonstrate excellent knowledge of the children in their key worker groups and proficiently follow the setting's policies and procedures to meet each child's individual requirements. Children learn in an extremely relaxed environment in which they explore an excellent range of freely-chosen and planned learning experiences. Management and staff work well together and are firmly committed to continuously improving their provision for young children. They effectively review and evaluate the provision and are fully aware of areas in which they want to improve. Partnerships with other early years settings are currently being developed.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing partnership working to provide further opportunities for parents to share in their children's learning and consider ways of liaising with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure progression and continuity of care.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are expertly protected through the setting's clear and well-documented safeguarding policy. All staff demonstrate secure knowledge about their responsibilities with regards to protecting children, and understand both the setting's procedures and the procedures to be used for referring concerns to the appropriate authority for investigation. The setting has extremely effective recruitment and vetting systems in place which ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so and are well inducted into their role. Proof of staff and management clearance is held on file for inspection and an effective annual appraisal system is used to explore and record any changes in the personal lives of staff which might affect their suitability. The environment in which children play and learn is very safe and extremely secure as staff conduct thorough daily safety checks and use an alarm to alert staff if anyone goes close to the main door.

This is the setting's first inspection since re-registration and change of premises. Huge changes have occurred within the day-to-day operations of the pre-school and staff said that they are still constantly reviewing the way in which they use the premises to ensure its most effective use. There is a very clear and effective management structure in place, with co-owners working alternate days on site to manage the office and to keep abreast of administrative tasks and employment issues. The setting manager oversees all other aspects of the provision and manages the team of six other staff, many of whom worked at the setting under the previous ownership. Both management and staff are extremely dedicated to providing high quality care and education for children by providing them with exciting first-hand learning experiences which they access through play and exploration. Extremely effective systems are in place for reviewing and evaluating the provision to enable the setting to make necessary changes and improvements.

Toys and play materials are extremely well presented at the children's height to encourage children to develop independence through self-selection. Children wander freely between the indoor and outdoor classrooms, assessing the exciting range of resources available to them. Equipment which is stored in low-level storage units and drawers is well labelled to enhance easy self-selection. Staff expertly support children's learning by being on hand to facilitate their suggestions and to guide their play. A clear staff development plan shows how staff are encouraged to further progress their childcare knowledge. The management provides staff with non-contact time during their working day to complete relevant observations and to update the children's learning journeys. The setting actively and enthusiastically promotes equality and diversity. Children are valued and their differing needs are extremely well met. Superbly presented posters and resources which reflect diversity are displayed around the setting, encouraging children to learn about the world around them.

Parents are extremely complimentary of the provision, expressing their confidence in the staff and commenting on the way in which their children want to attend, even on days when they are not booked in to attend. Parents are provided with extensive information about the setting and the way in which it operates. Staff

encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's learning by sharing their learning journeys with them and encouraging them to come into the setting to observe their children's learning. Partnerships with other professionals enable staff to work effectively to meet individual children's needs, however, partnerships with other early years settings are not so well established.

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

Children have great fun at this setting, exploring an exciting and very challenging range of activities. They participate in some planned opportunities as well as making excellent choices over their play and learning by self-selecting equipment. Children form small groups of friends and negotiate roles, for example, there is a butterfly group and a heart group, depending on how each child's face has been painted. Children excitedly express themselves as they utilise all areas of the setting, even the small space next to the comfortable sofa, which acts as a bed in the game of one group of children. The digging area at the end of the garden provides excellent opportunities for children to dig for treasure and to explore nature. A wide range of mini-beasts share the children's pre-school experiences as they carefully carry them in to show the pre-school manager and staff. Staff encourage them to look at the colours, size and shapes of the insects. They name them and use reference books to identify new bugs which are not so easily recognisable. A group of jolly pirates set sail from the wooden pirate ship in the garden, talking excitedly about where they are going to go and what they will find on their travels. A stage made by children from large construction shapes provides an excellent place for a newly formed 'rock band' to perform. The band, whose guitars are created from tennis rackets, share the space with a group of ballet dancers who demonstrate their talents to a round of applause from the audience and staff who are supporting this impromptu activity. Staff proficiently observe children's achievements and record them in well-presented and interesting learning journeys. Effective use of observations enables staff to plan for children's individual learning and to follow their interests and preferred learning styles.

Children develop secure knowledge of keeping healthy and safe as they follow the staff's clear and consistent procedures. They understand the importance of hand washing before they sit down for snack and lunch and after they have used the toilet. Children independently access the integral toilets, helping to enhance their self-esteem and confidence. The setting promotes healthy eating by encouraging children to enjoy a nutritious mid-session snack which generally comprises of fresh fruit or raw vegetables. Children are provided with opportunities to play an active role in the preparation of snack time and plans to further develop this part of the session are in hand. Children are extremely fit and active and thoroughly enjoy accessing the well-organised and exciting outdoor area. They learn to ride bikes, use community play equipment to promote cooperation and climb using a range of climbing equipment. Children's knowledge of keeping safe is expertly promoted by staff who remind them of the setting's boundaries and simple rules. They are encouraged to be kind and caring towards each other and to act in ways which help to keep each other safe.

Staff use extremely positive language to promote and enhance children's self-esteem and confidence. They encourage them to think critically and to solve problems by using open-ended appropriate questions and by responding clearly to their requests. Children are settled and content within the provision. They approach staff with ease and thoroughly enjoy the interaction they receive from them. They are very well-behaved children who develop secure friendships with their peers. Superbly planned and presented activities and resources enable children to develop essential skills for the future. For example, they talk confidently and are able to re-tell experiences proficiently. They use drawing and writing resources to develop their hand-writing skills, with many children forming recognisable letters. Children count effectively through everyday activities and use the exciting resources to extend their knowledge of numbers and shapes. They are creative and enjoy exploring messy play, such as shaving foam, gloop and other natural materials.

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

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| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 1 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 1 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 1 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 1 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 1 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 1 |

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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