

The Little Owl Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

148691

Inspection date

05/10/2011

Inspector

Melissa Cox

Setting address

Employees Social Club, 2 Earley Gate, Whiteknights,
Reading, Berkshire, RG6 6AU

Telephone number

0118 9268988

Email

Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

The Little Owl Pre School registered in 1989. The pre-school is managed by a committee of parents and operates from a large hall in the Employees Social Club at Earley Gate, situated on Reading University campus. The pre-school is open every weekday from 9.15am to 12 noon, term time only. There is a fully enclosed outside play area for the children to use. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school may care for no more than 24 children under eight years. Of these, no more than four may be aged under two years at any one time. There are currently 26 children on roll; all are in the early years age range. The pre-school caters for children of staff and students of the University and the wider community. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs four staff; two hold suitable qualifications to level 3. The manager has a degree in early years education and holds early years professional status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children's learning and development is soundly promoted, although their learning needs are not always fully extended. Children's welfare is not promoted sufficiently due to lapses in the requirements for risk assessment. Satisfactory partnerships with parents and others have been developed to help meet children's individual needs. The management committee and staff team have a generally accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision, although not all weaknesses are identified and acted upon. The pre-school demonstrates a sound capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

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 (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 26/10/2011
- keep a record of the risk assessment, clearly stating when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and any action taken following a review or incident (Documentation) 26/10/2011
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children - both indoors and outdoors - are kept to a minimum (Suitable premises, environment and 26/10/2011

equipment).

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

- develop ongoing observational assessment to inform planning to ensure that every children receive an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs
- lead and encourage a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare and safety is not sufficiently promoted, resulting in a number of breaches of the specific welfare requirements. Safety and security is given suitable priority in several areas of the pre-school. For example, staff complete daily risk assessment checks to help promote the safety of the children. However, the daily assessments for the garden area are not sufficiently robust to identify and act on all risks to children. Staff are not sufficiently vigilant to help ensure that children playing in some areas of the garden can be accounted for at all times. The pre-school has not maintained an annual record of risk assessment and staff do not routinely complete risk assessments for each type of outing. As a result, children's safety is compromised in certain situations. Most procedures are in place to help ensure children are safeguarded from abuse. For example, staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and continue to update their knowledge and understanding through ongoing training. A clear recruitment procedure is followed, which helps to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Staff make adequate use of the space within the provision. Children are able to freely choose from a range of toys and resources provided for them and are able to ask for further resources stored in a large cupboard. Staff organise themselves and the daily routine in a manner that mostly meet children's needs. They work closely with the children to encourage and support their learning. Outdoor play is only available at the end of the day and equipment is packed away mid-morning in preparation for this. As a result, some children become boisterous in between activities, which impacts on their learning.

Equality and diversity practices are sound. The new staff team are developing their roles and responsibilities within the pre-school to provide an inclusive environment. However, while staff are generally supportive of children's individual needs, the systems in place to support children and families who speak English as an additional language are not fully promoted. This is because staff have not yet developed secure systems in which to gather information of children's home languages in order to fully support them in their play and learning. Children's awareness of diversity is increased through the celebration of special events, including a variety of religious and cultural festivals. Children benefit through the

pre-school's links with other professionals and practitioners. The pre-school's special educational needs coordinator has sufficient knowledge and experience to support children and refer concerns to the appropriate agencies.

Partnerships with parents are positive. Parents and carers are made welcome and encouraged to talk to staff about all aspects of the provision and their children's care and development. These discussions are used in conjunction with children's learning journeys, which are always available for parent's to view, providing them with information on children's progress. Parent's views are sought through regular discussions and this information is used to influence some changes within the pre-school. Parents speak highly of the care and education their children receive and value the ongoing exchanges of information with staff in relation to their child's welfare and learning. There are developing links with other practitioners or settings children attend, which helps ensure continuity in children's care and learning. Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory overall. The management committee supports the staff and plays a role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision in order to bring about positive change. The new manager and staff team have been involved in steadily identifying strengths and areas for improvement. However, the current self-evaluation system has not identified and prioritised key areas for development to fully promote children's learning and welfare.

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

Children are happy and settled within the warm and welcoming environment. They develop a sense of belonging in the setting and are developing sound relationships with staff and other children. Staff have a suitable understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use a variety of methods to engage and support children's learning and development. There is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, which cover all areas of learning. Children generally receive sound support from staff who demonstrate that they know the children in their care. However, information on children's individual learning needs are not always effectively used to inform planning or set individual challenges for each child's continuing development. In addition, staff have yet to build on their teaching methods to observe, challenge and extend children's learning through meaningful play. As a result, children are not fully supported in their learning.

Children engage in a varied range of activities, both indoors and outside. The staff focus on developing children's communication and language skills and interact with the children during activities. They encourage conversation, helping children to develop writing skills and use open questions to help children recall information. Adequate levels of support from staff and the some use of questioning in children's play provide opportunities for children to solve problems and find solutions for themselves. Circle time provides opportunities for children to use their language and communication skills and children eagerly share information with others in the group talking about their own experiences.

Children are becoming confident when using numbers and enjoy counting in

routine activities. For example, they count how many children are present at registration time or during a number game. More confident children count the number of objects and match them to numbers in print. Staff provide opportunities for children to calculate and talk about 'more' or 'less' during routines such as the snack time routine or arts and crafts activities. Children begin to explore technology using the pre-schools computer equipment. They enjoy the range of computer programs that help them develop problem-solving skills. Overall, children develop sound skills for their future learning.

Children's behaviour is generally good. They respond well to instructions and are beginning to understand the need to share and take turns appropriately when encouraged by staff. There are some opportunities for children take on responsibilities for tasks within the setting such as tidying up or serving snack. They learn to understand the importance of effective hygiene practices. For example, they understand why they must wash their hands before snack and after messy activities. All children take part in a range of activities both indoors and outdoors which support their physical development. They enjoy climbing and balancing on the large wooden equipment in the garden and demonstrate increasing skill as they kick balls around the garden. Children are generally encouraged to learn about keeping themselves safe, for example, as staff explain why they should not run indoors. However, there are insufficient opportunities to further extend children's understanding of personal safety, which impacts on their ability to stay safe, especially when playing outdoors.

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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
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	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
--	---

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	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- undertake a risk assessment of the premises and equipment at least once in each calendar year and, immediately where the need for an assessment arises. Ensure that all necessary measures are taken to minimise any identified risks (Suitability and safety of premises and equipment) (also applies to the voluntary part of the Childcare Register) 26/10/2011

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register (Suitability and safety of premises and equipment). 26/10/2011