

Busy Otters Preschool Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Brenda Flewitt

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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*.

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

Busy Otters Pre-school Playgroup has been open for approximately 25 years and moved to its current premises in 2011. The pre-school operates from purpose-built premises in the grounds of Ottery St. Mary Primary School in the rural village of Ottery St. Mary, approximately 12 miles from Exeter, Devon. The premises consist of an entrance lobby, office, main play room, toilets, kitchen and store room. There is an enclosed outdoor play area, part of which is under cover. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, term time only from 9.15am to 11.45pm, with a lunch club from 11.45pm to 12.45pm. Afternoon sessions run from 12.45pm to 3.15pm each day except Thursdays, when there is a toddler group in operation.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 28 children from the age of two years to under eight years may attend at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 53 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The pre-school provides funded early education for three and four-year-old children. They support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs a qualified play leader who holds a National Vocational Qualification at level 4 in child care and education. She is supported by 13 members of staff, most of whom hold recognised childcare qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are well cared for in safe and secure premises where they are involved in a good range of activities that help them learn through play and exploration. Overall, the positive partnerships with parents and professionals contribute to staff knowing children well as individuals. In general staff support children well to make good progress in most areas of development, although the assessment system is not always consistent. There are good methods for self-evaluation, which help to identify areas for development. Staff continue to update their knowledge through training to improve children's experiences.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the systems to work together with other practitioners to support transition and consistency between settings
- develop further a systematic and routine approach to using observations and assessment to plan the next steps in a child's developmental progress
- improve the opportunities at snack time to further promote children's

emerging independence in practical skills, for example, by helping to prepare their own food.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff implement clear policies and procedures to promote children's welfare and safety. They carry out detailed risk assessments to provide a safe environment for children's play. Overall, staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children, which includes recognising signs and symptoms of abuse and knowledge of procedures to follow if there are concerns. Staff keep their knowledge up to date through training. All this helps to protect children from harm. There are clear recruitment and induction systems to ensure that new staff are checked for their suitability to work with children, and are sure about their responsibilities. All required records are in place, well organised, completed appropriately and stored confidentially.

Staff work well as a team, they communicate effectively, which results in sessions running smoothly and children settling quickly. Staff provide an enabling environment, arranging equipment on a daily basis so that children choose from a good range of resources to extend their own play and learning. Children learn a positive attitude to people's differences through the good example set by the adults. They access a variety of resources that reflect a diverse society. Children with specific needs are well supported. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator liaises effectively with parents, key workers and connected professionals to ensure that all children are fully included.

Overall, staff promote effective partnerships with parents and other professionals. Parents receive clear information about the setting by way of displays, written policies, and regular newsletters. Staff make themselves available to exchange information verbally on a daily basis in order to meet individual needs. Parents have the opportunity to have an active voice in their child's pre-school by being a member of the management committee. Parents say their children are happy at pre-school and feel that key workers know them well. Some children attend other settings that deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, staff have not established dialogue with all providers to exchange information to fully promote children's overall development.

Good self-evaluation methods identify areas for improvement and a vision for future development. For example, staff plan to improve resources that raise children's awareness of modern technology, and reinstate equipment for promoting planting and growing. Regular staff appraisals help to recognise areas for staff development. By attending training courses, staff continue to update their knowledge in order to improve children's experiences.

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

Children are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy their time in a playgroup where they play and learn in a friendly atmosphere. They establish good relationships with staff and one another. They often seek out friends to share their play experiences with, or play independently focussing well on self-chosen tasks. Children develop a strong sense of belonging and being part of a community. They see photos of themselves and their friends displayed, and learn to recognise their individual equipment. Both planned activities and conversation with staff encourage children's knowledge and involvement in local traditions including a carnival and 'pixie day'. Children behave well. They know what to expect through familiar routines, such as hand washing and self-registering. Children willingly help pack away equipment. They receive regular praise and encouragement for effort and achievement, which helps boost their self-esteem and confidence.

Overall, staff have a good knowledge of the early learning goals and how children learn through play. They plan a wide range of activities, linked to themes and topics, which include children's ideas. For example, children enjoy experimenting with wind-up torches in a dark den, linked to a topic of 'light and dark'. Most children use language well to communicate, confidently making their needs known and initiating conversations. Children like stories in groups, joining in with familiar phrases. They also enjoy looking at books independently in a comfortable book area. Children learn to recognise their written name and practise writing skills on a daily basis; some are confidently name their own work, forming recognisable letters. Children start to develop a meaningful sense of measure and number through their play and songs. For example, counting how many children are round the table or how many acorns they have found.

Children's curiosity in nature is encouraged through activities such as going for a walk on the school playing field. Children are fascinated as they see different types of ladybird crawling on a light cover. They like to collect items such as acorns and chestnuts, and look at the colours in the leaves on the trees that signify a change in season. Staff use an assessment system that identifies children's achievements, linking them to stages of development in the six areas of learning. However, they are not consistent in completing the records to clearly identify forward planning for the next steps for each child. Staff know the children well as individuals which enables them to support their good progress overall. Staff interact positively in children's activities, talking with them as they play, encouraging them to think, recall, solve problems and develop an understanding of the world around them.

Children learn good procedures for their own personal hygiene. They start to make healthy choices in what they eat from nutritious options supplied at snack time. However, staff prepare the food, which does not promote children's independence and practical skills fully. Children have daily fresh air and exercise. They confidently manoeuvre wheeled vehicles, avoiding one another and obstacles, and enjoy ball games of throwing and catching. Children learn about aspects of their own safety as staff remind them how to move around safely and use large equipment sensibly. They know what is expected if they must leave the building in an

emergency through regular practise of the fire drill. Their understanding is enhanced by visits to the pre-school by local fire officers.

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	2

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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

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