

# Skylarks Pre-School Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspector**

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**Type of setting**

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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**

Skylarks Pre-School Ltd reopened in 2011 under new management. It operates from the village hall in Tilney St Lawrence in West Norfolk and serves the local community and surrounding villages. The building is accessible to all children and there is an enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school opens every week day during school term time. Sessions are offered on a Monday, Tuesday and Friday between 9.15am and 3pm and on a Wednesday and Thursday between 9.15am and 11.45am. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 26 children under five years and there are currently 31 children on roll. The pre-school provides funded early education for 21 children and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The setting is privately owned by a suitably qualified and experienced proprietor/manger who works in the setting alongside five other staff. Of these, four staff hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or above. The pre-school receives support form the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are making satisfactory progress in their learning and development and are generally supported appropriately in their learning by staff. They are safe and secure in the setting and their good health is adequately promoted. Partnerships with parents and other professionals and agencies ensure children's individual needs are met, however, the setting does not actively support children in learning about similarities and differences. The proprietor has tentatively begun to use self-evaluation systems to identify areas for improvement, but these have not yet been implemented to benefit the children using the setting.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- provide more opportunities for children to become aware of, explore and question the similarities and differences in a diverse society
- encourage a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion with all users of the facility to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children
- ensure children's own ideas are encouraged and valued, rather than expecting them to reproduce someone else's work, specifically in adult-focussed craft activities
- improve snack time and planned activities to ensure children are always

offered healthy options to eat. Also, ensure children are helped to learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and the positive impact on their bodies.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are safeguarded by staff who are in the main experienced and qualified. They have a clear understanding of procedures in order to protect children from abuse and adults working with the children have been suitably vetted. There are effective policies and procedures in place to ensure safe recruitment and to promote children's safety in the setting. For example, risk assessments are robust and ensure hazards are minimised on the premises, enabling children to play safely. Play resources are of a high quality and are organised so that children can make choices about what they play with and where. They move confidently from the indoors to outside and are able to mix resources to extend their ideas.

The pre-school supports children with specific needs effectively. Although, the special educational needs co-ordinator has not yet received training, staff work closely with parents and other agencies to support the needs of the child. Parents are involved in developing individual plans for children. Through close partnerships, children's development is evident and they enjoy activities confidently alongside their peers. There are presently no children who attend other early years settings but the proprietor understands the importance of partnership working to provide children with continuity in their learning and development. There are some resources, such as play figures, dolls and cookery utensils in the setting which reflect a multi-cultural society. However, not enough is done to promote opportunities for children to become aware of, explore and question the similarities and differences in our diverse society or to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Parents comment that they receive clear information when joining the setting, such as policies and procedures and are given time to settle their children. They also comment that they feel well informed and involved in their children's learning. Some parents regularly contribute photographs, observations and information about children's interests and activities at home, whilst others prefer to speak with their child's key worker to share information.

The proprietor has just begun to reflect on the setting's progress since she took over. She has a few ideas which will improve the setting and activities for children, but at present the self-evaluation process is not effective in highlighting all the areas for improvement. Additionally, the process has so far not included the views of staff, parents and children. As a result, progress lacks sufficient pace.

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

Children are happy and settled in this pre-school and staff are kind, encouraging and have a good rapport with them. Staff make regular observations of children at play and use these to plan for children's next steps in learning. Plans are, therefore, based on children's interests and favourite activities, which encourages children to be excited about what is offered. Learning is satisfactorily supported by some staff who ask open ended questions, such as 'how many have you got now?' to promote children's skills. Sometimes, however, activities are too adult-focussed and children are not given sufficient opportunity to explore their own ideas, or try for themselves. For example, during structured craft activities, there were pre-cut shapes, such as stars and animals for children to add glitter or cut straws, which provide older or more able children with little challenge.

Children take part in a range of activities, which helps contribute to their learning and development. They have formed friendships and search out their peers to play alongside. Children are encouraged to manage self-care tasks, such as putting their coats on and fastening the zip. They show patience at activities and most are able to take turns and share. Children use a selection of mark making tools to develop early writing skills and enjoy looking at books together, talking about the subject matter and role playing, whilst reading them to one another. Children join in enthusiastically with their favourite songs and rhymes. They match colours and group items together, recognising which group has the most items and which has less, fostering early mathematical concepts. They count objects confidently and their problem solving skills are tested, for example, when trying to retrieve a hoola-hoop which has rolled out of the garden area. Children successfully pedal trikes at speed, changing direction, going backwards and demonstrating good spatial awareness. They use small tools, such as tongs and spoons to serve themselves cheese and grapes at snack time. Children's knowledge of electronic equipment is developing well. They use the mouse on the laptop with accuracy, independently load the compact disc player with music of their choice and use the digital cameras to take photographs. Children talk about nature, where animals live, as they make play dough animals and are involved in their local community, for example, children made flower arrangements for the local flower festival in Church.

Children are offered healthy snacks during the morning, but cookery activities and afternoon snacks do not always focus on healthy options. Additionally, although, children wash their hands before eating, staff do not help them to understand why and neither do they explain to children the benefits of fresh air and exercise. As a result, children's learning about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle is not assured. Staff remind children about using equipment safely, for example, children are reminded not to throw sand and the consequences of their actions are explained to them. Additionally, children take part in activities, such as practising fire drills to raise awareness of safety issues.

Some children are very aware with the pre-school rules and are able to recite these at circle time. For example, they know they must not run inside and as a

result, children's safety is enhanced and accidents reduced. Staff deal with unacceptable behaviour appropriately and children receive lots of praise and encouragement to promote their self-esteem. Children follow staff examples for polite behaviour and as a result, a degree of respect for one another, their toys and the environment is developing.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	3
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

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
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

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