

# Sparklers Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 955551  
**Inspection date** 12/12/2011  
**Inspector** Rachel Edwards

**Setting address** c/o Basildon Primary School, Beckfords, Upper Basildon,  
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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*.

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

Sparklers Pre-School opened in 2001. It is registered charity and is run by a voluntary committee of parents. It operates from a room within Basildon Church of England Primary School, in the rural village of Upper Basildon in Berkshire. It has its own, enclosed, outdoor, play area and the use of the school grounds.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It may care for a maximum of 24 children aged from two years to under eight years at any one time. Currently, it only cares for children in the early years age group. It provides funded, early education for three- and four-year-olds and some two-year-olds. The pre-school is open each weekday between 9am and 3pm during school terms. Children may attend half-day sessions or stay for the whole day.

There are currently 38 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs four members of staff, who work directly with the children. All of these hold appropriate childcare qualifications, one at Level 2 and three at Level 3.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Staff recognise children's individuality and this is at the heart of all they do so that children flourish in the safe, vibrant environment. They work closely with parents and carers and are extremely effective in meeting individual needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Play is purposeful and planned very effectively, taking into account children's ideas and interests so they, overall, make rapid progress in all areas of learning. Excellent links with the host school and other professionals significantly benefit the children. A strong desire to provide the best they can makes the management and staff constantly evaluate what they provide. Plans are ambitious and generally well targeted to ensure their effective capacity for continuous improvement.

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

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

- adding to the self evaluation process by devising a system to monitor the impact of changes made, on the outcomes for children
- encouraging children further to use and enjoy a variety of books and other

written material in all areas of the pre-school, both in and out of doors.

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

All the records, policies and procedures to underpin the safeguarding and welfare of children are in place and fully implemented. All staff and a committee member, attend child protection training, which they routinely update. They are confident in what to do if there are concerns, including working with outside agencies. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures are used to check the suitability of everyone working with the children. Staff use comprehensive risk assessments very effectively to keep children safe, including on outings. They hold current, paediatric, first aid certificates and have specialist training in administering emergency medication, as required by some children. This allows staff to care for children extremely well if they have an accident or become unwell.

Staff are very successful in devising and completing ambitious plans to highly benefit children. They moved premises, extended opening hours and now provide funded early education. They are highly reflective and recognise the importance of training, which they regularly attend to update knowledge and bring new ideas. To improve further, they are beginning to find ways of measuring the impact of changes for development. All involved are exceptionally motivated to improve further what they provide and have exciting and realistic plans for the future.

All key workers know their children exceptionally well. They liaise very closely with parents to monitor children's progress, which enables them to meet children's needs highly effectively and ensure the care and learning. These close relationships mean that children feel extremely secure and confident and that particular needs are identified early. Staff frequently 'go the extra mile' to attend specialist training and ensure the key person is always present to provide the additional support some children need. Generally, resources are of a very high quality and staff use space imaginatively. For example, stairwell drapes create a cosy space to share books and chat with friends.

The outstanding partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being and learning. As well as regular discussions, meetings and sharing of children's 'learning journey' books, staff implement creative ways to update parents. For example, an informative webpage has a weekly blog of what children have been doing. Staff display a large scrapbook, updated weekly with photographs and notes of activities, so that parents can talk to children about their day. Other innovative ideas include involving parents and children in a 'rhymathon' challenge. Plans include making fathers feel more welcome at activities, such as making campfires.

Wider partnerships are very strong, especially with the host school, which most children will attend. Staff very effectively liaise with reception teachers to give continuity in teaching methods. Pre-school children use the extensive school grounds. Pre-school staff take children to eat lunch with the main school so that even the youngest become confident and at ease in the bustle of large hall. The

manager and reception teacher plan to exchange teaching times for a short period each week. All these measures help children to make a very smooth transition into formal education.

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

Staff use their expert knowledge to skilfully direct children's play and ensure that all make very good progress. They provide an extremely stimulating and welcoming environment, where children are able to independently follow their own interests. Staff observe carefully and know the right moment to offer assistance or suggest a new idea so that children are encouraged to think and develop their play. Staff frequently and most competently discuss children's progress so that everyone knows how to challenge children very effectively to help move them on.

Children make exceptional good progress because activities are enjoyable, interest them and fully stretch their thinking. They make excellent use of their rural surroundings and the extensive school grounds. Children are extremely active and learn through practical experiences. For example, they gather twigs and experiment with fixing them together, before weaving natural objects and tinsel to make hanging decorations. They thoroughly enjoy planting potatoes and are amazed at how these multiply. They enthusiastically help prepare and make chips, which enables them to understand where food comes from.

Children make excellent progress with early writing skills. Activities, such as playing with dough, strengthen their fingers and develop coordination. Children are extremely keen to write, as they want to let Father Christmas know what they would like. They thoroughly enjoy visiting the village post office, buying stamps and posting their letters. This also leads to highly imaginative, role-play in their 'post office'. They use problem-solving skills exceptionally well as they gauge how much paper they need to wrap a parcel and how to stick it together. Children develop a love of books and eagerly choose one to take home and share with their family. However, different types of books are not readily accessible in all areas inside and outside, to encourage further use by all children. Children make impressive progress in hearing initial sounds in words through fun activities, such as the 'Silly Soup' song. They use technology very effectively everyday, such as the interactive white board, taking photographs or ordering their lunch on line. Children are curious, active and independent learners. They are very well equipped with skills they need in the future.

Children behave extremely well. They fully understand the 'happy rules' that they help to devise. Children learn about the wider world and to value differences as they celebrate their own and other festivals; exciting plans are well underway, regarding linking with a setting in Botswana. Children are highly motivated to learn to play safely, whilst taking small risks on more challenging climbing and balancing equipment. Regular visits from the community police officer, fire service and health visitor, contribute towards fully developing their understanding of how to keep safe.

Children most confidently make choices, such as what to put in the water bath and whether to be in or out of doors. They help prepare the snack, spreading crackers with great dexterity and confidently pouring their drinks. They fully understand why they wash their hands to get rid of germs. They fetch tissues for themselves and friends and discard these hygienically after use. They enthusiastically join in with 'activate' exercises at the start of the day and notice how this makes their hearts beat faster. They excitedly look forward to the weekly, ball skills session with an outside coach. By being very active for much of the session, they thoroughly enjoy keeping fit.

## 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>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### 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>	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	1
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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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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