

Ashby Castle Pre-Preparatory School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 21/02/2012
Inspector Dianne Sadler

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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

Ashby Castle Pre-Preparatory School was registered in 2011. It is privately owned and is an annex of the existing Ashby Castle Day Nursery. It operates from a converted house in Ashby-De-La-Zouch, Leicestershire. The setting serves the local area and has strong links with the local primary school. The setting is accessible to all children and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The setting is open Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 30 children may attend the setting at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 58 children attending, all of whom are within the early years age range. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs eight members of childcare staff which includes the manager and owner. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff holds a qualified teacher status and one is working towards this qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting is highly effective with robust policies and procedures that ensure all outcomes for children are outstanding. The experienced and dedicated staff work extremely closely with all parents and others involved in the children's care to provide a truly inclusive environment in which each child's individual needs are routinely met and their protection assured. Rigorous and extensive monitoring and evaluation systems enable the nursery to have an accurate understanding of the settings strengths and areas in which further improvement can be achieved. Teaching is consistently inspiring and challenging aided by comprehensive planning and assessment systems, so helping each child to reach their full potential.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- seek ways to develop the two-way flow of information with regards to children's learning where children receive care and education in more than one setting.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting has a comprehensive understanding and working knowledge of how to successfully safeguard children. Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of child protection procedures and maintain extensive policies and procedures which ensure children's safety is always given top priority. The setting has robust recruitment procedures in place and all staff are dedicated and exceedingly enthusiastic. They attend a wide range of training events throughout the year and are constantly seeking ways to further improve their knowledge and skills. As a result, staff have high expectations of themselves and children's achievements.

All aspects of the setting and outings children participate in are subject to systematic risk assessments. This ensures children learn in a safe environment without restricting their development. Comprehensive self-evaluation systems carried out by all staff and parents, analyse the strengths of the setting and successfully detail actions for the setting's future development. For instance, staff have completed training with regards to outdoor learning and have on-going plans to further develop the already inspiring outdoor play area. This has a very positive impact on all outcomes for children.

The setting is constantly striving to improve the already excellent partnerships they develop with children and their families. Parents and carers are provided with comprehensive information about the early years provision. For instance, they benefit from regular newsletters, informative noticeboards throughout the setting and clear and concise written policies. A 'Parent pack' is sent out each month detailing forthcoming events, activities and information about the staff. In addition, parents are provided with a wide range of information packs on areas, such as behaviour or having a new baby and a pack of resources for when children have been poorly.

Parent's views are collated through regular questionnaires sent out and through comments they make using the suggestions box. This information is shared with them at planned parents' evenings. Comments are extremely positive. Parents show complete satisfaction with the setting and value the excellent standards maintained in a welcoming, professional environment. Their views are highly respected and valued. For instance, when a parent suggests that a bench is made available in the hallway to aid children dressing and undressing, the setting acts upon the suggestion and provides the parent with a written outcome letter. The nursery is developing further their systems to effectively work with other early years settings which some children attend. They send out letters to the settings inviting them to make contact. However, this is not fully effective in practice for all children. The partnerships with the primary schools that the children move on to are excellent.

Children enjoy freely accessing an extremely well-organised, fun and inspiring environment both indoors and outdoors by choice at all times. An excellent range of good-quality resources are stored and displayed well, inviting children to make superb choices and good decisions about their play. Staff demonstrate an excellent

commitment to promoting inclusive practice. The environment is rich in positive images of diversity and children have excellent opportunities to learn about the wider world. For example, children learn about all religious beliefs and traditions. They learn about how the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates its Christmas on January 7th. They learn about Grandfather Frost and Snyegurochka his Snowmaiden. Children develop a complete sense of belonging and excellent self-esteem at this time as they are encouraged to bring in items from home to share with the other children.

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

Children have superb opportunities to develop their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. For example, children access a dynamic and rich outdoor play area in which they can explore and investigate the natural world. They learn to respect and care for the needs of all living things as they develop close relationships with animals, such as chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs kept outside. Children enjoy collecting eggs laid by hens which are used as a reward for their achievements and good behaviour during the day. Children are also encouraged to actively take part in planting, growing and caring for vegetables and plants. They thoroughly enjoy watering the snowdrops growing under the trees and use tools, such as spades and brooms to dig and sweep up leaves. This develops their physical skills. Children are also learning to keep themselves safe. For example, when exploring safety as a planned topic children enjoy visits from the fire brigade, road safety officer, life guard and police officer. They learn about safety from books. With the aid of these books children successfully spot hazards in the kitchen and learn the importance of wearing a helmet when riding a bike.

Through skilled, sensitive observations which are recorded, reflected upon and added to by parents and carers, the setting creates plans to further each child's unique development. Full use is made of the information gained from assessments. As a result, all children make significant gains in all areas of their learning and are developing the skills they need for their future success driven by their interests. Staff ensure each child is provided with significant challenges. For example, when it is noted that a small group of children are progressing exceptionally well in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, plans are made to provide these children with additional support and opportunities.

The setting listens carefully to what children say and responds to their requests extremely well. Children decide which areas they want to play in, which are organised exceptionally well within the six areas of learning. Children are eager to play and join in, confidently developing positive relationships with their peers and adults alike. Children's communication skills are being developed exceedingly well as they are constantly being supported and encouraged to use language for thinking. For example, when children show awe and wonder at finding a ladybird outdoors, they are asked how many spots it has and consider which place is best for the ladybird to rest.

Children also have wonderful opportunities to be creative and develop their imagination. They explore different media and materials, such as, cold spaghetti died blue and magic foam made up of small sticky balls which they mould together to make two and three dimensional structures. Children thoroughly enjoy accessing the role-play area which is changed regularly. Whilst set up as a hairdressers, children discuss equipment needed to wash hair, such as shampoo. They enjoy a visit from a hairdresser and experience having their own hair cut in the setting. They also learn about the community in which they live as they enjoy going outdoors and hunting for local salons and take photographs to proudly display in the setting.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

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

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

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