

# The Owl Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

---

**Unique reference number** 257941  
**Inspection date** 06/03/2012  
**Inspector** Lindsey Cullum

**Setting address** Owl Play School, Valley Lane, HOLT, Norfolk, NR25 6SF

**Telephone number** 07867 757661

**Email**

**Type of setting** Childcare - Non-Domestic

---

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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

## 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 Owl Playschool registered in its current premises in 2000. They operate from a purpose built building in the grounds of Holt Primary School in Norfolk. Accommodation comprises of a main playroom, kitchen, lobby, office and toilet facilities. Children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas which include a balcony and visit parts of the school grounds weekly for outdoor activities.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 29 children within the Early Years Foundation Stage on roll and the setting provides funded early years education. The setting opens each weekday from 9.15am until 12.15pm, school term time only. They also operate a breakfast club from 7.45am to 9.15am for children enrolled in the playgroup and primary school. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The setting employs five staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playschool is committee run and has charitable status.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children blossom and enjoy their time at this welcoming and vibrant setting, supported by a caring and enthusiastic staff team. The setting has a positive ethos of inclusion that ensures all children's care and learning needs are actively met. Children benefit considerably from the welcoming environment and interesting range of activities provided both indoors and outside, and are making good progress in their learning and development. Staff build strong partnerships with parents and have good links with others who provide care and learning for the children. The staff team continually review their practice and demonstrate a positive attitude and firm commitment towards sustained and continuous improvement.

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

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

- expand the opportunities for children to link sounds to letters and explore and experiment with sounds, words and texts
- consider further ways of assessing children's starting points which encourage parents to be fully involved in their children's learning from an early stage
- improve the use of self-evaluation as the basis for ongoing internal review; seek the views of all users and develop an action plan with timescales which identifies priorities for future improvement.

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

Children are well protected because staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and know when to take action to safeguard children in their care. Staff attend training to update their knowledge and information on safeguarding is easily accessible. Recruitment procedures are effective and all staff are appropriately vetted, hold suitable qualifications and are skilled. Ongoing suitability is monitored through a yearly appraisal system. Detailed risk assessments are completed and cover all aspects of the learning environment and any outings. Staff are vigilant and carry out checks on a daily basis to ensure any hazards are quickly identified and appropriate action taken. Resources and equipment are effectively monitored by staff so are of a high quality and remain safe and suitable for children's use.

The setting provides a bright and stimulating environment which is well designed to support children's independence. Resources are fully accessible, allowing children to select items for themselves. Children move confidently around the setting, freely choosing when they would like to play outdoors or enjoy their snack. Attractive displays featuring photographs of children enjoying activities, thoughtfully presented artwork and displays on specific topics ensure the environment is attractive to children and they experience a strong sense of belonging.

Staff are well qualified, enthusiastic and have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, contributing to children's welfare and learning. They work closely as a team and are committed to continuing their own professional development, regularly attending courses which further develop their knowledge and skills. The whole staff team are keen to improve the provision for children, taking time to reflect on their practice during regularly team meetings. However, to further embed the good self-evaluation process the manager should employ the whole setting approach, seeking the views of the committee, parents and other users when evaluating the provision. Staff have identified areas for future development, such as updating the operational plan so this fully supports good practice. Some action plans have been developed, although priorities have not been agreed and timescales for the completion of actions have not been identified, which will systematically bring about further improvements.

Children benefit significantly from strong, trusting partnerships which develop between staff and parents. Staff dedicate time getting to know children and their families, through home visits before children start and well-planned settling sessions. An effective key person system ensures that children's needs are known, children are fully included and able to work and play at their own level of development. Friendly, daily liaison ensures that parents are involved in their children's learning and development. Information about the activities available is recorded each day on a board in the entrance area so that parents are able to share in their children's experiences. Parents provide very positive comments about their children's experiences within the setting. Staff work closely, and have excellent links with many agencies so children with special educational needs

and/or disabilities are well supported and make very good progress, which also supports their families. A strength of the setting is their commitment to working with the school. Each week staff and children from the setting join the Reception class for an outdoor learning session. Staff accompany small groups of older children on visits to the school prior to their admission. This effectively supports children in making a smooth transition as they are familiar with the environment, teaching staff and have begun to make friends.

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

Children are enthusiastic and show great enjoyment in what they do. The environment is planned carefully to allow them to choose from a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities which cover all areas of learning. Children interact well with their peers and are keen to share their ideas with their friends and staff. All children are valued and treated with equal concern, and any specific requirements are sensitively catered for through discussion with parents and other professionals. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and interests as they observe children regularly, listen carefully to what they say and note achievements. Information gained through assessment is evaluated and used successfully to inform future planning. All children have detailed learning journeys with written and photographic information of their learning and achievements. Detailed discussion with parents and settling visits help staff to gain some information about children. However, systems are not fully in place to ascertain from parents children's starting points to ensure a firm foundation is established for future learning. Planning is based around children's current interests and takes in to account individual children's capabilities so they are suitably challenged and eager to learn through their play and first-hand experiences. For example, children's interest in dinosaurs is actively encouraged and resources provided which support learning. Staff show a genuine interest in what children are doing, offer encouragement and get involved in activities. They ask questions which seek out what the children know and help them to think critically.

Children's independence is very well promoted. They are able to make lots of choices and decisions about their play and know where to find toys and equipment they want. For example, they select construction materials to add to their imaginary games. Children are encouraged to try activities, observe as staff demonstrate, then try for themselves with high levels of support. They persevere and practice, displaying pride in their achievements. Children have vivid imaginations and eagerly engage in role play with their friends, acting through different scenarios. They enjoy playing with dinosaurs in the sand or use small tools to make patterns or letters in the sand tray. Children express their creativity through paint or drawing materials, creating recognisable pictures which they proudly show to others. Older children are beginning to recognise and write their names. Some emphasis is placed on providing print within the environment and helping children to link sounds with letters to promote children's literacy and language skills. Children enjoy stories and frequently request a story or select a book to look through on their own. Children communicate their ideas to each other and frequently join in conversations, demonstrating a widening vocabulary.

Friendships have developed and children spend a great deal of time playing co-operatively with their friends. A range of resources promote children's understanding of technology as they freely play with electronic laptops or programmable resources. Children take turns using the computer, selecting games they enjoy, including matching and number programmes, and are becoming proficient in using the mouse.

Children delight in the opportunities offered to play and learn outside and some children choose to play outside for most of each session. Staff plan activities for this area recognising the importance of outdoor play in broadening children's experiences. Children learn to dress appropriately for the weather with all-weather suits available so they can always access outside. Children explore a variety of materials. Trays are filled with different textured materials, such as rain water, compost, sawdust or sand. They enjoy imaginative play in the playhouse or are physically active, riding small wheeled toys with increased co-ordination. Children dig with great delight and find worms which they place in magnifying containers to study. The recent introduction of a wormery promotes children's understanding of re-cycling food waste and the resulting compost will be used for planting and growing activities. Everyday routines encourage children to develop good personal care and hygiene routines. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices at snack time and enjoy sitting in a small group chatting with staff or friends. Drinking water is accessible both indoors and outside and children freely help themselves. Children are learning to keep themselves and others safe. They use tools and equipment sensibly as staff provide gentle reminders. Children's good behaviour contributes significantly to the happy atmosphere of activity. They share and co-operate effectively and are treated with respect by staff who are good role models. Clear boundaries around acceptable behaviour help children to feel secure and develop a sense of right and wrong. All children are actively included in events and the setting ensures children are surrounded by positive imagery of the wider society and celebrate world festivals. As a consequence, children are developing skills which will equip them well for the future.

## 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>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### 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>	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
--	---

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

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

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## **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