

# Little Owl Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 221890       |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 05/03/2012   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Deborah Hunt |

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| <b>Setting address</b>  | Dry Drayton Primary School, Park Street, Dry Drayton,<br>Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB23 8DA |
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| <b>Email</b>            |  |
| <b>Type of setting</b>  | 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

Little Owl Pre-school Playgroup was registered in 1995 and operates from an annexe in Dry Drayton Primary School, which is situated in the village of Dry Drayton on the outskirts of Cambridge. The pre-school is registered to accept up to 24 children at any one time.

The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time. Sessions are from 9am to 12noon every weekday, and from 12.45pm to 3.15pm every Friday. Children may also attend a lunch club, which operates according to demand and currently runs from 12noon to 12:45pm on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Children attend for a variety of sessions and come from the local and wider area. There are currently 15 children on roll, including 8 funded children. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff. The manager is a qualified teacher. Her deputy holds a qualification at level 3, two staff are working towards a qualification at level 3, and the other is NNEB qualified. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are settled, happy and secure at this welcoming and friendly pre-school where staff who know them well successfully support their learning and development. Effective partnerships, an excellent selection of resources and thoughtful use of the environment ensure inclusive practice is mostly promoted in the provision. Policies and procedures for the safe and efficient management of the provision are implemented. The cohesive staff team have developed successful partnerships with parents and carers and transitional arrangements are in place with other settings children attend or move on to. Effective self-evaluation procedures enable the manager and committee to monitor the progress of the pre-school. This helps them make focused and realistic plans for future improvements, and thereby provide a service which offers high quality care for all children who attend.

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

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

- develop further respectful and caring relationships with all children and families.

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

Children are effectively protected as safeguarding is given high priority in the pre-school. The manager and her staff team demonstrate a secure understanding of local safeguarding procedures and clear policies and procedures are followed should they have any concerns about a child in their care. A thorough and careful recruitment process is managed in conjunction with the committee, ensuring that those working with children are vetted and are suitable to do so. Practitioners are provided with a clear induction and most are qualified, ensuring that children are cared for by competent adults who promote their welfare, learning and development. Well-embedded supervision and appraisal systems ensure that ongoing suitability is monitored, demonstrating the provision's strong commitment to the safety and well-being of children in their care. Continuous professional development is given high priority by the manager and she is keen to offer her staff opportunities to develop their practice, as well as keeping first aid and safeguarding training up-to-date. Practitioners supervise activities closely, and thorough risk assessments for the building and outdoor areas support them in ensuring children's safety. Additionally, trips are risk assessed prior to the event and a daily check list further confirms that the environment remains safe for children throughout the day.

The deployment of an excellent range of resources and displays in the room provide children with a stimulating and welcoming environment within which they play and learn effectively. Inclusive practice is given careful thought and is mostly promoted well. However, consideration of children's preferences could be developed further in order to promote children's self-esteem and confidence at all times. Staff know individual children and their families well which enables them to provide individualised and appropriate support. Clear strategies support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes close partnership working with outside agencies and other professionals in order to meet children's additional needs. The manager and her team work very well together. They capably implement planned activities and the flexibility in their approach allows them to follow children's individual interests: children therefore engage more readily in their learning and enjoy the experiences on offer to the full. The key working system ensures that children enjoy continuity in their care and parents have a central point of reference for their child during their time at the provision. The small group size means that children and staff develop a close bond and children take ownership of various roles and responsibilities, such as helping to prepare and set up for snack time. This gives them a strong sense of belonging.

Partnership working with the host school is effective and links have been established with other local settings which supports transitions for those children attending more than one setting or moving up to school. The provision also works closely with the local authority team which means children receive support and assistance when they need it. Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. Parents share information about children's learning and achievements at home through the home communication books that are in use daily, helping staff gain a more detailed picture of children's development and interests. A regular newsletter

is shared with parents by e-mail each half term and additional e-mails are sent if anything newsworthy occurs in the interim period. Daily conversations also help to keep families further informed about their child's care and learning. Each term the setting invites parents to come and discuss their child's progress and at the end of each year they additionally provide a written report. Parents speak very highly of the setting and staff. For example, one commented, 'it's brilliant! Absolutely fantastic! The staff are fantastic. I came here on recommendation. As soon as I walked in the atmosphere was lovely, very warm and welcoming!'

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

Children are eager to learn at this welcoming provision because experienced practitioners deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage with enthusiasm and patience. For example, a practitioner skilfully tells a dinosaur story, holding the children entranced and another patiently holds a toy helicopter aloft while a child explores the dials and knobs, helping him find the one which will make it work. Effective interaction and timely questioning by practitioners helps children to consider, reflect and extend their thinking. Planning is based around a topic which changes weekly or fortnightly but very much relates to children's interests and includes a wide range of activities covering all areas of learning. This year's intake was very young and care is taken to ensure that activities are adapted to suit their stage of development. For example, the 'buzzy bee' finger puppet is employed at registration time to help engage those children who are reluctant to join the group or find it difficult to sit down. Regular observations are undertaken of children's learning and next steps are identified. These inform the planning carried out at weekly team meetings and they are also transferred to the individual Child Profiles held by each key worker.

Children feel safe and secure as they have formed warm relationships with practitioners. Older children display confidence as they skilfully manoeuvre the mouse on the computer naming simple shapes and moving characters across the screen. Children's communication skills are developing well as staff continuously interact with them, listen and respond to them and introduce them to new vocabulary. Numeracy is an integral part of everyday activities, such as counting on their fingers as they sing 'Five Little Ducks'. Children compare different weights when they use the scales or pay for their shopping using the toy cash register. They solve simple problems such as fitting different sized stickle bricks together to make a house. Children develop a knowledge and understanding of the world as they learn about their immediate locality through walks and visitors who come into the pre-school. They gain an appreciation of the wider world, different cultures, languages and beliefs through multicultural displays, by celebrating different festivals such as Chinese New Year and when a parent from France came in and taught the children to sing in French. Children confidently explore and investigate materials, such as clay and glitter as they make tea light holders to give to their mothers for Mothers' Day. These activities lay secure foundations to support children's future economic well-being.

Healthy eating is given high priority and children are encouraged to think about what they eat, whether it is good for them and where it comes from. Water is available throughout the session and children enjoy a range of healthy foods. For example, they help to prepare a banana and milk smoothie and enjoy eating a range of fruits and malted cereal shapes at snack time. Children practise their pouring skills as they pour themselves their banana drink. Snack and lunch times are sociable occasions and practitioners sit with the children, joining in their discussions and sharing the mealtime with them, helping them to understand the value of conversation and company. Children contribute to the provision of snacks through their cookery activities, such as, when they bake homemade bread. Children's physical development is effectively promoted through dance and movement sessions and through exciting opportunities in the outdoor environment. For example, children ask for ladders to be brought out so that they can 'climb' the tree. Other children use sit and ride toys or enjoy the freedom of having space to run and play with their friends. Children independently follow hygiene routines washing their hands after using the clay and before sitting down for their snack or lunch. Children's behaviour, spatial awareness and interaction with their peers are good. They show maturity in sharing time on the computer and negotiate the available space well. Practitioners offer much praise and positive encouragement to support children to resolve differences amicably. Children learn about safety through activities such as recognising and agreeing when it is safe to cross the road during walks in the local area as well as taking part in regular fire evacuation drills.

## 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

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|--|---|
| <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

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|--|---|
| <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   | 1 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| <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 |

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