

Mitcheldean Early Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

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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*.

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

Mitcheldean Early Learners originally operated from the Mitcheldean Community Centre building in the centre of the town in Gloucestershire. They transferred to their new premises at Mitcheldean Endowed Primary School in 2011. The premises are purpose built and comprises of a large playroom with a secure kitchen area, a small playroom, an office and toilets. There is easy access to an enclosed outdoor area directly off the main playroom. This outdoor area is suitable for use all year round. The group is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children in the early years age at any one time. There are currently 39 children within the early years age range on roll. Of these, 28 children receive free early years education. Children come from within the town and surrounding villages. The playgroup currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The playgroup opens term time only on Monday to Thursday from 9am to 3pm offering full or half day sessions, and Friday morning from 9am to 12 noon. The group employs nine part-time staff to work with the children on a job share basis over the week. Of these, all staff have appropriate early years qualifications. The group has close links with the primary school and is a member of the Gloucestershire Playgroup and Toddler Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled at the warm and friendly setting, and make suitable progress in their learning and development. Systems for observation and assessment are being developed. The setting has positive relationships with parents, although links with other settings involved with children's learning are not yet fully established. Although policies and procedures required to promote the effective management of the setting are in place, not all staff are confident in knowing what procedure to follow if a child goes missing. Although staff are not involved in the process, management demonstrate a sound understanding of self-evaluation and recognise areas for development to support continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities, with particular regard to implementing the setting's policies and procedures
- provide well-planned experiences which support young children to learn with

enjoyment and challenge ensuring that they do not have to sit and wait for long periods of time

- improve the systems to work together with other practitioners to support transition and consistency between settings
- enable staff to engage in and contribute to regular cycles of planning and review in respect of the setting's self-evaluation, as well as information on children's learning progress, linked to the areas of learning, for example

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded, because the playgroup has suitable procedures in place to help keep them safe. For example, most staff are familiar with the procedures for child protection and all staff who work with the children are suitably vetted. Each member of staff's ongoing suitability is monitored through a mostly effective induction and appraisal scheme. However, not all employed staff are fully familiar with the setting's "missing child" policy. Staff ensure that children remain safe in the setting, as they implement appropriate procedures such as keeping the external door locked and constant supervision of children at all times. Risk assessments are in place for indoors, outdoors and for outings, and staff complete daily visual checks.

Partnerships with parents are sound. Staff know the parents well and gather sufficient information from them at the initial meeting to meet children's individual needs, for example dietary requirements, likes and dislikes. Parents receive an information pack prior to their child starting, and important information is displayed on the notice board. For example, complaints details, certificate of registration and public liability insurance. Parents are kept up-to-date about their child's care through verbal feedback at the end of each day. Also, they are effectively kept informed about their child's learning and development because each key person regularly meets with the parents to discuss their child's progress. Children's transition to the local village schools is soundly supported because reception class teachers visit children prior to their starting school in September. However, links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework are not sufficiently established to support continuity of learning and care for children who attend more than one setting. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported through the key person system. Consequently, inclusive practice is promoted.

Space at the setting is appropriately used to enable children to move around freely and access a range of age appropriate resources. Colourful displays of the children's work, along with a wealth of photographs, help children to feel a sense of belonging and promote their self-esteem. All children enjoy regular outdoor play in the large garden. This provides them with ample opportunities to explore, jump and run around. Management are currently in the process of updating all of the setting's policies and procedures. They have a suitable understanding of areas for development within the setting. However, not all members of staff are included in the self-evaluation process. As a result, staff are not fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the setting. Effective use is made of the available space. Staff set

up a suitable range of resources and activities each day, which children access confidently. This provides children with suitable opportunities to make independent choices about their learning and play. A selection of resources is readily available to raise children's awareness of diversity of the wider world.

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

Children arrive happily at the setting and part confidently from their parents and carers. They are content, settled and willingly take part in activities, which cover all areas of learning. They make choices about which activities they wish to take part in, and move around the space confidently. Staff at the setting are warm and friendly. They have a sound knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Individual files are in place for each child, which include staff's observations children's progress. However, observations and assessments are not clearly linked to the early learning goals. Nevertheless, children are making suitable progress in their learning and development. Children benefit from the close relationships developed through the key worker system. Every key person knows each child in their group well and can confidently plan individualised experiences to benefit each child. During the day there is an appropriate balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities. However, some activities are not well planned and carried out effectively so that children are engaged and interested throughout the activity. For example, the children lost interest in making play dough because the adults took a long time to organise and complete the activity.

In the main, children have a range of resources and activities that allow them to independently select what they want to play with during the day. For example, a suitable variety of building blocks, construction equipment and jigsaws are available to promote children's problem solving and fine motor skills. Staff support the children to hold pencils, pens and crayons correctly, as they draw around shapes and practise making marks and early writing skills. Role-play activities allow children's creativity to develop as they pretend to wrap dolls in bandages, telling each other that the dolls are poorly and need to see a doctor. Language and communication skills are supported as they select a range of easily accessible books from the reading area. Outdoor activities such as planting help children to begin to develop an interest in the natural world. This is supported by staff, as they introduce relevant books to support and extend children's learning. All children enjoy joining in with well known rhymes and sing their favourite songs during group activities, which help to further promote their communication skills. Children happily choose to play either indoor or outdoor as free-flow is actively encouraged daily.

Children's health is suitably promoted at the setting. They have fresh fruit for snacks and they have a choice of drinks of milk or water. Children can independently access their own beakers of water and these are clearly labelled to avoid cross-infection. Appropriate hygiene precautions are taken; the tables are cleaned by staff, and children wash their hands before snack time. They are

beginning to learn about the importance of keeping themselves safe. They practise regular fire drills and staff talk to them about the importance of not running indoors in case they hurt themselves. Children do not attend if they are sick, and this enables the staff to protect others from illness. Staff respond appropriately if children have an accident as they are all suitably trained in first aid. Children behave well at the setting as staff implement effective behaviour management techniques. They give the children regular praise and encouragement, and talk to them about the importance of sharing. Consequently, children respond well and their behaviour is good.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

Met