

Prestbury Playmates Pre-School

St. Marys Church Hall, Bouncers Lane, Prestbury, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 5JF

Inspection date

18/09/2013

Previous inspection date

26/11/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- The manager provides excellent leadership. Together with the staff team, she drives constant improvement. All staff demonstrate determination to meet each child's needs as well as possible. They introduce new and innovative ideas to help children learn.
- The 'key person' system is highly effective. Staff provide excellent support to both the child and family, from the moment of admission. This means excellent relationships are formed and staff develop a genuine working partnership with parents.
- Staff make excellent use of the premises, inside and out, to provide children with a wealth of exciting play activities that spark their curiosity and encourage explorative play. Children progress quickly in gaining valuable skills and attitudes for their future lives. Their behaviour is exemplary.
- Staff place children's welfare at the heart of their work. Staff nurture children's emotional and physical well-being, protecting their interests and working with outside professionals to provide every child with the help and support they need.
- Staff demonstrate consistently good interaction with children. They question children skilfully to provoke thinking and drive learning. Adult-led activities are carefully planned and implemented to a high standard, so children learn to concentrate and listen, while enjoying their experiences.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector held discussions with the owner and manager.
- The inspector talked with some parents, staff and children.
- The inspector examined documentations including parents' questionnaires, staff appointment paperwork and children's records.
- The inspector observed children's activities indoors and outside.
- The inspector and manager undertook a joint observation of a planned adult-led activity.

Inspector

Rosemary Davies

Full Report

Information about the setting

Prestbury Playmates Pre-school is privately owned and registered on the Early Years Register in 2008. It is situated in the village of Prestbury, a semi-rural area on the outskirts of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The pre-school operates from Prestbury Hall, which it shares with other village organisations. Children use the main hall as a playroom, the smaller 'waiting room' and an outside area for outdoor play.

There are currently 46 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The pre-school is funded to provide free early education to children aged three and four years, and for some two-year-olds. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is open during school term times only. It operates on each weekday, except Wednesday, from 9am until 1pm. On Wednesday it operates from 10.45am until 2.45pm, with a toddler group operating prior to the morning session.

The owner employs seven staff. All staff, and the owner, hold relevant early years qualifications at level 3. One member of staff holds Qualified Teacher Status for early years. Parents and carers assist at the pre-school on a rota basis.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- consider ways to make the indoor book area more enticing to children, so they choose to visit it more frequently to browse through books for themselves.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

All children flourish in the stimulating learning environments created by staff. Staff provide a wealth of activities using innovative ways that allow children to help themselves and be independent in their play. Staff work hard to set up an array of interesting activities daily, putting everything away at the end of the session. They overcome this difficulty of shared accommodation with a positive spirit, saying it encourages them to 'try new things'; change resources more frequently and provide fresh experiences for the children.

The outdoor area is very interesting. The available space is packed with inviting play spaces, exploratory areas and living things, all of which promote the seven areas of learning and help children learn about their world in particular. Children are curious and inquisitive as a result. They find out about the properties of liquids using the 'drip, drop

and squirt' box. They have observed tadpoles and frogs in the tiny pond, learning about the principles of changing life cycles. Children grow carrots, pulling these from the ground, washing and eating them. They help themselves to water from the camping water-container wedged between two logs, knowing how to turn the tap on and off. They declare the tomatoes 'need more water' and water them. When staff ask, 'How will you know when they are ready to eat?' children answer confidently, 'When they are red!'

Staff prepare children for school extremely well. Staff plan a specific adult-led activity for each week to develop children's ability to sit in a group together, to listen attentively, to answer questions individually and to give their views confidently. Children gain these skills and attributes through careful teaching in activities they enjoy. Staff prepare thoroughly for these. They know what they want to achieve, how they will do it and have all the resources needed to hand. The group time is notably well managed. Teaching is paced well, keeping children's attention and skilfully extending vocabulary. Children name percussion instruments and all enjoy the joke of calling a pair of maracas, 'macaroni' but know that all start with a 'm' sound. They learn to distinguish hard and soft sounds, eagerly offering their views on how different instruments sound. Staff pick up quickly on chances to promote other learning, such as sharing, counting and subtraction.

Staff work closely with parents to learn of children's successes or difficulties at home. Staff celebrate 'wow' moments, but use their own perceptive observations of children's play to help determine what individual children need to learn next and what their particular interests are. Staff keep carefully documented 'learning journals' that show children's progress since starting. Children who will not go to school for another year, can already write their names using recognisable letters, and choose to do so. This interest in writing stems again from the inviting presentation of resources and skilled staff interaction. Children understand that staff value writing, so are keen to do this themselves, declaring 'That's my name' with evident pride as they write it down. This demonstrates children gain very good literacy skills. Outdoors, books are placed in a tepee, which all children show interest in and want to look at. However, the indoor book area is not well located and books are not always attractively presented. This makes it difficult for children to find favourite books and sit down to look at them independently and develop their literacy skills even further.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

A highly effective 'key person' system lies at the heart of much of this pre-school's work. Many children have attended the linked toddler group. This gives the advantage that the manager and some staff know the children before they start and children are already familiar with the large hall. Settling in happens quickly. Children new this term already move around the large hall confidently. They choose what they wish to play with, moving resources around to extend their own play and learning. Resources are plentiful and of high quality and staff are imaginative in presenting these. For example, hurdle supports used by a gym club act as holders for guttering, which children enthusiastically push toy cars down. Children can alter the degree of slope as they wish, to find what makes the vehicles move more quickly.

Children's behaviour is excellent because they are busy enjoying themselves. Staff are innovative in providing solutions to the difficulties of using such a large hall. They plan the layout thoughtfully so there are no 'corridors' through the large room that might encourage children to run. Staff deal with minor incidents stemming from frustration quickly and effectively. They provide a 'fidgety fingers box' to help younger children learn to sit with others for group times. All staff help children understand what is expected of them.

All staff speak to children clearly and pleasantly, therefore children respond well, listening when asked. They quickly learn the session's routines, such as when it is time to have their lunch. They learn to manage their lunchboxes and drink containers competently following encouragement by staff. Children eat healthy lunches, as parents respond well to management requests to provide fruit and to limit less healthy options. Children chat animatedly to others, showing developing friendships.

Children's enthusiasm to be outside reflects that of staff. Everyone can enjoy fresh air in all weathers as suitable clothing is available if needed. Children practise a variety of physical skills, such as climbing on a challenging frame. Staff make full use of the spacious hall for physical exercise indoors too; children enjoy this option throughout the session. Older children use pedal cars, for example, carefully avoiding each other, showing their understanding of how to behave responsibly and safely.

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

The owner has a firm knowledge of both the learning and development, and safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. She employs an experienced, enthusiastic manager, who has the trust and respect of the staff team and who motivates that team to do their very best for all the children in their care.

Owing to the pre-school's venue, staff work together in the same space for much of each session. The manager often works with them. She encourages the team to learn from each other, and to evaluate practice frequently. Staff show pride in their work. Systems for staff development work effectively as all staff are now qualified. Staff undertake a variety of training to further their knowledge and skills, which is 'cascaded' across the team. Staff describe how training influences their practice and the difference it makes to children's progress. For example, following training staff's regular, planned use of a national literacy system develops children's language, communication and literacy skills rapidly.

There are clear lines of responsibility between the owner and manager providing efficient day to day running of the pre-school. The owner, although largely involved in administration, reviews policies and the evaluation document. The manager operates an 'open door' policy. She is available for individual discussions with staff and parents at a

specific time. This arrangement allows the manager to keep abreast of what happens in the nursery and children's lives. It aids the development of strong partnerships with parents and helps to resolve difficulties and identify issues quickly, so children and families get necessary support. This quick intervention helps address any areas children need help with quickly, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, the achievement gap is narrowed and all children are helped to reach their full potential.

There is a low turnover of staff, which means there is a well-established team who share the same vision for the pre-school. The owner takes responsibility for the recruitment of new staff and robust procedures are in place to check the suitability of all adults working with the children. This fully promotes children's welfare and safety. A 'buddy system' is used to help new employees learn the expectations of their role. This 'buddy' changes during the three month probation period to allow the probationer to benefit from the individual expertise of different staff. This system helps the manager make sure that the staff team maintains a consistent approach to their work and high standards, for example, in managing children's behaviour and keeping records of progress. The manager evaluates the quality of staff practice accurately, so identifies where support is needed. This means the manager is continually making ongoing improvements to the benefit of the children.

The pre-school is unquestionably valued by parents. They speak highly of their children's experiences and particularly of the care and concern staff show for the children. One parent reported that she had waited specifically to get her child into this pre-school and that her first visit was 'better than I can ever have imagined'. Parents speak positively about the way staff quickly recognise when extra support is needed and the speed at which this is obtained. Parents know their children's key persons very well and state that they treat children 'sensitively'. Parents are enthusiastic about the simple, but useful ideas staff suggest as to how they, as parents, may support children's development at home. The 'parent rota' system works extremely well. It gives parents and carers a first hand chance to watch their children at play and mixing with others, and to understand the pre-school's work.

The management and staff take advantage of the pre-school's proximity to the local primary school, to which the vast majority of children transfer. Staff visit the school and the reception teacher visits the pre-school. This means children become familiar with their new teachers and information regarding children's individual needs is shared. Children know where they will go to school, even if to another local school. Staff arrange for items of uniform to be available, so those moving on can become familiar with what they will wear and practise putting on the clothing. The pre-school staff prepare all children here exceptionally well for their future lives.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY376139
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	845752
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	46
Name of provider	Claire Burge
Date of previous inspection	26/11/2008
Telephone number	07887 785 998

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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