

# The Old School Children's Centre

Church Hill, Whitchurch, TAVISTOCK, Devon, PL19 9ED

## Inspection date

04/11/2013

Previous inspection date

08/03/2012

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:** 3

Previous inspection: 1

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	3

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision requires improvement

- Staff operate a suitable key person system, which helps children to settle-in and to feel secure in the nursery.
- Parents provide positive feedback about the nursery and their children's progress.
- Staff provide age-appropriate resources and activities to interest children and promote overall development.
- Staff work in partnership with others to support children's individual needs and development.

### It is not yet good because

- Staff meet ratio requirements, however, on some occasions the levels of supervision and support to children's care and learning varies.
- There has been a recent review of staff supervision and performance management, however, the revised system is not fully embedded in practice.
- Staff take relevant information from parents about children's backgrounds, however, they do not always effectively use this knowledge to support children's learning and to promote inclusion.
- There are suitable observation and assessment procedures in place, although not all documents precisely reflect children's current stage of development.
- Staff implement most policies and procedures reasonably well, although hygiene

arrangements at meal times are sometimes inconsistent.

## **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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## **Inspection activities**

- The inspector observed children in their activities in each of the age groups.
- The inspector had discussions with managers, staff and parents.
- The inspector had meetings with the management team and undertook joint observations with a registered individual.
- The inspector read and discussed a sample of children's records and documentation.
- The inspector took account of the self-evaluation procedure and current development plans.

**Inspector**  
Julie Wright

## **Full report**

### **Information about the setting**

The Old School Children's Centre is a privately owned day nursery and is one of three provisions owned by this partnership. It originally opened 1990 and was re-registered in 2011. It operates from three buildings at the old Whitchurch primary school on the outskirts of Tavistock. The premises are accessed from the front yard and there are steps down to the birth to three-year-old rooms and outdoor play areas. All children have access to secure outdoor play areas. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Care is available for children aged from birth to 12 years. There are currently 129 children on roll, 99 children are in the early years age range. The setting receives funding to provide free early education places for children aged two, three and four years. It opens each weekday from 7.30am until 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. There are 23 staff employed to work with the children, all of whom have early years qualifications. This includes four members of staff with Qualified Teacher Status. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who learn English as an additional language.

### **What the setting needs to do to improve further**

#### **To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:**

- review the staffing arrangements and deployment of staff to ensure that levels of supervision are always rigorous and that the needs of all children are consistently well met
- establish robust supervision procedures to monitor staff effectiveness and ensure continuous improvement to practice.

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

- improve the opportunities for children who learn English as an additional language to use home language in play, and for all children to learn about diversity
- improve the assessment procedures to ensure consistently effective monitoring of children's progress
- improve food hygiene practice with the consistent provision of plates at mealtimes, to further protect children's health and develop their social skills.

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are cared for depending on their age and ability in three groups, known as Caterpillars, Ladybirds and Butterflies. Each unit has age-appropriate toys and equipment to suit the children. Staff provide a range of activities to promote all areas of children's development. All staff who work with children have recognised early years qualifications, however, their competencies vary. This means that some staff are less confident or knowledgeable than others in extending and challenging children's learning. Although staff cover each of the educational programmes, some miss opportunities to promote children's interest and progress. Staff read stories and sing songs to help promote children's communication and language skills. They ask children questions during play activities to encourage thinking and discussion. However, at times staff interaction and communication with children lacks depth and meaning. Therefore, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.

Children move around with confidence as they select toys or join activities. In the Butterflies room pre-school children choose books and sit together to look at pictures, which shows literacy development. Children investigate replica insects in a tray of dried oats. A member of staff interacts with children, which results in an animated conversation about bees and honey. Children use their fingers to draw in the oats as the member of staff prompts letter and sound recognition. Staff provide resources to promote children's creative development. For example, children cut with scissors and glue material onto card to make an owl collage. This activity evolved from a story that children enjoyed, which demonstrates how some staff extend learning. However, not all staff respond to cues from children to fully involve them in a learning opportunity. Pre-school children show mathematical understanding as they play. For example, they select matching cards and toy money. Children compare letters and numbers and talk about 'giving change' with a member of staff.

Staff read stories with children, which children enjoy. They recall the sequence of events and like to chant popular phrases from the books. This helps them to develop concentration skills and understanding. However, on occasion there are interruptions by other children or staff. In the baby and toddler rooms children play happily and show interest as they move around. For example, they like the home corner and dolls. Children press buttons, pull levers on the activity centres, and shake bottles to see different effects. Staff provide sensory play experiences and various materials for children to investigate. For example, toddlers examine dried rice grains in a tray, with containers to pour from and fill. Sometimes staff provide close supervision and support at this activity. However, at other times they are less vigilant in their attention, so they are not always immediately aware of toddlers who try to eat the rice.

Young children enjoy impromptu songs and sit with staff to sing and do action rhymes. They play in the sand tray and copy words that a member of staff is saying, which helps language development. Staff ask parents about children's backgrounds and needs when they first attend. They note key words for children who learn English as an additional

language. However, they do not actively promote use of these in play and activities. This means that staff miss opportunities to help children learn more about differences and to promote inclusion. Suitable observation and assessment procedures are in place, although not all records are comprehensive. Staff compile summaries of development, including the required progress checks for children aged two years. Staff inform parents of children's activities and suggest ideas to promote shared learning at home. They use 'Chatterbooks' which act as a useful form of communication with parents. Staff ask parents to note events and achievements, so that they can talk to children in the nursery about things they do at home.

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

Staff operate a suitable key person system with nominated staff as 'significant others'. This reduces the number of carers for young children, which promotes consistent care. Parents and children develop warm relationships with staff. Children form secure attachments and are happy in the nursery. Staff are aware of babies and toddler routines, such as sleep and feeding times. They keep a daily record and have frequent discussions with parents, so parents are aware of their children's activities. Staff know which children have a comforter and whether they sleep in a cot, on a mat or in pushchair. They check sleeping children every ten minutes to make sure they are safe and settled. Staff take children to visit different group rooms as they prepare for their next stage. This helps babies and children to feel secure and confident when they move into the next unit. Staff promote self-esteem and encourage positive behaviour with children. Young children like to look at their photographs on the 'family board', so they develop a sense of importance and belonging. Toddlers learn to sit together to share toys, for instance, to build towers with bricks. Pre-school children respond to staff instructions and like to help. They learn to be cooperative in group activities, which help them in preparation for school.

All children play out each day so they benefit from fresh air and exercise. Staff provide age-appropriate activities for outdoor play, to link with the areas of learning. For example, children dig in soil and hunt for insects, so they learn about the natural world. They use mark-making materials, such as chalk, and play imaginatively with their friends. With staff support, children learn to use steps and play equipment safely. Suitable arrangements are in place for the provision of food and drink, to meet children's individual dietary requirements. Pre-school children enjoy a caf style snack, where they can help themselves. They show a clear understanding of routines and developing competence in independence skills. For example, children know to wash their hands before snack. They take something to eat and some pour their own drinks. Staff sometimes sit with children at the table to talk with them and help. However, support varies when staff are at other activities and not readily available. Staff are conscientious in some aspects of good hygiene practice, to protect children's health. For example, they wear disposable aprons when changing nappies and serving food. However, there are inconsistencies at mealtimes when children do not have plates for their food. There are suitable routines for staff to maintain play areas. For instance, staff clean tables and sweep spillages at appropriate times. However, on occasion too many staff are engaged in practical domestic tasks at the

same time. This then reduces levels of supervision and direct interaction with children.

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

This inspection took place because the provider notified Ofsted of a significant event, in accordance with the welfare requirements. The provider took suitable action to address the concerns they had identified. All policies and procedures have been reviewed and discussed, to raise staff awareness and understanding. These include safeguarding, working with parents and behaviour management. Managers monitor and support new staff through a suitable induction procedure. This means that new staff are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children and promote welfare. Routine appraisals contribute to ongoing assessment of staff suitability. Staff work reasonably well together and maintain required ratios. However, there are some busy periods when staff attend to chores or other responsibilities. At such times they are unable to provide consistently effective support to children's care and learning. For example, in the morning when staff escort to school, there are two staff left in the pre-school room with up to 21 children. This meets ratio requirements because one of the staff is a qualified teacher. However, when one or more children require individual attention it limits the overall support available to children at this time. Premises are secure and staff are aware of persons arriving and leaving. They conduct risk assessments to check safety and to identify possible hazards. Safety equipment is in place to minimise risks, such as safety gates and fire control equipment.

There is a suitable training programme to help staff continue to develop and improve their childcare skills and knowledge. Managers identify areas for staff development and provide appropriate support. They have recently placed key focus on welfare requirements, to address issues such as the 'intimate care' of children. However, this has led to some oversight in vigilantly monitoring the quality of teaching. Managers have just begun to use a revised format for observations on staff practice. They demonstrate a clear understanding of practice aspects that require improvement to be consistently good. Managers take positive actions to address weaknesses and therefore demonstrate a sound capacity for improvement. Management, staff and parents contribute to the self-evaluation procedure. Parents complete questionnaires to share their views on the provision. At inspection verbal feedback from parents and carers is positive. They comment on how well children settle and how much children enjoy going. Parents are pleased with their children's progress and the information they receive from staff. Suitable procedures are in place to seek additional support with regard to children's individual needs. Staff work in partnerships with others, such as speech and language therapists, to help children develop. They share relevant information with parents and others, in the interest of children's welfare and progress.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Met**

## 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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY422875
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	937835
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	56
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	129
<b>Name of provider</b>	Lesley Griffiths, Natasha Weake & Abigail Gardiner Partnership
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	08/03/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01822612362

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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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