

Flitwick Pre-school

36a High Street, Flitwick, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK45 1DU

Inspection date

08/05/2014

Previous inspection date

14/11/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

4

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Practitioners provide an inviting and stimulating range of play materials and activities, both inside and outside, to engage children. Consequently, through their explorations and practitioners' skilful questioning, children make good progress.
- Practitioners demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of all safeguarding procedures. Therefore, children learn in a safe and secure environment.
- Managers provide high quality supervision and support to practitioners, promoting effective teaching and care procedures to maximise all children's learning and development.
- A well-established key person system enables practitioners to work in close partnership with parents to ensure that children's individual care and learning needs are identified and met.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to enhance children's enjoyment during story time and 'show and tell' sessions by providing adequate space for all children to sit comfortably to maximise their learning.
- To enhance the already good delivery of education, there is scope for managers to expand the monitoring and use of feedback from parents, professionals and external agencies.

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 observed activities in the pre-school and talked with practitioners and children.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with the chairperson of the management committee.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of staff and a range of other documentation, including safeguarding procedures, staff supervision documents and self-evaluation documents.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents spoken to on the day.
- The inspector viewed all areas of the building and garden used by the children.

Inspector

Katrina Rodden

Full report

Information about the setting

Flitwick Pre-school was registered in 1992 as a result of the merging of two long-established pre-schools, and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in a single-storey building in the centre of Flitwick, Bedfordshire, and is managed by a voluntary committee. The setting serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from one main room and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. There are currently seven members of staff working directly with the children. Of these, five hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 and above, including one with Qualified Teacher Status. The setting opens Monday to Friday during term time only, and sessions are daily from 9.15am to 12.15pm, with an extended session until 3.15pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. There are currently 25 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider the location of planned activities, in particular story time and 'show and tell' sessions, taking into account the amount of space children have to sit comfortably
- expand the existing monitoring process to take into account, and build upon, the views of external agencies and professionals who work in close partnership with the pre-school.

Inspection judgements

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

The pre-school has a wide variety of toys and resources that children freely access, both inside and outside. Practitioners have effectively developed the outside space to incorporate all seven areas of learning. By allowing children the choice to play inside or outside, they learn effectively in an environment and with resources that are most suited to their interests and learning styles. Consequently, children make good progress in their learning and development. All areas of learning are covered by using open-ended resources, such as cornflour and water, sand and a huge selection of art and craft items that children freely access. Practitioners skilfully challenge and extend children's learning by asking open-ended questions that allow them to predict outcomes and stimulate further investigation. By allowing children time to think through their responses, practitioners are able to move children to the next stage in their learning. For example, while children

happily play with rainwater they have collected in containers, practitioners ask them what they could use to help transfer the water from one container to a bottle without spilling it. Children experiment with a spoon, funnel and small pot to find the most effective method. An inviting reading den encourages children's interest in books and stories, and they spontaneously enjoy playing out familiar stories and rhymes with their peers and practitioners. For example, children sit inside a very large cardboard box and re-enact a story about gifts sent from a zoo. The children laugh as practitioners knock on the top of the box to discover what animal is inside. Through this, children extend their language and recounting skills in a creative way.

Although children make very good progress within the pre-school, there is scope for practitioners to further extend children's learning at story time and during daily 'show and tell' sessions by giving more consideration to the physical space used. Occasionally, children seem squashed as they sit together in a relatively small and confined area. Consequently, as children try to get comfortable, they do not always give their full attention to practitioners, which can reduce their ability to learn effectively. Practitioners accurately record children's achievements and progress as they play. Through the information gathered, practitioners plan new activities based on developmental stages so they can support children's individual learning needs. Practitioners confidently plan activities based on children's interests, and themes follow all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported to make good progress with targeted individual educational plans that focus on any emerging gaps in their development. For example, practitioners are able to enrich children's communication skills by encouraging their use of sign language. Consequently, all children make good progress in their learning and development.

Children are encouraged to join in structured activities to help prepare them for school. They match numbers stuck to the front of ride-on cars with numbers placed on the ground to create 'parking spaces' to promote number recognition. Practitioners encourage children to share resources, take turns and recognise their names on cards used at snack time. Speaking and listening skills are promoted during daily 'show and tell' sessions where children bring in special objects or share news from home. Independence is encouraged as children put on their boots and coats before going to play outside in the rain. Children are supported by practitioners to move to the next stage in their development, and consequently are prepared for their subsequent move to school.

Parents share information from home about their children's interests and developmental stage. Practitioners complete a timed sample observation on the children's first day at the pre-school, and combined with the information given by parents, they use this as starting points for learning. Practitioners quickly establish good relationships with both children and parents, and share ideas with them to continue to expand learning opportunities at home. For example, practitioners have established a library system and children can take a favourite book home to share with parents and carers. They also have a book diary in which practitioners and parents write which books children have particularly enjoyed and any extended learning, or ideas for future learning, that comes from the story. Practitioners regularly share reports of children's development and progress recorded in individual learning journals with parents. This information is also used by practitioners when completing the required progress check at age two.

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

Children are happy and enjoy their time at pre-school. They quickly settle and make friends. Practitioners gently remind children of rules; to be kind to each other, to share and to tidy up. Children happily share toys and equipment by spontaneously finding a large sand timer in order to swap 'turns' when the sand has poured through to the bottom of the timer. Practitioners are good role models, show respect to the children and are fair. Consequently, children are well behaved and show awareness of their peers' feelings. By maintaining consistent boundaries that children understand, practitioners foster an environment in which children feel emotionally secure. Consequently, children rapidly become active learners and make good progress in their development.

The pre-school has established a gradual admission process to help young children settle and become familiar with practitioners, peers and routines. Practitioners gather information about individual learning and care needs for children, and welcome parents to 'stay and play' as long as is needed to settle their children into the pre-school. Coupled with this, an effective and flexible key person system enables children to quickly build up a trusting relationship with practitioners. A key person is assigned to individual children, but if a child builds a stronger and more trusting relationship with another practitioner, the key person can be swapped to the practitioner that the child feels most comfortable with. Consequently, children feel secure in the pre-school and continue to learn and develop well. Parents can talk to the key person about the specific care needs of the children and any concerns they have. At the end of each session, significant information about the day is passed to parents, maintaining a clear two-way channel of communication. The key person effectively communicates with other settings and agencies that are involved with specific children so that any gaps in learning can be addressed. During the term prior to starting school, early years teachers from local primary schools visit the pre-school to meet the children. Parents accompany their children to visit the schools. Teaching staff also work with practitioners to identify specific needs, and this helps make the transition to school as smooth as possible.

Practitioners proactively encourage children to adopt healthy lifestyle choices. Children independently wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Physical activity is promoted to keep children fit by allowing them to climb on a wooden climbing wall, balance on beams and run in the large garden. By using these resources, children make good progress in their physical development. Practitioners sit and talk to children about the importance of a balanced diet as they select and eat a healthy snack. Excellent practice reinforces children's understanding of safety issues. For example, children take turns to be the 'helper of the day'. One of their tasks is to help with the daily risk assessment of the garden. Children take their own clipboard outside with a sheet containing pictures of the areas they need to check, and report back to the practitioner in charge, before sharing any important information with all the other children. This also promotes the children's self esteem and sense of belonging. Children are encouraged to take developmentally appropriate risks, such as using a knife at snack time to cut up crumpets and spread butter.

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

The management committee have recently updated their own knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to all aspects of governance. Consequently, all actions set in the pre-school's last inspection have been addressed and are no longer a cause for concern. For example, by using appropriate methods, managers confidently ensure that all practitioners are suitably qualified for the role they have been employed to undertake. Managers also ensure that all practitioners recruited are suitable to work with children. The pre-school has effective safeguarding procedures in place that all practitioners are familiar with. Managers respect the importance of keeping children safe, and all practitioners have attended external training to support this. Consequently, practitioners have a clear knowledge and understanding of how to report concerns and how to follow all aspects of the pre-school's safeguarding policy. Practitioners are fully aware of the importance to keep the pre-school secure, and hazards are minimised through comprehensive risk assessments and daily checks. Children are taught how to stay safe from harm by discussing who they can talk to if they feel worried or concerned. Consequently, children play and learn in a safe environment.

Managers ensure that all children's records are kept up to date and that tracking methods of children's progress are accurate and easily accessible. All practitioners meet on a regular basis to discuss children's progress and to plan activities that will move their learning and development to the next stage. Managers ensure that an effective supervision process is accessed by all practitioners so that their own professional development can be monitored and supported. Consequently, practitioners remain motivated to further enhance their already good understanding of how to effectively support children's learning and development. Practitioners access relevant training necessary to support individual children, and key messages from these courses are evaluated in supervision and appraisal meetings. Managers acknowledge the importance of self-evaluation and now strive to make improvements in areas where weaknesses have previously been identified. For example, the whole of the outside environment has been cleared and reorganised to provide a safe, welcoming and stimulating area to promote imagination and exploration in all areas of learning. Managers have introduced systems to reflect on the quality and scope of care and education delivered. For example, questionnaires to seek the views of parents have recently been introduced. There is, however, scope for managers to enhance the monitoring process by expanding the variety of questionnaires. This includes taking into consideration the views of external professionals heavily involved in the care and education of children attending the setting, ensuring practice continues to be of the highest quality.

Partnerships with parents, other settings and external agencies are very strong. Special needs coordinators, speech and language therapists and local primary school teachers visit the pre-school on a regular basis, and practitioners actively seek support from other agencies and professionals when necessary. Consequently, when gaps in children's learning are identified, practitioners effectively and promptly seek advice so that no child's progress falls behind. Parents are generally very supportive of the care and education children receive. Those spoken to at the time of inspection expressed praise for the pre-

school's commitment to consistently meet all the children's individual and sometimes complex needs.

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

Unique reference number	219072
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	963095
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	25
Name of provider	Vicarage Hill Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	14/11/2013
Telephone number	07870 773867

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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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