

Inspection of Busy Otters

Longdogs Lane, Ottery St. Mary, Devon EX11 1HY

Inspection date: 17 June 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive happy and settle quickly in a well-organised environment. They have adapted well to changes due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. For example, children arrive and immediately wash their hands to help keep themselves and others safe. They receive very good support from staff as they settle at their chosen activity on arrival. Staff have developed warm, caring relationships with children. Children are motivated and eager to learn, and consistently show high levels of interest in their chosen activities.

Children freely explore the outdoor area and staff support them to take appropriate risks. For instance, children have very good opportunities to challenge their physical skills on the climbing frame and when negotiating the large tyres around the outdoor area. They enjoy learning new words and their meanings. For example, staff introduce new language when they talk to children about the names of the dinosaurs, as they hide bones and fossils in the sand. Children use paintbrushes to uncover them, and staff point out if they have found a fossil or a dinosaur bone. Staff skilfully incorporate mathematical language by discussing the size of the bones. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve, which means all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Children with SEND are supported well. The staff team works closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that children get the required levels of support they need. For example, the special educational needs coordinator ensures that the strategies and advice from professionals is incorporated into children's individual educational plans, and these are implemented to help children make progress.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Staff communicate with parents regarding their children's progress and next steps through an online system. Parents say they feel well informed, including throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and they can see the progress children have made within their learning and development. Staff have established good links with the local school to support children to move on to the next stage of their education.
- Staff make highly effective use of initiatives to extend children's communication and language development. Children have access to books and stories throughout the session. They come together as a group to enjoy stories. Staff use props to enhance stories and encourage children to join in with familiar words and phrases. Younger children and with a shorter attention span are supported by staff, and provided with specialist resources to help maintain their focus with the group story.

- The manager and staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. Children share and take turns. Staff consistently praise children, which boosts their self-esteem. For example, they say 'good sitting' and 'well done' so children know what is expected of them. Staff make good use of visual aids to help communicate changes in the routine. They use a tambourine and provide a five-minute warning to allow children time to finish their activities when it is time to tidy up.
- Staff understand the importance of promoting children's physical development. They provide opportunities outdoors for children to plan and make an obstacle course from planks and tyres. Children develop their physical skills as they learn to balance and negotiate the course. They also go on walks in the local community with staff, and enjoy preparing a shopping list to take to the local supermarket.
- Children celebrate some festivals and events throughout the year. For example, they gain an understanding of the community where they live and community events. However, there is scope to enhance this further to help children understand diversity during their everyday play in the pre-school environment.
- The manager leads her team well. She has good systems in place to make sure staff develop their skills and knowledge. Staff have regular meetings where information from training is shared. Managers support staff to access different training opportunities, such as safeguarding and mandatory training. However, the managers' methods do not precisely focus on where staff need support, to raise the quality of teaching to a consistently high level.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff ensure that children are well cared for in a safe environment. Staff implement robust risk assessment procedures to keep children safe. All staff, including the designated safeguarding lead, know and understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children. Staff are aware who the pre-school's designated safeguarding leads are. All staff have completed relevant safeguarding training and are aware of wider safeguarding issues. For example, all staff have attended refresher training and are aware of 'Prevent' duty guidance.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- widen and extend the knowledge children have about people, families and communities outside their own
- increase the focus on staff's professional development to help to raise the quality of teaching even higher.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY560108
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10190361
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	42
Name of registered person	Busy Otters Preschool CIO
Registered person unique reference number	RP560107
Telephone number	01404 812442
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Busy Otters registered in 2018 operates form purpose-built premises in the grounds of Ottery St Mary Primary School. The pre-school operates during term time only and is open Monday to Friday from 9am until 3pm. It is in receipt of funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school employs 11 members of staff. Of these, one holds qualified teacher status, one an early years degree at level 6, seven hold an early years qualification at level 3, and two hold level 2.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Corinna Laing

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector held discussions with the nominated individual of the committee, the manager, deputy, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk and discussed how the pre-school delivers the curriculum.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager of a planned adult-led activity.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.
- The inspector looked at a sample of pre-school documents. This included policies and evidence of staff suitability and training.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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