

Inspection of The Old School Nursery

West Street, Shapwick, Blandford, Dorset DT11 9LB

Inspection date: 21 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are very happy and settled. They respond easily to the calm, nurturing and reassuring approach that staff provide, and form trusting relationships. Staff have high expectations for children's learning and provide a varied curriculum following their interests. Children develop positive attitudes to learning and make good progress. Older children show pride in their achievements as they begin to draw recognisable shapes and letters. Babies learn through their senses, expressing great enjoyment as they enthusiastically splash their hands and feet in the water tray. Toddlers begin to use their imaginations and creativity, for example to help staff build a model piano or fire engine. Children become absorbed in activities. They try hard to tighten the strings on a guitar and say they are using their 'concentrating faces'. Children develop positive friendships and show kindness to others. Older children build a seat of wooden blocks and carefully fit one more block on top, so all their friends can sit together. Younger children patiently wait to take turns when using the swinging hammock.

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

- Management and staff work very effectively together as a team. Management gives a proactive approach to using the individual skills of staff, for example with music to enhance children's learning. Children like to make up songs with staff and develop a good sense of rhythm and control of their movements. They follow the actions to a favourite song and show great excitement and anticipation as they roll their arms 'ever so slowly' and then 'ever so fast'.
- Children become confident communicators from a young age. Staff give clear emphasis to listening to 'children's voices', including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Older children begin to use new vocabulary, such as 'outrageous', and talk about a dragon that was 'captured'. Staff encourage children's eye contact and listening skills and understand how babies express themselves through babbling and body movements.
- Staff clearly value and welcome children as individuals. Children benefit from the respectful care practices staff use. Staff give clear consideration to their interactions with children to understand how they learn best and help them feel safe in their care. Staff create a calm, unhurried pace to the day and babies happily snuggle up to them for a cuddle and settle easily.
- Children enjoy singing number songs, such as 'Five little men in a flying saucer', and become confident in counting. Staff promote children's early mathematical awareness effectively overall. However, they do not always build on children's growing interest of number and quantity to help them relate this to the written numeral as consistently as possible.
- Staff promote children's understanding of the world very effectively. For example, children use a microscope to look at a bumble bee more closely. They

decide they cannot see 'the bee's sting', but say, 'The bee is soft and fluffy'. Children learn how to protect their environment and how litter can affect the animals living there. They see how snails hibernate on the 'the old lady lime' tree in the nursery meadow. Children help to care for 'Turbo', the nursery's giant land snail, and see how he explores and eats different foods.

- Parents comment very highly about staff and the nursery. They say, 'It's a fantastic setting', and staff provide excellent care and support. Staff give a very strong emphasis to supporting the whole family. They establish ongoing communication, which promotes positive partnerships. Parents say they feel very involved with their children's learning.
- Children enjoy their play and learn well through exploration and investigation. However, at times, staff do not promote all children's participation and social skills consistently well, for example during outdoor play and snack times.
- Staff promote children's natural physical progression very well. They give children time to explore and strengthen their movements. Babies gain confidence crawling and develop good core strength to sit independently. They smile happily as they pull themselves up to standing. Younger children learn how to sit safely in a hammock and gently swing themselves 'to and fro'. Older children are keen to 'have a go' at climbing up and down a rope ladder.
- Staff support children's behaviour effectively. Babies are very content, and toddlers play happily alongside their friends. Older children play cooperatively. They help their friends to make a special potion in the mud kitchen area, and suggest adding some herbs. Children recognise expectations, for example during a focused activity when they politely tell visitors, 'We need to be quiet now'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Management promotes staff's understanding of safeguarding effectively. Management and staff give a proactive approach to engaging with families and safeguarding agencies, and implement preventative strategies to protect children's welfare. Management follows a clear recruitment and ongoing support process to help assess staff suitability. Management and staff maintained regular contact with parents and children during the COVID-19 pandemic. They provided ideas for activities to support children's ongoing learning at home.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- consider further ways to support children's understanding of linking the written numeral to quantity.
- make more use of everyday routines to strengthen support for all children's participation and promote all aspects of personal development consistently well.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY445921
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10218135
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	59
Number of children on roll	94
Name of registered person	The Old School Nursery (Shapwick) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP531572
Telephone number	01258857922
Date of previous inspection	4 August 2016

Information about this early years setting

The Old School Nursery opened in 2002 and re-registered in 2012. It is privately owned and operates in the village of Shapwick, Dorset. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 7.45am until 6pm all year round. It is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs 24 staff who work directly with the children. The manager holds early years professional status, the deputy holds early years teacher status and the majority of staff hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Mary Daniel

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 manager took the inspector on a tour of the setting and explained how the curriculum is delivered.
- The inspector and the manager completed two joint observations and discussed the quality of teaching.
- The inspector observed children's interactions in play indoors and outdoors, and discussed their learning and development with staff.
- The inspector took into account the written and spoken views of parents.

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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