

Inspection of Dolphins Childcare Centre

North Petherton County Primary School, North Petherton, BRIDGWATER, Somerset
TA6 6LU

Inspection date: 31 March 2023

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 arrive eager to play and they separate from their parents with ease, excited to meet their friends. They are greeted warmly by caring staff. Staff are responsive to children and they give children the attention and reassurance they need throughout the day. Children enjoy their time in the setting. They have fun and laugh with the adults who care for them and their friends. Staff praise children for their accomplishments and their efforts. This helps children to develop a positive sense of self.

Leaders are clear about the curriculum they have created, which is based on the strong belief that happy, confident individuals are better equipped for learning. Children choose from a range of enticing activities on offer. They persist for long periods and show high levels of concentration. For example, young babies roll potatoes down ramps, showing how curious they are. Older children confidently use a range of tools to create their own models. Children correctly identify the tools, such as screwdrivers and spanners, explaining how they are used. All children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress and are well prepared for future learning.

Children are familiar with the routines and expectations. They are well behaved and learn to take turns and share. Children develop good self-care skills as they are supported to take care of themselves and their possessions. Every child has their own place to keep their things. This gives children a strong sense of belonging.

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

- Children's speech and language are very well supported. Staff are good role models. They talk to children about what they are doing and give children time to share their ideas. Staff use signing with young babies, who begin to use simple signs to communicate. When staff identify children whose speech is not as well developed, they provide targeted support. This helps all children to become more confident talkers.
- Staff know children's interests and use these to plan activities for them. For example, they place toy dinosaurs in messy play to encourage children to take part. At times, staff are not always clear enough about what it is they want children to learn from planned activities. This means that staff do not assess each child's understanding and abilities precisely enough.
- Children become engrossed in their play and often show fascination in their discoveries. For example, when using pipettes, children watch the arc of liquid as they squirt it up into the air. Sometimes, staff miss these wonderful learning moments and do not make use of them to further develop children's understanding and curiosity.

- Children have ample opportunities to develop their physical skills in dedicated, age-appropriate gardens, and they take part in forest school sessions to learn about living things and their habitats. Staff enthusiastically lead movement and dancing sessions that encourage children to be physically active.
- Young children delight in learning the actions to familiar songs. Babies make choices about which songs they would like to sing, using picture cards. Throughout the nursery, children enjoy sharing books and stories with staff, who read to them in an engaging way. Older children use the pictures to recall stories they know as they independently 'read' the stories with their friends.
- Staff support children to become independent. Babies learn handwashing routines and to feed themselves using cutlery. Toddlers quickly become toilet trained. Older children use the toilet, wash their hands and serve their own food independently.
- The nursery cook provides children with balanced, nutritious meals. Staff encourage children to try new foods and they are vigilant about children's dietary needs, including allergies. This helps to keep children safe and healthy.
- The experienced and dedicated leaders are committed to continually improving the quality of the provision. They support staff well and offer them opportunities for training and development. Staff report high levels of well-being and say how much they enjoy working in this caring and positive setting.
- Parents speak highly of the setting. They are confident their children are making good progress and they value the strong bonds their children have with their key persons and other staff. They say that everyone in the nursery knows their children's names and makes them feel welcome. Parents describe the nursery as 'homely and nurturing', and that staff all have 'caring, smiley faces'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a high priority on children's safety and well-being. They complete robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and leaders use quizzes to refresh and deepen this knowledge. Staff and leaders know the signs and symptoms of abuse. They know the correct procedures to follow in the event of a concern about children's welfare.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- carefully consider the learning intentions of planned activities to be able to assess children's knowledge and understanding more clearly
- support staff to identify children's fascinations to extend their learning even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY300144
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10276371
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 10
Total number of places	67
Number of children on roll	160
Name of registered person	Dolphins Childcare Centre Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP525250
Telephone number	01278661333
Date of previous inspection	13 July 2017

Information about this early years setting

Dolphins Childcare Centre is a privately owned provision, which registered in 2004. It is in the grounds of North Petherton Primary School. The centre opens from 7.30am to 6pm on Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year. It receives funding to provide early education to children aged two, three and four years. The centre also provides a breakfast club and after-school club for children attending the primary school. There are 27 members of staff. Of the 25 staff who work directly with the children, 15 are qualified between levels 2 and 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Den Russell

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the setting.
- The managers and the inspector went on a learning walk across all areas of the setting and discussed how the early years provision and curriculum are organised.
- The deputy manager and the inspector jointly observed and evaluated an activity.
- The managers discussed the leadership of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke to children and staff throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to parents to gather their views.

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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