

Inspection of Toybox Pre-School

The Swainson Building, Ansford Academy, Maggs Lane, CASTLE CARY, Somerset
BA7 7JJ

Inspection date: 11 October 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 happy and settle quickly. The well-planned curriculum ensures they are inquisitive to find out what activities are available that day. Staff enable children to make decisions and choose if they wish to join adult-led activities. For example, half the children decide to go to the communal garden, where they gain an important sense of being part of their community. They recall what the plants need to be able to grow and enjoy filling their watering cans to give the roots water. Back at the pre-school, children are invited to look at the produce they picked, and all the children eagerly engage. Children extend their knowledge and vocabulary, learning the names of more unusual vegetables, such as chard and kale. Staff help children to describe the differences they notice and consider what might have made the holes in the leaves. Even the youngest children are fascinated.

Through effective teaching, children learn about cause and effect. For example, young children explore how far toy cars roll on a slope. Older children describe how the wind blows their hair and say that dry leaves are crunchy and that when they walk downhill, they speed up. Staff engage with children successfully to support their language development. They narrate children's actions, repeat mispronounced words and role model new vocabulary.

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

- Through good observations and monitoring of children's development, staff know the children well, what interests them and how to motivate their learning. Good teaching skills include demonstrating, explaining and giving children time to have a go at new skills and keep practising. For example, young children explore how tools can have an effect on dough; cutters, scissors and a plastic saw can all cut, but in different ways.
- Children have good opportunities to be active and engage in physical activities, indoors and outdoors. They enthusiastically join in with their morning music and movement, listening to instructions and gaining control and coordination. They excitedly march in a line to 'The Grand Old Duke of York' and display confidence on the climbing frame.
- Children behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Staff provide effective support for young children to manage their behaviour and to understand their feelings. Children have good relationships with the staff and each other.
- Staff enable children to become increasingly independent in their personal care. Children understand the importance of hygiene in their routines and activities. For example, they wash their hands before eating and wipe their sticky fingers before going to play. They have good discussions about their own health while bathing and brushing the teeth of dolls. Although staff keep children safe, they

do not always use this as an opportunity to teach older children to consider and think about how to manage risks for themselves.

- The partnership with parents is strong. Parents confirm how well staff share information with them and work together to support children's care and development. Staff build good relationships with other settings that children attend, to work together to meet children's needs. However, they are not as proactive in finding out what other providers already know about children to help them plan even more effectively when children first start at the pre-school.
- The manager provides good support and professional development for staff. For example, the special educational needs coordinator is new to the role and is attending training with the deputy to support her. Staff work together well as a team. The management team use funding effectively, focusing on what will benefit the children the most. They are developing a sensory room for all the children to use, but with the high needs of some children in mind.
- The current committee is extremely supportive of the setting, wanting to ensure that the future of the pre-school is secure for the community. For example, they are seeking to purchase the lease of the building and are extensively fundraising to make major changes to the outside. This will enable children to freely access the area and be able to choose where they want to play and learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have regular safeguarding training. They all have a good knowledge of signs that children may be at risk of harm and who to report them to. They know their whistle-blowing procedures, including who to go to outside of their organisation. If there are concerns, the designated safeguarding lead takes appropriate action to protect children but also supports families where needed. Staff carry out good risk assessments and take effective action to minimise hazards. They take good equipment on outings and follow safe procedures to keep children safe. The manager helps parents understand the risks of the internet and safeguard children at home.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- deepen older children's understanding of possible risks and how to manage them for themselves
- extend the partnerships with other settings children attend when gaining information on children's starting points.

Setting details

Unique reference number	142877
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10307833
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	23
Name of registered person	The Toybox Preschool Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP523611
Telephone number	01963 359 600
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018

Information about this early years setting

Toybox Pre-School opened in 1986. It operates from the Swainson community building, near Castle Cary, Somerset. The pre-school is run by a committee. It operates Monday to Friday, from 9.15am until 3.45pm, during term time only. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early years education for children aged two, three and four years. There are five members of staff. Of these, two hold an early years qualification at level 5 and one at level 3. Two members of staff hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Elaine Douglas

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 led the inspector on a learning walk to discuss their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector talked to the staff, parents, and children during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager and inspector conducted a joint observation of an adult-led activity and discussed the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector observed the quality of education indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector held a leadership and management meeting, and the inspector checked relevant documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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