

Inspection of Dragonflies Preschool

St. Marys Catholic Primary School, Lyme Road, AXMINSTER, Devon EX13 5BE

Inspection date: 7 November 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 benefit from the very welcoming and nurturing environment. They arrive happy and keen to attend, settle well and feel safe and secure. Staff provide comfort when children need additional reassurance, such as looking through their family photo album together. Children develop positive attitudes and behaviour. They play kindly, make friends, listen well and learn to resolve disagreements. Staff are good role models and help children to learn what is expected of them through consistent messages.

Staff deliver a broad and interesting curriculum with a focus on outdoor learning. Children enjoy many activities within the school grounds and outings in the local community to enhance their understanding of the world. For example, children join activities with the community centre members and visit the local museum. Children are interested and motivated learners. They explore freely and join in new activities with curiosity. Staff value children's interests and choices, and join in their play to enhance their ideas and learning further. For example, when children show an interest in washing their toy cars outside, staff help them to create a car wash. Children get involved in adding ideas and resources which excites and engages them well.

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

- The quality of teaching is good. Staff know the children well, monitor their progress closely and provide targeted next steps to help close any gaps in their development. They provide challenges to build further on children's learning. For example, children work out how to make playdough tracks the correct size to run their cars along, and sort the cars by size and speed. This helps children learn how to solve problems and to understand mathematical concepts.
- Children move freely between the playroom and outdoor area, leading their play. They enjoy planned and spontaneous walks in the school grounds to explore the natural environment and to collect resources for their imaginative play. For example, children help collect sticks to build a pretend bonfire.
- Children learn new words regularly to build their vocabulary, such as through their topical discussions, stories they read and colours in creative play. Staff provide targeted activities to help those needing additional support in their development. For example, staff sign, use flashcards and provide one-to-one and small-group sessions to help children build their language skills. However, on occasions, staff do not allow some children sufficient time to answer their questions to build their thinking and language skills even further.
- Staff help children to gain the skills they need in readiness for starting school. Children learn to manage tasks themselves to gain confidence and independence, such as chopping their snacks, changing their clothes and

managing their personal hygiene. Children use one-handed tools to encourage their early writing skills, and learn to recognise their names.

- Children learn about the importance of developing healthy lifestyles. They eat healthy meals and snacks together, and enjoy lots of physical play throughout the day to develop their large and small-muscle skills.
- Partnerships with parents and other professionals are excellent. Staff gain a wealth of information about children before they start to ensure they meet their needs consistently. They encourage further learning at home, such as providing a book-borrowing scheme to support children's literacy. Parents express extremely positive views of the provision, in particular the excellent communication from staff in person and on-line. Staff develop very good links with the schools children transition to, and the other settings they attend to complement their learning.
- The strong and efficient management team works closely with staff to evaluate and to make ongoing improvements to the quality of the provision. This includes how they use any additional funding for children to have the most impact on their learning. The well-qualified staff value professional development to enhance their skills and children's experiences. For example, attending training to help them support children's mathematical development further and to develop opportunities for forest-school activities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a very good understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They understand the risks to children and procedures to follow in the event of any concerns about a child's welfare. Staff attend training regularly to help them keep up to date with safeguarding issues and procedures. The management team follows robust recruitment procedures to ensure staff are, and remain, suitable to care for children. Staff provide a safe and secure environment in which they supervise children closely. They help children to learn about keeping themselves safe, such as how to behave safely on walks and the risks of fire.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide time and opportunity for children to think and respond to questions to strengthen their thinking and communication skills even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY496057
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10304919
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	24
Number of children on roll	27
Name of registered person	Dragonflies Pre-School CIO
Registered person unique reference number	RP535060
Telephone number	01297 639329
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2018

Information about this early years setting

Dragonflies Preschool registered in 2015. The group operates from Axminster, Devon. It opens each weekday, from 8.45am to 3.25pm, during term time only. The group receives funding to provide free early years education for children aged two, three and four years. The group employs seven staff to work with children, six of whom hold appropriate qualifications at levels 3 to 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Bridget Copson

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 with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager completed a learning walk around the premises with the inspector and explained how they use this to meet children's needs and to deliver the curriculum.
- The inspector observed activities and the quality of staff's interactions with the children. She discussed the effectiveness of an activity with the manager.
- The inspector sampled the documentation and discussed the manager's knowledge of the requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The inspector took account of parents' 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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