

Inspection of Sara's School

Tedburn St. Mary Village Hall, Tedburn St. Mary, Exeter, Devon EX6 6DZ

Inspection date: 31 January 2024

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

Staff warmly welcome children and their families. Children begin playing with their friends as soon as they arrive. They confidently find familiar toys and resources. They work together to practise balancing on plastic stepping stones and take care to cross them all without falling over. Parents comment on the good relationships children make with each other over time.

Leaders promote an ambitious curriculum based on children's interests and what they need to know next. Children learn about a range of topics and different ways of life. Staff provide exciting activities that capture children's imaginations. Children learn particularly well in the outdoor area. They delight as they collect and accurately count plastic insects and reptiles in small fishing nets. They excitedly develop the activity by deciding to make 'frog pie for dinner' in the outdoor kitchen. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and promote a positive learning environment.

Leaders ensure that recent staffing changes have been managed well. New members of the leadership team are well trained and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The manager has put in place a thorough induction process for new members of staff, and training is swiftly arranged for them in essential areas, such as safeguarding. Children respond well to the continuation of familiar routines, including daily singing and music sessions.

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

- Leaders have a secure understanding of what they want children to learn over time. They assess children's current knowledge to build on what children already know and what they want them to know next. Children take part in a rich set of experiences. For instance, as part of a topic on farming, a local farmer allows the children to see their tractor, and others bring farm animals to visit.
- Children demonstrate a love of books. They cuddle up together in the outdoor reading den to share stories and listen to adults read. Staff provide regular opportunities for children to take an active part in story times, including encouraging children to dress up as characters from the book or hold objects linked to the story.
- Children make good progress in their physical development. Staff provide a range of opportunities for children to develop the small muscles in their hands. For instance, toddlers carefully use plastic tweezers to pick up small pieces of fabric and dried rice. Staff provide focused learning opportunities for children to develop their control and coordination of large movements, such as helping them learn to roll, throw and catch balls. Children demonstrate their new skills in their independent play.

- Children become deeply engaged when learning outdoors. They enthusiastically access the good range of activities on offer and talk confidently about what they are doing. Staff engage particularly well with children in the outdoor area and work closely with them to develop their vocabulary and solve problems. Children's play and talk are highly purposeful. However, sometimes in the hall area, there is less discussion between children and staff during play, and on occasion, it is very quiet with less meaningful activity.
- Children learn about healthy lifestyles. They learn about the importance of keeping their hands clean and independently access a handwashing station in the hall. Staff teach children to recognise their emotions in an age-appropriate way, such as through the use of drawings of 'feeling monsters'. Older children begin to recognise and talk about how they are feeling.
- Leaders ensure there is an effective key-person system in place. Staff understand the need to work in partnership with the parents of their key children. They gain essential information from parents about children before they start, such as details linked to dietary requirements and allergies. However, they do not always gain enough detailed information from parents to help them quickly provide effective comfort to babies who are new to the setting.
- Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is good. Staff monitor children's progress carefully and put in place early interventions to support children, such as those with speech and language difficulties. They work closely with other agencies where necessary, including taking part in local authority initiatives to support children with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide more opportunities for children to develop their ability to hold meaningful conversations and discuss their ideas with others
- strengthen partnerships with parents to provide a consistent approach to help new children, especially babies, to settle more quickly.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY448999
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10308381
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 11
Total number of places	21
Number of children on roll	35
Name of registered person	Smale, Sara Louise
Registered person unique reference number	RP515078
Telephone number	07801 535 323
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2018

Information about this early years setting

Sara's School registered in 2012 and is managed by the owner. It operates from the village hall in Tedburn St Mary, Devon. It is open during term time from 8am to 3pm on Tuesdays and Fridays, and from 8am to 5.30pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays. There is a breakfast club Tuesdays to Fridays and an after-school club Wednesdays and Thursdays for children attending the local school. Care is sometimes available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during the school holidays. There are five staff, including the owner. Of these, four have a relevant level 3 childcare qualification, and one is an apprentice. The setting receives early education funding to provide free places for children aged two, three and four years old.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Leanne Edge

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 viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The owner joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at the setting.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a communication and language activity with the owner.
- Parents shared their views on the setting with the inspector.
- The owner shared key documentation with the inspector, including evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.

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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