

Inspection of Red Balloon Pre-School Group

Osborne Road, Tweedmouth, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 2HS

Inspection date: 2 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The manager and her staff team have worked very hard since the previous inspection and swiftly addressed the actions raised. The manager has a clear understanding of what it is that she wants children to learn and works closely with her dedicated staff team to implement this into practice. Children benefit from an ambitious programme of activities that helps them to prepare well for their next stage in learning and their eventual move to school. There is a strong focus on promoting children's independence and social skills. Children quickly become familiar with the routines of the setting. This includes hanging up their own coat and putting away their name tags after their morning snack. Furthermore, children line up at the school canteen at lunchtime and learn to carry their own dinner trays to the table.

Children play well with one another. They establish strong friendships and help each other to get ready for outdoor play. In addition, they hold hands and plan together what activities they want to engage in. They laugh as they sit astride tandem bikes and race around the large school yard.

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

- The manager and staff team work closely with the local authority to complete intensive safeguarding training. The manager seeks the views of others to help her to continue to enhance the setting. This means that any emerging weaknesses are swiftly identified and addressed. Furthermore, she completes regular supervision sessions with staff and works alongside them. This helps her to identify any training needs.
- Partnership working with parents is a particular strength of this setting. Parents praise the dedicated manager and staff team for their hard work and for building caring and trusting relationships with their families. Parents are provided with regular communication about their children's learning and development.
- Children behave well. They listen and respond to instructions given. Staff read stories to children about different emotions and explore how characters feel. However, on occasion, staff do not provide explanations or build on children's understanding of how to manage their own feelings and behaviours.
- Children immerse themselves in role-play games and activities. They walk around the room with a large number of handbags on their arms and tell others they are going shopping. Staff sit patiently as children pretend to apply lots of make up to their faces. They ask staff to sit still as they carefully pretend to add mascara to their eyelashes. This demonstrates children's good imaginative skills.
- The manager and staff have a good understanding of their safeguarding procedures. They complete regular risk assessments and ensure the environment is safe and secure. There are clear procedures in place regarding

whistle-blowing and effective management procedures for allegations.

- Staff talk to children about where food comes from. They support children to understand how to grow fruit and vegetables in their vegetable planters in the nature garden of the setting. Children consistently follow good hygiene practices, including using small steps to wash their hands independently before handling food. Staff talk to children about the reason why it is important to keep themselves healthy, including how to take care of their teeth. Furthermore, children learn to care for other living things, such as making bird feeders for their nature area.
- Staff support children to develop good communication and language skills. They talk to children about letter sounds. Children show excitement as they learn about the letter 'p' and join in with a popcorn activity. They use their senses to explore the popcorn and count spoonfuls into their bowl. This helps children to develop their mathematical skills. However, staff do not encourage children to make links between their learning that help them to extend their thinking and remain deeply engaged in their play.
- Children participate in a wealth of activities and games that help to develop their physical skills. This includes children climbing over complex obstacle courses in the large outside wooded area. Children join in with risk assessments and show that they understand how many children are able to use the indoor climbing frame at any one time. In addition, children spend time using their small-muscle control to make models from play dough. Children use a range of cutters to create pretend food for others.

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 explanations and build on children's understanding of how to manage their own feelings and behaviours
- support children to make links between their learning that help them to extend their thinking and remain deeply engaged in their play.

Setting details

Unique reference number	301816
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10313673
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	20
Number of children on roll	15
Name of registered person	Red Balloon Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518696
Telephone number	07790 967868
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2023

Information about this early years setting

Red Balloon Pre-School Group registered in 1993. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time. It is open from 8.45am until 2.45pm, An after-school club is available until 5.15pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Emma Allison

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- 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 group activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of 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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