

Inspection of The Old Potting Shed

Combe Lodge, Blagdon, North Somerset BS40 7RE

Inspection date: 22 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The manager organises a broad curriculum to meet the learning and development needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The curriculum has a strong emphasis on children's personal, social, and emotional development. Staff use baby yoga sessions to provide a calm activity where babies develop strong bonds with their key person so that they feel safe and secure. Staff are consistently respectful to children and role model their expectations of behaviour. As a result, children behave well, are kind to each other and have very positive attitudes towards their learning.

Staff regularly observe children and make assessments of their progress so that they can plan activities to build on what children already know and what will interest them. Staff are always on hand to support and extend play ideas. For example, when children want to dress dollies, staff sensitively allow time for children to try to do this by themselves. This encourages children to persevere and practise new skills.

Baby room staff sing songs very clearly and use signs and actions to help babies understand the meaning of the words they hear. Babies learn to listen, imitate the actions and gain a sense of rhythm and rhyme. This helps develop their early communication and language skills.

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

- Staff support children's language development by extending conversations. For example, they talk to children who are playing with dollies about what real babies do and need. Staff skilfully read stories, allowing time to explore the pictures to help children understand, answer questions and make predictions. Staff link a picture of whale's teeth to extend what children know about looking after their own teeth. This leads to conversations about oral health, including visiting a dentist, and eating healthy food.
- In the garden, staff engage children in activities using clay and natural materials they had previously collected, such as petals, sticks, and sprigs of rosemary. The children learn that the clay is hard to push with their fingers, but they discover that it supports the sticks well. Staff tell them that the clay will harden if left to dry. The children are excited that they can take their creations home later and say they will do this by 'special delivery'.
- Children exercise their muscles by digging big holes in the mud and challenge themselves to transport heavy buckets of water in wheelbarrows. Young children sit on the ground learning to roll balls to each other. These opportunities help to develop children's physical skills very well. However, the outside area does not fully support all aspects of the curriculum to benefit those children who learn

better outdoors.

- Staff promote children's independence skills well. For example, they encourage babies to use spoons when eating. Staff provide activities to further develop children's hand coordination. For example, they show them how to use pipettes to squeeze vinegar onto bicarbonate of soda to create 'fizzies' that children proudly show to their friends. This also helps children learn to do things by themselves.
- The curriculum focuses well on promoting children's healthy lifestyles. Children benefit from eating healthy foods provided by the nursery. Staff show children how to dispose of tissues hygienically and when to wash their hands. Staff teach children about recycling and caring for the environment. Children gain valuable experiences from walking around the grounds of the estate, including a wooded area, where they enjoy fresh air, explore nature and study the seasonal changes.
- Knowledgeable and experienced staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. Staff work closely with parents and professional agencies to put in place targeted support to help all children make the best possible progress and prepare them for the next stage of their learning journey. Parents are pleased with the excellent communication and support they receive from the nursery.
- Leaders and managers share a positive ethos towards continuing quality improvement. They consistently offer excellent support for staff well-being and maintain high levels of training opportunities. This has resulted in staff using natural materials in children's play to provide more opportunities for them to use their imagination.

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:

- develop the curriculum in the outside areas to further extend the learning experiences of children who learn better outdoors.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2663313
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10332999
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 4
Total number of places	78
Number of children on roll	79
Name of registered person	Bridgwater Young Men's Christian Association
Registered person unique reference number	RP905002
Telephone number	01761 462209
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Old Potting Shed registered in October 2021. It operates from two buildings within the grounds of Combe Lodge Estate in Blagdon, Somerset. The setting is open from 8am until 6pm all year round. They receives early years funding for two-, three- and four-year-olds. There are 21 staff employed, of whom four hold qualified teacher status, one is qualified to level 6, two at level 5, five at level 3, two at level 2 and seven who are unqualified.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Margaret Dobbs

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 joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke 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 manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of an outdoor activity.
- The inspector took account of parents' views, both verbal and written.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation.

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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