

Inspection of Dolphins Childcare Centre

North Petherton County Primary School, North Petherton, BRIDGWATER, Somerset
TA6 6LU

Inspection date: 12 November 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children go easily to staff for cuddles. Staff greet children warmly and they settle to play happily on arrival. Children start to share their toys and resources spontaneously from a young age. For example, toddlers give sticking resources to a younger friend in a craft activity. Staff get to know children well and have changed how they plan activities to give more focus to children's interests. They provide a broad curriculum that helps children make steady progress overall. However, teaching is variable and, at times, staff do not organise planned activities as well as possible to fully engage children's participation and help them make better progress.

Children use their imaginations well in their play. For example, pre-school children are keen to build a carnival float and find the resources they need. They concentrate well in this activity and work together to decide how to fit the 'steering wheel' and 'seat' in the float. Babies start to make the sounds of their toy emergency vehicles and push these around a table. Toddlers show surprise when they pick up a twig from a craft activity and see a piece of red tissue stuck to the top. They tell staff 'It's a flag' and wave it around eagerly. Children like to dress up, such as to be a doctor or nurse, and pretend to make their dolls feel better.

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

- Since the last inspection, the provider has helped staff understand how to make more use of children's fascinations in their play to help develop their learning. However, the provider has not fully established procedures to monitor all aspects of practice as well as possible and recognises there are some weaknesses in the provision offered to children. The provider is keen to make improvements. For example, to ensure that staff are able to implement all operational procedures, such as record-keeping, or to support all children's learning consistently well.
- The provider has not notified Ofsted of a reportable matter, as required. However, this does not have an impact on children's safety. In addition, the provider understands the significant events that must be notified to Ofsted in future.
- Parents say they find the handover discussions staff provide useful to keep them well informed about their children's day. They comment positively about staff helping them settle their children in well and like the stay-and-play sessions provided. They feel involved with their children's learning at the nursery through their liaison with staff.
- Staff have supervision meetings and opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. Staff have developed their understanding of how to support the pre-school children's physical skills and be ready for moving on to school. However, the provider does not help staff reflect on their performance effectively enough

to develop all aspects of their role and responsibilities. For example, to make the best use of activities to ensure all children are engaged in meaningful play and learning and support all children's next steps of development as well as possible.

- Staff help children learn about keeping healthy and fit. Children enjoy nutritious snacks and meals and know they need to wash their hands before eating. Toddlers make good attempts at serving themselves some pasta and start to gain independence skills. Children like to use up their energy as they climb and slide on the play equipment. They have fun waving the large bubble wands back and forth and watch with fascination as the bubbles float up in the air. They excitedly run around trying to catch and pop the bubbles.
- Babies enjoy their singing sessions and show excitement when they recognise familiar songs. Toddlers enthusiastically march up and down to a favourite nursery rhyme. They sit together to listen to stories and sometimes anticipate what will happen next. However, at times, children sit in a large group and do not always have enough space to move around easily and follow the actions of songs. In addition, staff sometimes interrupt children's story time to change their nappies. As a result, the other children become distracted and lose interest.
- Staff support children well, overall, to play cooperatively. They encourage them to use good manners from a young age. For example, babies begin to say and sign please and thank you. Children smile as staff praise them for their achievements.
- Staff assess children's development and identify where they need to make more progress. Babies become absorbed pushing paintbrushes through the sand. Toddlers develop their coordination skills while having fun, such as when trying to hook the colourful plastic ducks floating in a bucket of water. Pre-school children start problem-solving and work out how to use the plastic crates for the body of their carnival float. Although children like playing outdoors, staff do not always provide a wide variety of activities to promote all areas of learning consistently well. For example, to support those children who learn best outdoors as well as possible.
- Children begin to develop and use their vocabulary well, overall. For example, pre-school children involved in a cooking activity say, 'That's a massive, gigantic dollop of jam'. Babies begin to repeat familiar words and are keen to sign the names of animals, such as monkey, in a song. Toddlers empty and fill containers of sand and tell staff they have made a cup of tea for them. They are keen to talk about the colours of the fireworks they saw recently.

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 meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the

provider must:

	Due date
improve arrangements for monitoring staff practice to ensure they all have a clear understanding of all aspects of their roles and responsibilities and implement these effectively	07/01/2025
improve the use of staff supervision and professional development opportunities to reflect on, and improve teaching to support children's learning to the highest level.	07/01/2025

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

- develop the play experiences and learning opportunities for children in the outdoor play areas to support those children who learn best outdoors consistently well
- strengthen the organisation of group activities to enable all children's participation consistently well.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY300144
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10371666
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 10
Total number of places	65
Number of children on roll	124
Name of registered person	Dolphins Childcare Centre Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP525250
Telephone number	01278661333
Date of previous inspection	31 March 2023

Information about this early years setting

Dolphins Childcare Centre is a privately owned provision, which registered in 2004. It is sited in the grounds of North Petherton Community School. The centre opens from 7.30am until 6pm on Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year. The setting receive government funding. The centre also provides a breakfast club and after-school club for children attending the primary school. There are 26 members of staff. Of these, the majority hold an early years qualification at level 2 or above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Mary Daniel

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The inspector and the manager undertook a learning walk and discussed their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed children's interactions in play indoors and outdoors and had discussions with staff about children's learning and next steps of development.
- The inspector completed two joint observations of children's activities with the manager and discussed the quality of care and education provided.
- The inspector took into account the spoken views of parents.

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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