

Early Birds Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Chris Mackinnon

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Early Birds Pre-school Group opened in 2000. It operates from a large hall and three other rooms in a church in Seaford, East Sussex. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00am until 12.noon. Separate afternoon sessions are provided on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1.00pm until 3.00.pm if demand requires.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the childcare register. Children aged between 2 and 8 years may attend, with no more than 36 in the early years age group. There are currently 45 children on roll and children aged three and older receive funding for nursery education. The setting is able to care for children with special education needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. There is a staff team of seven, and mostly all have level three early years qualifications, or have more advanced training.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The pre-school is a highly organised provision, and a well trained staff team successfully support individual children's development. A highly stimulating play environment, is provided and staff demonstrate exemplary skills in teaching and promoting individual children's achievement. The organisation of planning and assessment is thorough and comprehensive; and staff work closely with parents and carers to ensure children make excellent progress with their learning. Staff use of self-evaluation is confident and consistent, and the setting is developing a wider range of outdoor play opportunities.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- consider the further development of learning opportunities in the outdoor play area

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The organisation and management of the setting is highly effective and children are provided with an excellent programme of play and learning. The staff team are highly experienced, with several staff qualified to an advanced level. A particularly well organised and successful key person system is in place, which successfully

informs the planning of activities, and ensures individual children's progress is consistently promoted. The setting has highly organised and consistent safeguarding measures, combining well organised policies and practice guidance, with a high level of staff awareness. The staff team demonstrate considerable expertise and confidence in their presentation of the play programme. As a result, an excellent range of learning initiatives are currently being undertaken to widen and further enhance children's experiences. These are particularly well focused and involve the promotion of children's social skills, their use of language and diversity awareness.

Children make good use of an exciting and well presented range of play resources, particularly for creative and inventive play and widening their understanding of the world. Children are consistently encouraged to explore the play environment, and have many opportunities to adapt and combine play materials. For example, they explore manipulative toys, and have different forms of mark making. Children's responses to the planned environment are excellent, and many aspects of the setting are highly stimulating. For example, the use of 'play tents' and cosy areas where children can explore story books and have small group role play. The setting has many advantages with being able to use three rooms within the church building, which provides considerable space for expansive and expressive group play. There is also a highly resourced art craft and mixed media area, where children have many excellent opportunities to explore colours and experiment with materials. The overall accessibility of play items and attention given to promoting learning opportunities, make the setting's play environment and presentation of resources an outstanding feature. The pre-school makes good use of a newly created outdoor play area, for a wide range of physical games and active learning. As part of the setting's own action plan, further development is planned to widen the range of learning opportunities outdoors. And this is noted as an area of continuing improvement for the setting.

The setting's well established key person system ensures staff place a strong focus on developing individual children's achievement. All children are consistently monitored and have regular one-to-one learning. Children who attend with specific development needs are particularly well included and guided by their key staff, who work in close partnership with parents, individual support workers and visitors from outside agencies. Children are able to successfully extend their level of achievement, and make measurable progress across learning gaps. The pre-school is also highly consistent in its support for children's understanding of equality and diversity. Children are provided with a good range of resources and activities that helps them to understand people's differences. For example, cultural festivals like Chinese New Year are fully celebrated, with children and parents well involved and contributing to the planned activities.

The pre-school maintains close links with other play settings, particularly local schools and childminders. Care is taken by key staff who use link books effectively, to record details of children's experiences with other carers. The pre-school's relationships with parents is highly organised. Parents are encouraged to work closely with their children's key workers, and become part of the setting's highly successful 'parents as partners' scheme. Which is well used to share information and ensure children's learning stages are well known. Frequent opportunities are

provided for parents to meet key staff, and review their children's observation records. A clearly organised parents notices display area, also helps to ensure parents are included and able to contribute to the play programme.

The pre-school staff show considerable skill in the application of reflective practice, and a range of methods are used to assess the effectiveness of the play programme. For example, frequent changes are made to the play areas and presentation of play items to facilitate specific learning initiatives; such as exploring technology resources, or numbers based learning projects. The weekly play and activity plans are also subject to change and revision, as children's own interests and play ideas are explored and encouraged. The staff have produced and submitted, a detailed self-evaluation document that clearly outlines the setting's practice, and identifies areas for improvement. Frequent staff meetings are also held to discuss development and drive improvement, and through the continual generation of new learning initiatives, staff confidently demonstrate their commitment to maintaining high standards within the setting.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The setting is highly successful in its support for children's learning development. Staff cooperate effectively to plan play themes and activities that challenge children's abilities, and promotes achieving. The basis of the setting's successful play programme, is a detailed and highly effective environment plan, which includes all the required areas of learning. It also ensures children are presented with all the resources and materials they need for productive play. A considerable amount of the planned learning is based on children's interests and experiences. For example, a recent museum visit results in a highly successful learning theme about dinosaurs, involving a range of creative projects and learning opportunities. The organisation of observation and assessment is thorough and excellently managed. Staff key persons take responsibility to maintain their children's development profiles, and carry out written observations and use photographs to record progress. Staff also take care to ensure parents are well engaged with their children's learning journeys, and each child's achievement is well tracked by a scoring system, that clearly shows their progress through the learning stages

The staff demonstrate a high level of skill with teaching, and the overall quality of staff interactions with children in outstanding. The team have the benefit of input from degree level practitioners, who are on hand to apply a consistent review of the setting's support for early years education. Staff demonstrate a high level of ability with extending learning during the activities they present. For example, exploring numbers and colours during story times, and heavy and light during play with containers. Staff have considerable expertise with promoting learning, which is reflected in the quality of their interactions with children. For example, many exciting small group games and play sessions are well supported by staff who show good skill in the promotion of role play.

Care is taken by staff to ensure children feel welcome and consistently supported

at the setting. A highly successful 'my space' wall display has been established, where individual children can show their artwork, or significant items from home. A well organised range of procedures are also in place to ensure children are kept safe and secure. Staff carry out daily checks, and a well organised range of risk assessments are used to manage risk. Staff successfully promote children's healthy development, and the staff team has the benefit of a nutritionist to advise on the quality of the snacks and food provided. Children's physical development benefits from frequent opportunities to be active indoors, and in the setting's outdoor play area. Children particularly enjoy playing with balls and hoops, and opportunities for music and movement and active play is included in the daily sessions.

Staff are highly effective in their encouragement of children's social learning. Staff work well with children to encourage sharing and turn taking, and good consideration is given to promoting children's awareness of others. For example, the setting has a current learning theme called 'being kind', which focuses on working together and resolving disputes. Staff help children to talk about feeling happy and sad, and children are successfully encouraged to cooperate during their free play periods, when they build rail tracks, or explore small world resources.

The outcome of a well prepared learning environment, planned activities and skillful teaching, is that children have excellent opportunities to develop skills for future learning. The promotion of children's language and literacy is highly successful, and a particularly good example is the use of rhyming sessions, to help children explore and learn the sounds of words and letters. Story times are particularly well presented, and staff successfully encourage children to talk about what they see in the pictures and illustrations. Problem solving takes place consistently throughout the play activities, with many opportunities provided to learn about shapes and sizes; and children enjoy counting hidden items during sand play.

An excellent range of art craft activities are provided to encourage children's creative learning. Children have cutting and sticking, and enjoy doing drag painting with feathers. Children have a lot of fun during exciting group circle times, where staff act out stories, making sound effects; and children's creative thinking benefits greatly from this highly imaginative form of play. Many of the play projects successfully support children's developing knowledge and understanding of the world. Children enjoy playing with planes, cars and helicopters, and have frequent travel and transport themes. A particularly effective world awareness project provided within the setting, is the exploration of Russian culture; with children learning about matrushka dolls, tasting lemon tea and listening to stories in Russian.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met