

Taunton Opportunity Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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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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Description of the setting

Taunton Opportunity Group (TOG) is a pre-school specialising in supporting babies and pre-school children with special educational needs. The children who attend have a range of additional needs, such as autism, cerebral palsy, physical difficulties, downs syndrome, medical needs, general developmental delay, language and communication disorders and other syndromes and disabilities for which sometimes there is no known cause.

The group began in 1997 and in 2000 moved to purpose-built premises situated on the site of Wellsprings Primary School. The building has a spacious playroom, a conservatory and a large enclosed outside area. There is also a multi-sensory unit for children with sensory impairments, a parents' room, physiotherapy area and two small rooms for visiting professionals such as speech therapists. It is open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during term time for children aged two to four years from 9.15am to 12.15pm. The group offers a lunch club on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12.15pm to 1.10pm. On Monday afternoon from 1pm to 3pm and on Friday morning from 9.30am to 12 noon the group offers specialist baby and toddler groups, which parents or a main carer can attend with their child. In addition to this children and families can also attend individual sessions led by a multi sensory specialist in the sensory room.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 33 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. There are six members of staff, all of whom hold early years qualifications to at least Level 3. The manager is a qualified teacher and one staff member is completing an Early Years Foundation Stage degree course. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. The group is a registered charity and is run by a voluntary management committee.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

There is an extensive range of experiences provided in a vibrant and stimulating environment and the exceptionally successful interaction and enthusiasm of the staff ensures that all children are highly motivated and engaged. The meticulously detailed policies and procedures and very well organised documentation demonstrates that all elements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are understood and rigorously implemented to skilfully and successfully promote every child's welfare, safety and learning. The self-evaluation is extremely thorough and highly effective, showing that leadership and management is very forward thinking and committed to and capable of sustaining outstanding future improvement. High priority is given to developing positive partnerships with parents and other professionals to ensure children's individual needs are exceptionally well met.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- establishing a parents' forum to enable parents and carers to be even more involved in evaluating and improving the group's work.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management are outstanding and the manager provides excellent guidance and support to all staff and families. Systems to evaluate what is offered are rigorous and the whole staff team are ambitious and strive constantly for excellence. Although there were no actions or recommendations from the last inspection it is evident that the manager and staff are never complaisant. Staff are totally committed to promoting equal opportunities and go the extra mile in ensuring that all pupils are afforded every opportunity to do as well as they can. They are constantly developing their expertise and competently take on increased roles and responsibilities. For example, one member who arranged medical training for staff in gastrostomy feeding so they can all support any child who may need this. Documentation is very well organised with meticulous recording of medication, individual care plans, dietary needs and attendance to ensure each child's absolute health and safety. There are very robust recruitment procedures to make sure staff are suitable to work with children. Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding procedures and fully understand their role in reporting concerns and ensuring all children are protected at all times. Risk assessments for the premises, outings and medical needs are extremely thorough, which means that children are able to move in complete safety between their activities. Security is excellent with the administrator monitoring access to the building at all times. Parents and carers and visitors are always signed in and out.

All rooms and outdoor areas offer exceptionally inspiring learning opportunities with an extensive range of high quality resources, which are easily accessible to enable all children to make choices through the range of communication approaches used. The group has an exceptional amount of specialist equipment, such as standing frames, specialist chairs, communication aids, table top easels and sensory materials, which are used daily to ensure all the children can experience and enjoy all the activities. Staff are enthusiastic, committed and smiley. They skilfully create a very positive and welcoming learning environment, which considerably enhances children's daily experiences. Planning is very detailed and clearly relates children's learning and development to the age related expectations. Staff meet weekly to discuss every child's response to their recent activities, their emerging interests and any particular learning or medical needs they may have. These discussions form the basis of plans, which set out the week's individual activity suggestions for every child. There is a careful balance of adult-led activities either for all the children, or for groups and individuals, with

activities children can choose for themselves.

The setting has exceptionally thorough procedures for self-evaluation. All staff are involved and bi-annual parental questionnaires enable parents and carers to express their view. There is scope for parental involvement to be extended through establishing a parents' forum to enable parents and carers to make comments about the group's policies and practices. Nevertheless, the setting works very well with parents and carers thereby facilitating the thorough exchange of information to provide constant care and successfully promote children's learning and development. Weekly information about children's activities, high quality displays depicting all the areas of learning and daily feedback on children's achievements ensure parents receive regular information and advice. Staff understand that many of their children have had incredibly traumatic starts to life, often with long stays in hospital and appreciate the emotional impact this has on parents and carers. Therefore, they are totally dedicated and highly successful in ensuring parents have complete trust and faith in leaving their child with them no matter how complex the child's difficulties and medical needs are. Parents describe the staff as 'amazing and fantastic.' One parent comments, 'the amount of progress my child has made is remarkable. My child was unable to walk when starting here and has improved so much. The staff are brilliant and I personally have learnt so much which has helped me with my work as a childminder.'

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

Children play in a very safe and clean environment where staff provide an excellent range of toys and resources, including specialist equipment. Many of the children who attend the group have weak immune systems and adults are vigilant in ensuring the highest levels of hygiene and safety at all times. Children are sensitively encouraged to explore and learn through their individual play preferences and they can indicate whether they want to be indoors or outside. Although many of the children are unable to express their views verbally, due to their developmental difficulties and young age, staff are highly skilled at interpreting children's individual body language, levels of involvement, confidence and self-esteem. They know precisely the best moment to intervene in children's play to extend their understanding and communication skills. Staff are exceptionally warm and caring and talk knowledgeably about the children they care for. Children clearly love their time at the group and make excellent progress in all areas of learning. Their learning and development is supported by excellent systems to measure their achievements. Staff plan relevant, individual programmes for each child based on comprehensive information gathered from multi-agency consultation meetings.

Children learn about the importance of washing their hands after using the toilets or potties or nappy changes and prior to eating. Children's independence is encouraged as they sit together to enjoy lunch club. Staff sit with them and help develop their personal and social skills. Children thoroughly enjoy physical activities and being outside in the fresh air. They enjoy swinging on the swings and playing with bats and balls and experimenting with musical instruments. Children learn to

keep themselves safe as staff explain to them the importance of being careful at all times. Staff are very enthusiastic play partners and skilfully support children to experience safe risks, such as using the climbing frame. Children experience and clearly love as many physical activities as possible. All weather clothing is provided for some children who may be crawling to ensure all children join in. The high adult child ratio ensures that all children are kept completely safe and this is evidenced by only one recorded incident in the accident log. An excellent variety of healthy snacks are provided and children's individual dietary needs are recorded and known by all so that staff can support children with feeding and drinking difficulties.

Even though many children have limited spoken language they are enabled to make a contribution and express their views and preferences by eye pointing to make a choice or by communicating their likes and dislikes through their body language or facial expressions. Children, who are able to, give out the plates at snack time and pass toys to each other and help to tidy the equipment away. They learn to share nicely and take turns. There are effective strategies to manage children's individual behaviour and staff obtain information from parents about how they deal with different behaviour issues to ensure they are dealing with this in a consistent manner. Staff are very calm and show children kindness and respect at all times. Children are sensitively supported to develop social skills, such as dressing and undressing. Those children who are totally dependent on adult support for their intimate needs are treated with the utmost dignity and consideration at all times. All children receive lots of praise and encouragement throughout the morning, which helps to develop their confidence and self esteem.

Children love attending the group because they are warmly greeted by all the staff each morning and clearly have strong and affectionate relationships with all the adults and, in particular, with their key worker. They are inclusively welcomed and equally valued and loved. They learn to be as independent as they possibly can given the constraints of some of their physical difficulties. Children are helped to communicate through speech, signing, objects and photographs and staff are highly skilled at knowing which method to use. Excellent partnerships with speech and language therapists, educational psychologist and physiotherapists means that children's specific needs are totally recognised and supported in all areas of their learning and development. They enjoy listening to stories and join in happily with the chorus in 'The Runaway Pancake.' They enjoy singing and signing to action rhymes such as 'Row, row, row, your boat.' They successfully learn a variety of early mark making skills through moving their fingers in paint or coloured sand and using felt pens. Children are learning many number rhymes and use numbers and counting in their play. The sensory room organised by an extremely skilled practitioner provides great opportunities for children, including babies and toddlers to relax and experience visual stimuli, such as fibre optics, a bubble tube and a mirror ball.

The opportunity group has an excellent local reputation and a long track record of providing outstanding early years specialist provision. It succeeds in its aim to provide a rich, stimulating environment where children achieve their full potential because they are supported by skilled adults who have excellent child development knowledge.

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

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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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