

Little Cuckoos Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Rachel Edwards

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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

Little Cuckoos Pre School opened in 1986. It operates from one room in purpose built premises in the grounds of the now closed Corsley Primary School, Corsley, Warminster. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 24 children from two years to under eight years of age at any one time. The pre-school is open from 9am until 3pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from 9am until 1pm on Thursdays during term time only. There are currently 37 children in the early years age group on roll. Children attend from the village and surrounding rural area. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year olds. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs five staff who work with the children. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications, three to at least level 3. The play leader is a qualified teacher and is currently working towards a masters degree in advanced early years practice.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are well cared for and make very good progress overall in this friendly and vibrant pre-school. Staff are well qualified and enthusiastically use their expert knowledge to support children's learning and welfare. Partnerships with parents and outside professionals contribute significantly to the high quality of the provision, particularly in involving parents in their children's learning and in identifying areas for future improvements. The staff and committee work tirelessly to formulate ambitious, well targeted plans and raise the funds and help needed to ensure their success. The pre-school demonstrates a strong capability to continue making very good progress.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review the arrangements for children's snack time so that they can choose when to eat and those engrossed in play are not interrupted
- deploy staff effectively so that all children can choose to play outside when they wish.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school has robust policies and procedures, which are effectively used to ensure the health and safety of all the children. Staff receive regular training so they are clear about their responsibilities to safeguard children and the designated member of staff for child protection works closely with other agencies to protect children's welfare. All staff have undergone the necessary checks to confirm their suitability to work with children and these are updated every three years. Staff are vigilant in supervising children to ensure their safety and are especially conscious of the different ages and abilities of the children. Staff carry out risk assessments and take prompt action to minimise hazards.

The pre-school works hard to drive improvement and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. For example, fund raising events help to facilitate action plans. The staff, committee, parents and children all contribute to the self-evaluation process, helping to secure the ongoing improvement of the pre-school. Staff recognise the importance of training, which they regularly attend to update knowledge and bring new ideas into the pre-school. The play leader is working towards a masters degree and has made use of new knowledge by developing the outdoor area to create exciting learning opportunities. There is now a large canopy so that children can safely and comfortably play outside in the sunshine or rain. Splash suits are provided for everyone so that all can enjoy messy play with water or dig in the mud and sand. However, staff are not always deployed to greatest effect to enable all children to play outside as they choose and to benefit those who learn better in this environment. Generally, resources are of a very high quality and are used imaginatively to support children's learning. For example, a microscope is linked to the computer screen and children delight in seeing in great detail bugs and other objects they find. They make excellent use of their rural location to teach children about the natural world. Staff have had relevant training in equality and diversity and promote children's individual needs well. For example, they use 'sing and sign' activities to help ensure the inclusion of those with communication difficulties and promote the learning and development needs of all children well.

The pre-school has a highly positive relationship with parents and other carers. Parents' views and ideas are sought and acted upon, such as through questionnaires and involvement in the committee. Resulting improvements have included a booklet designed specifically for the children when they first start and extensions to opening hours. Parents speak enthusiastically about their children's 'learning journey' scrap books. They are encouraged to be involved by including their own observations and photographs and bringing in 'wow' slips of achievements that are significant for their child. Parents are encouraged to share any special talents or knowledge with the children, such as coming in to play musical instruments or help with gardening, and children benefit from these additional experiences. Wider partnerships are good and contribute well to supporting individual children, for example, help from outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists is obtained when needed. Children attend from an extended catchment area and move on to several different primary schools. This makes it difficult to establish very close links with each school but staff are working

to address this and help prepare children for the move, for example, by obtaining school uniforms from each of the schools.

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

Children thoroughly enjoy the time they spend at pre-school. The exceptionally good relationships that they and their families build with staff helps children feel safe and secure. The key person system is effective in ensuring that each child is well known and that no one 'slips through the net'. Children's interests are used to plan activities that they want to take part in, such as hunting for bugs and this makes them eager to participate and talk about what they are doing. For example, children wonder what might have eaten the holes in some leaves they find. As they search, they find 'cuckoo spit' and the staff member shows them the small creature that lives there. Children are heard to make comments, such as, 'we need this' as they produce a magnifying glass to get a closer look. The children's learning and ideas are extended with linked activities, such as exploring related story books and printing caterpillars, which provides a good opportunity to count and talk about shapes and patterns. Children are keen to record their interesting experiences and this encourages them to make marks and attempt early writing. Many children can confidently write their names and other simple familiar words by the time they move on to school. They solve problems, such as discovering they need a slope to make balls roll down a tube and then working together and contributing ideas as they experiment with different ways of fixing the tube to a crate. The children become active, inquisitive and independent learners, so that they are well equipped with the fundamental skills they will need in their future lives.

Staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn and they are skilled at directing children's play to ensure they make good progress. They constantly review what works well and have created a stimulating and welcoming environment in which children are able to follow their own interests. Staff are observant and know the right moment to offer assistance or suggest a new idea so that children are encouraged to think and develop their play. Children are encouraged to communicate in different ways and basic signing is routinely used which especially helps the youngest children and those with speech or language difficulties.

Children become highly independent in managing their personal care. Most can put on coats and change shoes to go outside and the younger ones are encouraged to have a go before help is given. They know very well that germs will make them poorly so quickly go and wash hands before eating. They enjoy meals and snack times, when messages about healthy eating are reinforced. They especially look forward to 'fruity Friday' when they share and help prepare the fruit they each bring in. Their interest in healthy diets is encouraged through helping to grow fruit and vegetables in the pre-school garden. Everyone sits together for group snacktime and whilst this a social occasion, it does mean that children cannot choose when to eat, which can be important for those who have not had breakfast and it interrupts the play of others who may not be hungry at that moment.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop strength and co-ordination. They climb and balance with great skill and agility, for instance, as they negotiate the suitably challenging climbing frame. They understand that its good for them to be active and they are aware of feeling hot and puffed out after running around.

Children behave extremely well as they are treated with respect and are given clear guidance about what is expected of them. They are also well occupied playing with things they have chosen themselves. They learn to respect each other and to be aware of others needs through meaningful activities such as filling Christmas shoeboxes. They begin to learn about the wider world through playing with resources and occasionally taking part in activities that promote diversity, such as celebrating the Chinese New Year.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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