

Applepips Pre-School

Offord Primary School, Millers Close, Offord D'Arcy, ST. NEOTS, Cambridgeshire,
PE19 5SB



Inspection date	20 January 2015
Previous inspection date	1 March 2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Requires improvement	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Requires improvement	3
The setting does not meet legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- Children's learning is not always maximised during every day activities. This is because the quality of teaching is not consistent.
- Assessments of children's progress are made but are not used to consistently plan activities to fully reflect the children's interests and offer sufficient challenge to promote them to make good progress in their learning and development.
- Performance management arrangements for staff are in place and all staff have access to regular training. However, supervision is not yet developed to include observations of teaching practice and therefore, opportunities to improve teaching are missed.
- Partnerships with parents are not yet sufficiently established to fully support parents' involvement in their child's learning. For example next steps in learning are not currently shared to improve opportunities to promote children's learning at home.

It has the following strengths

- Children make progress in their learning and are working within the typical range of development for their age.
- Children make good attachments with staff and demonstrate that they feel safe. Consequently, children become confident and are well settled.
- Children are independent and demonstrate awareness of their own risk and how to keep safe, such as when playing outside in a frosty environment.
- Safeguarding is strong. Staff fully understand their responsibilities in protecting children from harm and the action to take should they have any concerns about a child or another member of staff.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- develop the quality of teaching to maximise every day opportunities to extend and develop children's thinking, so that they make good or better progress in their learning
- improve the monitoring of educational programmes and assessments of children's progress, so that all children make good progress in their learning.

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

- strengthen the systems to monitor staff performance so that weak practice is identified and support is given to enable practice to improve, so that it is consistently good or better
- share more information with parents so that they know their child's next steps in learning and understand how they can support this at home.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main pre-school room and in the outdoor area.
- The inspector spoke to members of staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and held a meeting with the manager of the pre-school.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's records, planning documentation, evidence of the suitability of staff working in the provision and a range of other documentation, including policies and procedures.

Inspector

Gail Warnes

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This requires improvement

The quality of teaching is variable. Consequently, not all children make consistently good progress in their learning. Staff do not always make the most of learning opportunities to challenge and develop children's thinking effectively. For example, when children discover ice in the outdoor environment, staff do not encourage children to explore its properties or develop their thinking about how it is formed. During other messy play activities, staff do not extend children's thinking or encourage exploration of cause and effect. Nevertheless, children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, develop the basic skills to be ready for school. Assessments of children's progress are not rigorous enough to inform planning to precisely meet children's needs and offer sufficient challenge to promote their good progress or better. Next steps in children's learning are not shared with parents, which means opportunities to support their learning at home are missed. However, children enjoy the varied activities on offer and respond enthusiastically to staff and demonstrate their understanding of healthy foods and those which may be harmful to their teeth. Children attending the out-of-school club enjoy a range of stimulating and challenging activities.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is good

The environment is warm and welcoming. Children move freely about the pre-school and develop their independence as they choose where and what to play. They demonstrate confidence and manage their self-care and personal hygiene needs independently. Children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure in the respectful and caring relationships they have established with the staff in both the pre-school and the after school club. Children are developing a keen sense of managing their own risk as they recognise that it is not safe to run around the frosty outdoor environment. Settling-in arrangements are flexible which means children are emotionally well supported from the start. Staff are kind, approachable and supportive. Consequently, children are well prepared emotionally for the move to school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision requires improvement

Leaders aspire to improve the pre-school. They have recently been appointed to their roles and have accurately identified the weaknesses in the provision. They demonstrate a secure understanding of their responsibilities and ensure children's safety, health and well-being is effectively promoted. All staff demonstrate a good understanding of their role in protecting children from harm and consequently, safeguarding arrangements are strong. Arrangements for staff supervision currently in place are not sufficiently rigorous to monitor the quality of teaching. Monitoring of planning and assessments is not yet robust enough to enable the manager to check that planning precisely matches children's individual needs and interests to promote their good progress in learning. Staff work well with parents and other professionals, and consequently children's care needs are appropriately met.

Setting details

Unique reference number	221912
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	876368
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	19
Number of children on roll	48
Name of provider	Applepips Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2010
Telephone number	01480 810488

Applepips Pre-School was registered in 1998 and operates from a mobile building at Offord D'Arcy Primary School in Cambridgeshire. The pre-school is open from Monday to Thursday term time only. Pre-school sessions run from 8.55am until 2.55pm. The committee also provide out-of-school provision from 7.45am until 8.50am and from 3pm until 6pm for school aged children. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year old children. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are currently seven members of staff working directly with the children, four of whom have an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and above.

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