

Sherington Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Susan Marriott

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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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

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

Sherington Pre-School was registered in 1972 and operates from two rooms in Sherington Village Hall. The setting is run by a voluntary management committee of parents and receives funding for early education. Children have access to a secure area for outdoor play.

The pre-school is open on weekdays during term time only. Morning sessions run from 9.15am to 11.45am from Monday to Thursday and a Friday afternoon session runs from 12.30pm to 3pm. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to provide 30 places. There are currently 24 children attending who are within the early years age group. Of these, 18 receive government funding. The setting serves the local and neighbouring communities. A small number of children attend other settings such as childminders and other pre-schools. The setting provides for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

There are five staff members, of whom, three hold relevant childcare qualifications. The pre-school is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Significant improvements in the leadership and management of this friendly pre-school mean that children now make good progress in their learning and development. Staff sustain good quality interaction with children to draw the learning from play and promote positive attitudes to learning. Children are kept very safe and most aspects of children's care and education are promoted well. Effective partnerships with parents and carers mean that staff have a good knowledge of each child's needs and appropriate partnership working with others secures continuity of care for children. The joint supervisors and their staff team have adopted a positive approach to continuous improvement and are beginning to use self-assessment procedures effectively to support the ongoing review of their work.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- embed planning, observation and assessment systems to fully secure children's progress towards the early learning goals.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school benefits from joint supervisors with complementary skills, who are genuinely seeking to embrace the spirit and essence of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Effective safeguarding procedures secure children's safety. Recruitment systems are now suitably robust and significantly improved systems ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Regular daily checks are recorded and risk assessments ensure that hazards are minimised. The welfare of children has been the focus of much improvement. For example, an appropriate record of all visitors is kept, showing the purpose of each visit and details of arrival and departure times. Accidents are promptly recorded and parents notified. Practice is now properly inclusive because in group situations, individual children are effectively encouraged to take part in a positive way that supports their development.

Planning is appropriately linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage, although the new systems do not yet fully secure children's progress. Improved staff deployment means that children receive good support in order to meet their individual needs and routines. The supervisors and staff have a much improved understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to implement appropriate policies and provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. They work with parents and carers to ensure that they understand each child's background and culture and are therefore able to meet their needs and promote children's awareness of individuality. Children's self-esteem is promoted as they are offered opportunities to talk about themselves, their families and recent experiences.

Staff work well as a team and are actively supported in attending further training. This helps create a positive environment, where children feel secure and happy. Established partnerships with other providers and the local village school promote consistent, appropriate care for children. Effective communication with parents means that staff are able to work well in partnership with them. Parents receive thorough information about the pre-school and their child's progress, for example, through notice-boards, newsletters, daily talks with staff and review meetings. The pre-school has recently introduced 'Voice of the child' sheets, where staff send home a picture of the children doing an activity and ask the parents to chat about it with their child and record their comments. The committee and supervisors have a clear vision for the future and accept that the embedding of planning and observation systems is necessary to secure their aspirations. The strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision are identified accurately and the action needed is being prioritised effectively. The pre-school works well with other outside agencies, such as the local authority advisers, to consistently improve the quality of provision. For example, equipment is no longer cleared away after snack time and this enables children to enjoy the full range of activities until the end of the session.

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

Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well supported in their achievements. The supervisors have improved the manageability and effectiveness of the planning, observation and assessment system and these now demonstrate the child's starting point and clarify the progress being made. Information gathered by staff is used to inform activity planning and ensure that children are offered activities that promote their individual development. For example, photographs and evaluated planning show a memorable visit from the Community Police Officers. The visit captured children's interest as the officers explained their uniform and equipment. The officers made a radio call to their Head Office and the excited children shouted 'hello' back, before they went outside to see the flashing lights and siren on the car. The next day, pre-school had a Police Station in the home corner and the children made a police car out of a large box. Some of the older and more able children extended their learning as they were supported in making 'Police Slow' signs like those they had seen in the back of the police car.

The environment is attractively presented and set out in defined areas which support the six areas of learning. Equipment is increasingly accessible, and enables children to make independent choices. For example, as children proudly show their pictures drawn with stencils, staff offer lots of praise and children decide to cut out their pictures using the scissors available on another table. Children are learning effectively through play-based activities because staff are now confident to encourage child-led play. For example, children engage in early writing activities because they want to make their own identity wristbands in response to children's accounts of being in hospital. Children solve simple problems, such as how to measure the length of worms. They investigate whether worms will burrow down prepared holes in the ground. Children grow sunflowers, strawberry plants and beans. They construct with a purpose in mind using a variety of resources, as they make a giant sunflower for the pre-school display in the Sherington Flower Festival.

Elisabeth Sparkle is the turquoise travel bear belonging to the pre-school. She has been recently re-introduced to provide a way of linking with home for children just starting to attend the pre-school. Proving very popular with all the children, she has quick sleepovers and returns to pre-school the next day. A delightful display of children's writing on postcards tell of her adventures and recount how 'she took up so much room in my bed that I fell out'. Children's enjoyment is enhanced and their learning effectively extended because staff join in appropriately with their play and discussions. For example, as children play with play dough, staff engage them in discussion about the shapes they have made and set them the challenge of fitting the shapes into the bun tins provided. When a member of staff was caught in the 'volcanic ash' event, remaining staff set up a volcanic explosion experiment in the water tray. Children enjoy opportunities to engage in physical activities, both indoors and out, and staff are currently implementing the 'Write dance' programme to support children's physical development and early writing skills.

Children enjoy their play and achieve well because staff plan daily, recognising individual children's interests and extending activities to the next day where appropriate. Children show a strong sense of security and confidence in the setting as they are gently shown expected boundaries of behaviour and safety in the hall and outside. Children learn to play appropriately with their peers and are praised for listening to and following instructions. They are encouraged to use a range of tools safely knowing an adult is always close by and they have an awareness of dangers and safety issues in the setting. Children learn about the relevance of healthy lifestyles as they participate in activities and discussions, and the snack time routine has been significantly improved to promote learning and children's independence through pouring their own drinks and serving themselves food. Children develop skills for the future as they develop a positive sense of themselves and understand the wider world through their play and communications.

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	2
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	2

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	2
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