

Wildflowers Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY338951
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Inspector Jacqueline Munden

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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

Wildflowers Kindergarten is one of two privately-owned settings by the same provider that follows the principles of Forest Schools approach to education. This setting opened in 2006 and operates from the village hall in Kilmeston in Hampshire. It primarily offers outdoor play and exploration in nearby woodland areas. It operates three days a week, term-time only, from 8.45am to 3.15pm.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register for a maximum of 16 children aged from three years to eight years. There are currently 16 children on roll, all of whom receive funding for nursery education. There are three members of staff employed to work with children, all of whom hold suitable childcare qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The manager and practitioners are extremely well motivated and inspired by the highly experienced and skilled proprietor who has a clear commitment to them and to delivering the Forest Schools' principles. Children benefit greatly from a rich and stimulating learning environment enabling them to make excellent progress in all aspects of their learning and development. Stringent systems are in place to support children's health, safety and welfare. A very strong partnership with parents and others involved in children's care ensures they are all included and their individual needs are met extremely effectively. The setting has a high capacity to maintain continuous improvement as they regularly evaluate and make positive improvements to the care and learning that children receive and to enhance their experiences further.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review sleeping arrangements regarding the provision of individual bedding, to ensure children's health is fully promoted at all times.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The kindergarten is exceptionally well managed and organised. All practitioners have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities and take an active part in safeguarding children. Recruitment and vetting procedures are extremely thorough to ensure that all adults who work with children are suitable to do so. There are robust procedures for reporting on child protection concerns and all are confident about their responsibilities and what action to take. Children's

safety is given the highest priority at all times and comprehensive risk assessments are completed. Practitioners are exceptionally vigilant and have extensive safety procedures which are strictly adhered to, in order to protect children when in the natural environment. For example, children hold the rope to walk along the unpaved country roads to reach the enclosed wood or field areas in which they play and explore. An effective induction programme is in place, ensuring all new practitioners and visiting students quickly become familiar with the policies and procedures.

Exceptional commitment is demonstrated by the enthusiastic practitioners who are completely organised in everything they do to ensure the safe and smooth running of each session. The hall is prepared for when children return at lunch time with the cosy and relaxing sleep area with sheepskins and blankets. However, when resting the lack of individual bedding does not fully prevent the risk of cross infection. A healthy, substantial lunch is cooked each day comprising of a wide range of fresh vegetables that children devour enthusiastically. Everyone sits together at the inviting dining table laid with a candle and flowers. When heading out to the woods, rucksacks are packed and carried with all the equipment that may be required including clothes, drinking water and nutritious snacks, as well as some other useful resources, such as books, a tape measure and magnifying glass. Extremely effective procedures are implemented to ensure children's health is protected which require a wide range of equipment to be carried by practitioners for toileting, hand washing, including warm water, and dealing with injuries and emergencies. The latter part of the afternoon session is spent in the hall or its grounds. This continues to provide an interesting and stimulating environment with resources that challenge children's learning and encourages them to improvise and use their imaginations. Much of the play equipment is made of natural materials and items used in everyday life, such as kitchen utensils.

Great value is placed on developing successful partnerships with parents sharing information about the child's needs and preferences so they benefit from consistency between them. Parents are provided with a vast array of information regarding procedures that underpin the settings outstanding practice and ethos of the setting. Children with English as an additional language are very quickly helped to develop communication skills and those from different cultural backgrounds are made to feel welcome as their parents join the setting to share traditions with the children. This helps broaden all children's understanding of the wider world. Parents enthuse, stating they are extremely happy with the care and education their children receive. Some report the style of learning, that being outdoors for long periods of time provides, supports their children who learn best through activity and movement. They recognise positive changes to their children's mood and see an immense increase in their confidence and self-esteem. Parents enjoy reading the daily report displayed informing them of what children have seen, done and experienced that day. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in their children's learning including contributing to the very effective system used to record their development and plans for their next steps. There are excellent systems in place to liaise with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children who attend more than one setting benefit from a collaborative approach to their care.

Strong commitment is shown towards making improvements and significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. Methods for self-evaluation are excellent and cover all areas of practice. Feedback from parents/carers is highly valued and information gathered from the parents' questionnaire is acknowledged and acted upon. The proprietor has a clear vision for the setting. She is forward thinking and always puts the needs and interests of children at the heart of planned developments. This means that the nursery sustains exemplary practice.

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

Children are exceptionally happy and settled, which allows them to flourish and develop excellent attitudes towards learning and make rapid progress in all areas of their development. They develop exceptional skills for the future. This is due to extremely skilled and enthusiastic practitioners and the wonderfully enabling learning environment. Practitioners take full advantage of every opportunity as it arises to help children learn. They question, challenge and hugely encourage each child according to their individual level of development, which aids their progression immensely. The time spent outdoors has a significant impact on children's learning as it provides an abundance of opportunities for them to use their imagination, to be inventive and resourceful.

On arrival, children get into appropriate clothes, demonstrating great independence as they dress. They enjoy and learn through a wide and varied mix of experiences including some that practitioners create, as well as the naturally occurring cyclical opportunities linked to the seasons, weather and nature. Children also confidently initiate their own ideas using the natural resources around them. As children arrive at the selected rural area to visit for that morning they leap into physical activity. Laughter permeates through the woods as children run freely. They bound into the woods and immediately begin exploring at their own pace, only moving on to another area when they want to. As they find something that interests them they spend time freely exploring it. For example, children make 'mushy soup' in the rain water they notice that has collected at the base of a tree, adding leaves and seeds and mixing it with a stick. Children benefit greatly from being outdoors for prolonged periods allowing them to develop their ideas for play over time. For example, a den being built using logs and branches found in the woods is under continual construction and alterations. Children act as dogs, crawling in and out through the newly fitted 'cat flap' which is a curved shaped log found and fitted at the entrance. Children demonstrate an exceptional ability to use, encouraged by practitioners, their imaginary and creative skills to act out invented characters. Children develop creativity and problem-solving skills as they work out how to move a log too heavy to lift alone. They discover it can be rolled to where they want it or work together to lift it.

At snack time children enjoy time to relax and be calm. They benefit greatly from an extensive range of interesting and challenging discussions and conversations that practitioners initiate or extend at all times. Children sit absorbed and interested as books are read to them and they listen to sounds around them. Some

demonstrate their extensive skills and confidence as they recite poems and sing songs to the group. Their skills in mark making are encouraged as they find resources around them to utilise. Children use pieces of chalk to write names on fence rails and to draw pictures. Children's use of number is promoted exceptionally well. They enjoy singing songs and rhymes, such as 'five apples hanging on the tree'. Children delight in acting as apples, using a fallen tree for 'dropping off' one by one. Practitioners provide excellent strategies for children to help them work out challenging problems for counting. For example, a practitioner suggests a method to help when counting objects in a circle. Children who demonstrate a particular aptitude for using numbers are offered appropriate challenges to help them to develop further. Practitioners instigate lots of discussion about the various lengths of sticks children find to help them learn about size. When a long stick is broken they point out that it is now shorter. At 'Mud Mountain', children develop great physical ability and grow in confidence as they take supervised opportunities to experience new challenges. They take risks climbing over fallen trees, using a rope to pull themselves up a hill and lowering themselves down a slope headfirst using tree roots to control their descent. Children relish seeing ewes with their lambs and take time to look at a dead rabbit that a child finds. Through having close contact with nature they learn to recognise and respect the cycle of life. Children are intensely observant and continuously identify and learn about living creatures and their habitat. They learn to protect the environment as they recognise objects alien to the woods, such as a piece of polystyrene, and take these back to the hall with them to put in the rubbish bin.

Children develop harmonious relationships with others, through negotiation, taking turns and cooperation. They behave very well and demonstrate exceedingly good manners and consideration for each other as they play and when at the dining table. Children are learning about keeping safe exceptionally well; they are aware of following safety procedures, such as responding when the whistle is blown to alert them to danger. They are developing an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles as they spend copious amounts of time in the fresh air and learn effective procedures, such as washing their hands before eating.

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

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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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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