

Sevenoaks Preparatory School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Susan Linda Capon

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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

Sevenoaks Preparatory School was registered in 2008. The independent school has charitable status. The school provides nursery and kindergarten care for children aged from two years to under five years and is situated on the Knole estate in the Sevenoaks area of the county of Kent.

The nursery operates from two rooms in the main building and the kindergarten from a mobile unit in the school grounds. All children have access to secure outdoor areas.

Ofsted only registers this this setting for their under three year olds. A maximum of 94 children aged from two to under three years of age may attend at any one time. There are currently 19 children on roll in the nursery. The group offers support to children with special education needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. The school opens for 37 weeks a year from Monday to Friday between 8.30am until 11.45am. An extended day is available between 8.00am until 3.00pm. After school care is also available for working parents.

The school employs 14 qualified members of staff excluding the qualified head of pre-prep who is supernumerary. The group also has peripatetic teachers for music and drama.

The preparatory school is registered on the Early Years Register. This inspection did not include the kindergarten as this was incorporated into the previous school's inspection.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The passionate, dedicated, strong management and staff team provide high quality provision, where every child is recognised as being unique and offered extensive opportunities to achieve personal success and reach their personal potential. Every child enjoys regular opportunities to develop as they enthusiastically participate in the extensive stimulating, exciting activities offered each day, keeping them interested and involved. Inclusive practice is fully promoted as staff recognise the importance of early childhood, and the individual needs of each child attending, enabling them to develop and progress at their personal rate. All staff are fully conversant with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and the day to day procedures for the setting, implementing these at all times. The group continues to use extensive self-evaluation procedures to develop the quality of the provision provided, including information gathered from staff, parents and the children. The nursery has developed excellent relationships with all parents, providing them with extensive opportunities to be fully involved in their child's care, learning and development on a daily basis.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continuing to develop the key worker system recently organised ensuring all children attending receive individual care, learning and developmental opportunities relevant to their personal needs
- continuing to develop the new arrangements for assessment and planning for the younger children, using the new documentation more relevant to their personal needs.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The passion and driving ambition of the management team ensures all staff are enthused and dedicated to providing high quality care, learning and development for every child in their care. In depth policies and procedures and safeguarding awareness ensures the safety of all the children, during their time at the setting. Rigorous employment checks are fully implemented, ensuring all staff are suitable to work with the children.

Staff are fully involved in the extensive self-evaluation undertaken by the provision. Daily evaluation of the planning and activities ensures staff continue to check if the aims and objectives for the individual children are met or make any changes that may be required. The nursery has continued to develop its practices fully implementing the recommendations following the school's inspection. For example, staff now work as key workers and are continuing to develop this role. The use of Makaton signing has effectively enabled staff to develop their communication with all the children, particularly those with limited language skills, English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff work closely with all parties involved in the children's care, ensuring they promote continuity for the child. For example, they have strong relationships with the Special Education Needs Coordinator and speech and language therapist. Some staff are portage trained and have excellent experience in caring for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They give clear guidance and support to parents, enabling them to aid their child's progress in line with other professionals involved.

All potential hazards are minimised through the extensive daily risk assessments undertaken, minimising the risk of unnecessary accidents. Children are developing an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they listen carefully and follow the instructions for staying close to adults on their nature trail and know they need to dry the wet slide before using it.

The children's welfare and safety is paramount to everyone involved in the provision. Children receive excellent care through the high adult to child ratios

available every day. All staff are fully trained and the children generally receive some one to one attention, during their time in the group. The extensive resources indoors and outdoors are relevant to the individual children's developmental needs. Staff ensure all toys, activities and equipment are regularly checked for safety and cleanliness, ensuring they are suitable and safe for the children to use. Children access an extensive range of toys and equipment promoting positive images of other cultures, races, gender and disabilities. For example, ethnic dolls in the home corner and musical instruments from other countries. A good range of additional activities, promoting the world about them, are incorporated into the planning each term. For example, children discuss different family groups and learn about Diwali and the Chinese New Year celebrations. They enjoy visits to Knole Park and additional regular activities including Tumble Tots, developing their awareness of the wider community.

Staff work hard to maintain a strong relationship with all the parents. Parents find staff have a genuine kind and caring manner towards the children. They are helpful, informative and approachable, enabling parents to discuss any concerns they may have. All parents say their child has settled very quickly and is eager to attend each session. Some parents feel the provision is perfect and all would recommend it to others. Parents receive extensive information through the group prospectus including the policies and procedures, notice boards in the hallway and playrooms, newsletters, emails and school's website. They feel able to speak to the staff at any time during the day and enjoy the open morning events. All said they are kept fully up-to-date through their child's daily written contact book and half termly report regarding ongoing progress and development.

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

The consistent staff team work very well together, promoting continuity of care for all the children attending. They provide high quality, stimulating and interesting activities while following the spontaneity of the children as they play and learn. Children's artwork is displayed around the provision, including the home corner, enabling children to develop their confidence and self-esteem as they proudly show their parents their latest masterpiece.

The children are developing a good awareness of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy healthy snacks of fresh fruit and water or milk. Staff take every opportunity to discuss healthy eating, encouraging children to taste new food when appropriate. Individual dietary needs, likes and dislikes are fully considered. For example, a plain biscuit was available for a child who disliked some of the available fruit. Children eagerly discuss the red apples as the staff cut them up, observe the apple core and learn how the pips will grow if planted. Outdoor play has been extended through the addition of all weather flooring. Free flow outdoor play is promoted for much of the session, extending opportunities for the children to learn and develop. They particularly enjoy fetching water from the water butt as they competently turn the tap on and off once their bucket is full. Some enjoy filling the water tray making it into a fish tank while others mix the water with the dry sand watching as it changes. Many enjoy water painting the

playhouse and fort. The tranquil, relaxing, expansive grounds promote additional learning opportunities as staff skilfully discuss what the children can see, hear and smell. The children decide they will need a ladder or pink rope to climb the huge tree. Large sticks are used to discuss big and small, and heavy and light, as the children try to carry them and measure themselves. The children develop their own games as they decide they are on a bear hunt. They eagerly look for rabbit holes and discuss how their shadow appears and why the dew is glistening on the grass.

The staff effectively incorporate the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum into their provision, recognising their children's achievements are related to the birth to three areas. Staff meet together each week, discuss their ongoing observations of all the children, planning interesting, innovative activities to encourage ongoing progress and development. There is an excellent balance of adult-led and free choice activities and the staff are extremely good at following the child's lead. For example, going on the nature walk instead of undertaking a craft activity. The curriculum is well balanced ensuring all areas are covered equally. Ongoing observations cover all areas ensuring the children achieve all round progress and development. Good informative information is gathered from parents prior to a child starting at the group, enabling staff to build on this, recognising each child's personal interests. For example, one child loves to make collections.

The children are making very good progress as they play and learn. They are developing excellent life skills as they learn to share and play cooperatively together. They tidy away the toys and understand the rules of the group, promoting a harmonious environment. Several can dress themselves and use the bathroom unaided. They have developed good relationships with the staff team and made new friends.

The children are confident in the nursery, eager and keen to try new activities each day. They settle quickly to an activity of their choice and enjoy listening to stories in the comfy book corner with an adult. Postman Pat and Thomas the Tank Engine are firm favourites. During the session they sit enthralled as staff use props to tell the story of The Three Little Pigs. The children particularly enjoyed huffing and puffing with the wolf, developing the blowing skills they previously practised using feathers and other light equipment. Children explore a wide range of different materials including water, sand, glue, dough and paint on a daily basis. Role play activities promoting children's imagination are enjoyed in the home corner as they prepare dinner. They understand a real oven will be hot as they pretend to cook their oranges. Staff take every opportunity to extend children's learning while knowing when it is more appropriate to watch and follow the child's lead. Children have good concentration skills as they complete a large floor puzzle or the grading tray activity with limited help. They tidy their toys away and know the routine for the session. Minimal behaviour management is required as staff skilfully distract children when necessary, quickly resolving any problems through their consistent calm approach. All staff praise and encourage the children, developing their self-esteem and confidence.

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

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| 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

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|--|---|
| 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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|--|---|
| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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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