

# Inspection of Shilbottle Friendly Frog Pre-School

Shilbottle County First School, Shilbottle, ALNWICK, Northumberland NE66 2XQ

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Inspection date:

15 July 2025

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## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Good

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is outstanding**

Children develop a strong sense of belonging at this very warm and friendly setting. They are extremely settled and happy. Children develop their senses as they explore with cereal and foam. They concentrate fully as they thread cereal and share books with their friends. Dedicated staff are respectful, gentle and kind. They build wonderful relationships with children. Staff are very proud of children's achievements and provide plenty of praise and encouragement. This helps to build children's confidence and self-esteem.

There is a very strong focus on children's emotional development in the curriculum. Staff talk to children about how they feel and greet them each morning in a fun way, with the choice of a cuddle, handshake or dance. Transitions within the daily routine are very calm and well organised. Children's behaviour is excellent. They play extremely well together. Children follow instructions very well as they tidy up and take turns to be 'helper of the day'.

Staff help children to grow rapidly in independence. They have developed a 'dummy station' to help children to rely less on comforters. Staff encourage children to respect each other's choices and make their own decisions. For example, children vote for which story they would like staff to read. This helps children to learn about fairness and democracy. Children serve themselves and focus fully as they peel fruit and pour drinks. They choose where to sit and carry their own plates. Children are extremely well prepared for their move to school or the next stage in their learning.

## **What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?**

- Staff know children very well. They are very clear about where children are in their development and what they want them to achieve next. Staff plan a wide range of exciting, and often innovative, experiences that motivate children to learn.
- Children learn about nature, such as they make 'bug hotels' and take part in woodland walks. They plant sunflower seeds and mark national bee day. Staff teach children about the wider world through outings and from visitors to the setting, such as local firefighters. Children enjoy travelling by bus to a book shop and take part in regular visits to a library van.
- Staff help to instil in children a sense of community. Children visit the local family hub and take pictures and puzzles to share with the village's older residents. They go carol singing and make decorations for the village Christmas tree. Staff and children celebrate world kindness day by leaving flowers for residents to find around the village.
- Staff provide excellent support for children's developing communication. They let

children know in advance what they are going to be discussing at circle time, so children have time to think about what they would like to say. Staff use pictures and sign language to help support children's communication still further.

- Support for children's physical development is outstanding. Staff encourage young children to pull themselves up and 'coast' around furniture. This helps to develop their balance as they take their first steps.
- Staff help children to develop core strength by arranging activities at different heights and encouraging children to stand, rather than sit. They use additional funding to help to support children's movement through music.
- Staff plan excellent support for children's mathematical skills. They help children to learn about pattern as they thread coloured cereal hoops in repeating order. Staff provide children with choices, such as a 'big' or a 'little' spoon, to help them to understand size. Children explore number and count how many votes there are for each book at story time.
- The setting has a very positive relationship with the local school. Staff work very closely with school staff and health professionals, involved with children in their care. This helps to create a consistent approach to support for children, including those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding. Staff plan informative events to help include parents in their children's learning, such as sessions to help parents to learn about sign language. Staff involve children in the planning of events. For example, children help to set up and prepare sandwiches for a Mother's Day morning tea.
- Leaders and staff are very reflective. They gather views from children and parents to help plan continuous improvement. For example, staff invite children's views on how to develop the setting's garden. Feedback from parents is excellent. Parents describe the setting as 'exceptional' and say staff 'go above and beyond'.
- Leaders provide very strong support to staff, for both their professional development and well-being. Leaders and staff work very well together as a team. They are passionate about their roles and the outcomes for children in their care.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

## Setting details

|                                                    |                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                     | EY410616                           |
| <b>Local authority</b>                             | Northumberland                     |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                           | 10399308                           |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                           | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| <b>Registers</b>                                   | Early Years Register               |
| <b>Day care type</b>                               | Full day care                      |
| <b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b> | 0 to 4                             |
| <b>Total number of places</b>                      | 24                                 |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                  | 43                                 |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                   | Shilbottle Friendly Frogs Limited  |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b>   | RP529790                           |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                            | 01665 581377                       |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                 | 27 November 2019                   |

## Information about this early years setting

Shilbottle Friendly Frog Pre-School registered in 1995 and is located in Northumberland. The setting employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, two staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 4 and three staff at level 3. The setting opens all year round, 7.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. It offers government funded childcare.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Julie Foers

## Inspection activities

- Leaders discussed with the inspector how the setting organises and plans the curriculum and experiences for children. The inspector viewed the space used by the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities and assessed the impact on children's learning. The inspector and leaders evaluated an activity together.
- The inspector discussed with leaders and staff how they help to keep children safe. This included confirmation of first-aid training and the suitability of those working on the premises.
- The inspector held discussions with leaders and staff. She took into account the views of parents.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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