

Little Gems Under 5's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	101501
Inspection date	06/11/2008
Inspector	Pamela Edna Friling
Setting address	Scout Hut, Clyde Road,, Brockworth,, Gloucestershire, GL3 4JN
Telephone number	07979514822
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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).

Description of the setting

Little Gems Under 5's Playgroup opened in 1984. It operates from the main hall and outside play area of a scout hut in Brockworth, Gloucestershire. It is managed by a voluntary committee of parents. The playgroup serves the local area.

The group is on the Early Years Register. There are currently 20 children on roll between the ages of two and four years. Of these, seven children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend at varying times throughout the week. The setting opens five days a week during school term times. Daily sessions operate from 09:30 until 12:30.

The playgroup employs six staff. Two staff, including the playgroup supervisor, hold early years qualifications at level two and above. Two further staff members are working towards an early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Little Gems Under 5's Playgroup suitably meets the needs of the children who attend and enables them to make satisfactory progress in their learning and development. Children benefit from the recognition by staff of their individual needs, interests, character traits and identified next steps in learning. Children's individual care needs are appropriately addressed by the caring staff team. Staff provide a friendly environment where both children and their parents feel welcome, however, limited information for parents regarding planned activities reduces their involvement in children's learning. The group have begun the process of self-assessment of their provision to improve experiences for children and to continue to address some recommendations from the previous inspection.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the outdoor play environment and resources to promote children's independent learning across all six areas of the curriculum
- ensure there is a daily balance of both planned adult led and child initiated activities that provide sufficient challenge to the most able children so preventing boredom and associated deteriorating behaviour (also applies to Learning and Development)
- develop ways for children to make choices from a wider range of available resources so allowing them to independently initiate or extend their own play, explore numbers, shapes and patterns and make marks
- improve information for parents to include details of planned activities to encourage parental involvement in their child's learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The group is generally well organised. All required policies, procedures and records are in place, clear and up to date. There is a strong staff team with clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities. Children are safeguarded effectively through staff knowledge and understanding of required procedures. Staff confidently describe actions they will take to safeguard children. Staff carry out and record comprehensive risk assessments to ensure the safety of the children with daily check sheets signed to show all areas have been assessed as safe. Systems for the collection of children are well implemented. Systems for recruitment, induction and appraisal are in place with training needs monitored and opportunities offered. A process for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the provision is in its infancy, with parental questionnaires highlighting areas to praise and areas for improvement. Links with local schools are being forged with visits by the school to the group for a 'Zoo Lab' event and visits by the group to the school for concerts. In addition, links are extended with schools and outside agencies to ensure individual needs are identified and monitored. Parental contributions towards children's learning journey scrap books are encouraged.

The partnership between the group and the parents is satisfactory. Parents speak highly of the quality of the care their children receive and the approachability of the staff. A good range of information is shared between the group and parents including regular informative newsletters. However, parents have only limited access to daily plans, therefore reducing their ability to support their children's learning beyond the group.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are cheerfully involved in free play which stems from their interests. Staff show satisfactory understanding of how children learn and develop. Systematic observation and assessment of children as they play enables staff to plan for next steps of learning of their key children. Staff note individual interests and identify next steps in learning and development and use this information to select daily play resources for the children. For example, an identified interest in music led to the provision of a backpack containing musical instruments. Some staff led activities are planned. Staff encourage critical thinking and problem solving through interaction with the children and open questioning. For example, staff question children as they stick autumn leaves on a tree collage and join in with role play scenarios to extend children's language skills. They plan the indoor environment, selecting resources and activities covering all areas of learning. Children enjoy extensive play in the outdoor area. This area is not fully planned or resourced effectively to provide an enabling learning environment for the children. In addition, lack of access to a wider range of resources limits children's ability to independently extend or initiate their own play both indoors and outside as the majority of resources are stored out of their reach or sight. For example, the outdoor play house did not have play resources available and children were unable to collect domestic play equipment to extend their play.

Children are kind and caring to each other. Most children behave well. Lack of challenge and stimulation for the most able children from some staff selected activities and resources leads to boredom and some misbehaviour as children seek out other activities and experiences. Children develop friendships, share resources well and help each other. For example, children independently negotiate the sharing of play cameras and come to an amicable agreement regarding the model they would each have. Children develop their understanding of the world as they explore the properties of melting ice, enjoy a visit by the fire service, observe worms on the floor and collect falling leaves. Children are freely creative as they independently select items and tools during their craft activities, dress up as 'princesses' and go to find the 'castle', and explore music as they play with musical instruments. Opportunities to paint are more limited. Children count confidently to five in their key groups at snack time but have no displayed numerals to refer to within the room. Children are competent when independently using electronic toys and digital cameras. They develop their knowledge of the local community as they take part in fundraising events. For example, children enjoy a fancy dress sponsored walk in the park with a Halloween theme.

Children are learning how to remain healthy. They take part in daily physical exercise as they develop their pedalling, pushing and throwing skills in the free flow indoor and outdoor environment. Children benefit from varied nutritious snack foods and independent access to drinking water. They develop good personal hygiene routines as they wash their hands and describe how they are removing the 'germs'. Children recognise changes to their bodies as they exercise, removing their coats as they become hot and 'puffed'. Staff extend children's understanding of how to stay safe as they conduct regular emergency evacuation drills and encourage children to play safely by explaining how their boisterous behaviour may cause problems for others. Children's individual specific needs are very well met through staff knowledge and understanding of each child in both the whole group and in their specific key group, helping children to feel fully included.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There has been one complaint made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

In March 2008 a visit to the group took place in response to a complaint received regarding behaviour management. It was found that the group were meeting the requirements and no further action was taken. However, at the visit it was established that Ofsted had not, as required by regulation, been informed about significant changes to the committee. An action was set requiring the group to improve their knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations and to set in place a procedure to notify Ofsted of relevant matters such as significant changes to committee. Appropriate action was taken by the group and they remain suitable for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.