

Emerson Valley Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 141769
Inspection date 09/02/2009
Inspector Susan Marriott

Setting address 6 White Horse Drive, Emerson Valley, Milton Keynes,
Buckinghamshire, MK4 2AS

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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).

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.

Description of the setting

Emerson Valley Playgroup was registered in 1984 and is managed by an elected committee of parents. It operates from the Community Hall in the Emerson Valley district to the south of Milton Keynes. The playgroup serves the local area. Access is gained by a block paved path to the front door. The areas available for use are a large, and smaller room, a separate fully-fitted kitchen and toilet facilities. There is also a fully enclosed outside area.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 32 children may attend the group at any one time. The playgroup opens for five days a week during school term times and operates an Early Start provision from 09.00 to 09.30. There are currently no children using this service. Playgroup sessions open during the following times: Monday 09.30 until 12.00 and 13.00 until 15.30; Tuesday 09.30 until 12.00; Wednesday and Thursday 09.30 until 15.30 and Friday 09.30 until 12.00. A lunch club is offered between 12.00 and 13.00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

There are currently 62 children on roll, of whom 40 receive funding for early years education. The group employs 10 staff to work with the children. Of these, eight hold appropriate qualifications and two are working towards achieving a qualification. The group receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the provision is satisfactory. This is a very safe, friendly and generally inclusive setting where the children make acceptable progress in their learning and development. Children mostly enjoy the activities, however, planning is too complex to be effective and assessments are not sufficiently linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage to fully support children's progress. Many aspects of children's welfare are promoted well and they are kept very safe and secure. Staff have begun to evaluate the quality of provision and identify areas for improvement, demonstrating adequate capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop a system for washing and drying hands that prevents any form of cross-infection
- develop a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children
- improve planning for appropriate play and learning experiences across all areas of Learning and Development, for both the indoor and outdoor environment based on the children's interests and needs. Use the information

gained from parents and carers about children's starting points and capabilities to inform this process

- improve the use of systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child
- enable parents to review their children's progress regularly and contribute effectively to their child's learning and development record.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

All required documentation is readily accessible and effectively underpins the safe and generally efficient management of the provision. A dedicated administrator takes responsibility for much of the office work and this enables the manager to give her time and expertise to the staff and children. Current safeguarding requirements are fully met and risk assessment is in place. The setting is sufficiently inclusive and generally meets the needs of most children, including those who have English as an additional language and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children's care, learning and welfare is generally supported by caring staff and interested parents. However, parents cannot always readily access their children's assessment files and are not sufficiently encouraged to contribute their own observations of their child's learning at home. This weakens the partnership working between home and playgroup. Security measures are appropriately robust and ensure the safety of children and staff. The manager has substantial experience in childcare and is increasingly able to identify the setting's strengths and weaknesses. She is aware that planning has acquired too many layers to enable the staff to deliver a fully effective educational programme. However, there is no effective system of reflective practice in place to monitor the quality of provision and secure the setting's capacity for continuous improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children enjoy generally effective support from the staff in relation to their care and learning. Staff maintain sound levels of interaction with children of all ages and generally meet their daily care needs with care and dedication. However, children are at risk from the spread of germs because they wash their hands in communal bowls of water and dry their hands on a shared cotton towel.

Acceptable use is made of space in the large hall which is set out with a suitable range of play-based activities which the children enjoy. The small room is used for small group work to ensure that every child receives some close attention but activities are not always specifically planned to provide enough challenge and capture children's attention. The spacious garden area provides children with daily access to fresh air but planned learning for outdoor activities lacks imagination. The education programme is planned to fit into a main theme each term and activities cover most aspects of the early learning goals. However, these are not sufficiently tailored to the interests and abilities of the children in attendance to

sustain their keen interest and progression in learning. For example during the inspection, children and staff are dressed in their pyjamas as part of the 'Night time' theme. On the day of inspection, children enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and marshmallows at the snack table, but there are no other relevant activities linked to the theme to enable some children to understand why they are at playgroup in their pyjamas.

Staff gather basic information about children's starting points and capabilities when children begin to attend the playgroup but this information is not used effectively to establish plans to develop individual children's learning. Staff share the planning of the focus activity each day. The system identifies a single aspect of one of the six areas of learning as the main learning intention for children each day. This means that that only one or two aspects of each area is specifically planned for each half-term and consequently, there is insufficient coverage of the six areas of learning to secure children's progress. Planned and spontaneous activities are not always effectively evaluated to ascertain children's attainment and documented observations are not sufficiently linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage to clearly demonstrate children's progress.

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?	3
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 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

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

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action.

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.