

Old Stratford Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 219885
Inspection date 18/03/2009
Inspector Susan Marriott

Setting address Old Stratford Community Centre, Deanshanger Road, Old Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK19 6NL
Telephone number 07821630058
Email
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

Old Stratford Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1989. It now operates from the Community Hall on the outskirts of the village of Old Stratford in the extreme south of Northamptonshire, near to Milton Keynes. A maximum of 27 children may attend the pre-school at any one time, or 40 children when there is access to the main hall which the setting is able to use on a Monday and Tuesday for physical education, dance or drama sessions for the rising five children. The setting has the use of the large field and spacious car park and full use of all other facilities which include a smaller hall, storage room, large kitchen and children's toilets. There are also disabled toilet facilities on the premises. All children have access to a secure outdoor space consisting of a covered area, safety matting, play area and grassed area where the children grow flowers and vegetables.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. The pre-school opens each weekday during school term time. A breakfast club runs from 08.00 to 08.30; session one runs from 08.30 to 11.30; a lunch club runs from 11.30 to 12.15 and session two runs from 12.00 to 15.00. There are currently 71 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 42 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from Old Stratford and surrounding villages. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs three full-time members of staff and five part-time workers, of whom four hold a Level 3 qualification and two staff hold a Level 2 qualification. Two staff have begun the 'Common Core of Skills and Knowledge' training currently available. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the provision is good. Children thrive in this genuinely inclusive setting where staff demonstrate a real commitment to meeting the needs of all children, clearly recognising their uniqueness and individuality. Old Stratford Pre-school provides exemplary support for children's learning and development, ensuring that children make extremely good progress, given their ages and starting points. Almost all aspects of children's care and welfare are met very well by the provision. The setting is continually striving to offer the very best possible care and education to the children and has already identified the development of quality monitoring as an area for further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- devise a system to verify the identity of any visitors
- increase frequency of fire drills
- develop further, quality improvement processes as the basis for continuous self-evaluation to identify strengths and take appropriate action to address weaknesses.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's care, learning and welfare is substantially enhanced by the dynamic initiatives of the committee chair and the highly effective way in which the setting is led and managed. Security measures are generally good and mostly ensure the safety of children and staff. Visitors are usually asked to produce identification but there are occasional lapses in this practice. Thoroughly detailed risk assessments are carried out visually on a daily basis and written assessments are being devised for every area of the setting and for every type of outing. However, fire drills are practised with insufficient frequency, potentially compromising the safety of children and staff. Extremely effective links with the parents and carers, together with other professionals involved in the care and education of the children, enables the pre-school to tailor activities to the individual needs of children in their care. All required documentation is readily accessible and effectively underpins the safe and efficient management of the provision. Current safeguarding requirements are fully met. The setting is fully inclusive and meets the needs of all children, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The manager has clear vision for leading the pre-school forward and receives genuine support from her loyal staff team. Continuing staff development is vitally important in this vibrant setting and the resultant enhancement of staff skills and knowledge contribute substantially towards the rapid progress the children make. Staff demonstrate an exceptionally high level of knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, thereby securing excellent learning and development outcomes for children. The manager and her deputy have worked hard to conscientiously identify areas for improvement. Their resolute determination to drive improvement through development plans contributes significantly to the quality of care and education. For example, they are acutely aware of the differing learning styles of boys and girls and ensure that their differing needs are taken into account when designing the garden area. They are always looking for new ways to increase the involvement of parents in the life of the pre-school and have installed a digital photograph frame in the foyer to display pictures of the daily activities enjoyed by the children. Consequently, the setting has begun to develop reflective practice to monitor the quality of provision for children, demonstrating the setting's good capacity for continuous improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children enjoy impressive levels of support from the staff in relation to their care and learning. All staff clearly enjoy the company of the children. They sustain exemplary levels of high-quality interaction throughout the day, skilfully drawing the learning from play through asking lots of questions and making suggestions to encourage the children to take the next step in their learning. Staff do not provide an easy answer but gently ask open questions to encourage the children to think for themselves and to find solutions to difficulties encountered. Staff make inspired use of pictorial signage to guide children's use of the snack area, drinks dispenser, toilet and hygiene routines and to support their developing communication skills.

The education programme is confidently planned and superbly organised. Children are observed closely by staff and the evidence gathered is used, together with staff evaluations of general learning, to plan the following week's activities. These cover all aspects of the early learning goals, ensuring children enjoy an extensive range of activities, designed to inspire and motivate each child's desire to investigate, explore and learn through play. Staff are given time during their working week to plan collaboratively, using their observations and evaluations of children's learning to ensure that activities are specifically tailored to the interests, needs and abilities of the children. The voice of the child is valued by staff and children are able to make special requests for specific activities to be included in the plan for the following week. For example, a bright orange, flower-shaped sticky note indicates a request to make jam tarts.

Parents and carers are actively involved in their children's learning right from the start of their contact with the pre-school. Staff arrange home visits, completing an 'All about me' booklet in consultation with the family. Staff provide blank booklets encouraging parents, carers and children to create a photograph album of special people, interests, pets and activities. This is placed into the box in the book area and forms a discussion point and an item of comfort and support during times of emotional distress. Regularly documented observations are maintained on all children and assessment folders are sent home for parents to read. Parental observations of their child's learning at home are very much valued by staff. Contributions made in their child's profile and on the sticky notes available in the foyer, strengthens partnership working between home and pre-school. Children's views are actively sought at appropriate times. Children are encouraged to become critical thinkers through their regular discussions about the activities with caring, skilled staff.

The learning environment is organised in an exemplary way that helps children progress rapidly toward the early learning goals. Resources throughout the provision are easily accessible and actively promote children's development of concentration, independence and choice. The use of the indoor and outdoor space is constantly evaluated by the staff. For example, staff noticed that the craft workshop area was being frequented by many more girls than boys. They purchased carefully selected gadgets such as a children's paper trimmer, a hole punch and staplers and have been rewarded by seeing the boys take an increased interest in this area. Staff were aware that their time was being eaten up by repeated visits to the store cupboard to fetch items for the children, so they obtained a low-level drawer storage unit to make the resources immediately accessible. The children love the big diggers and lorries for role play in the gravel pit and a large, wooden, covered decking area, open to the garden on one side provides the opportunity for children to enjoy table top activities in the fresh air. On two days per week, the setting has the use of the large hall on site and they make the most of this facility to offer structured physical activities, music and movement and dance to further develop children's physical skills.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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

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.