

Courtmoor Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	109924
Inspection date	11/03/2009
Inspector	Gordon Jackson
Setting address	Courtmoor School (Youth Wing), Spring Woods, Fleet, Hampshire, GU52 7RY
Telephone number	01252 810141
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).

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

Courtmoor Community Playgroup opened in 1978. The playgroup supports the local area and is managed by a committee of parents. It operates from a self-contained building called the Youth Suite within the grounds of Courtmoor School in Fleet. Accommodation used is shared with the Youth Group which operates in the evenings and comprises the main hall, kitchen and toilets. A further small room is available off the main hall for special occasions. The group has an enclosed play area with an all weather surface for outdoor play. The school playing fields and grounds are occasionally used for outdoor investigation activities. There are currently 37 children from two years six months to under five years on roll. This includes 27 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are held every morning from 09:15 until 12.15, with lunch clubs from 12:15 to 13:00 if required. Children bring their own packed lunches to these lunch clubs. Afternoon sessions operate on Tuesday and Thursday from 13:00 to 15:00. There are six staff working with the children. Of these, four have early years qualifications at the equivalent National Vocational Qualification level 3. One is studying for this qualification. One member of staff has just been appointed to the group. The setting receives support from the local Early Years advisory team, the Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and staff from other support and advisory groups.

Courtmoor Community playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register, the Compulsory Childcare Register and the Voluntary Childcare Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The playgroup provides an excellent education for its children based on the quality of the staff and carefully thought out practices which are regularly reviewed. Overall, children make excellent progress in acquiring a broad range of valuable skills and self confidence. Children feel safe and secure and clearly enjoy the provision provided. All the staff are involved in the monitoring of children's progress and are aware of individual needs. Partnership with parents features strongly and contributes to the high regard they have for the playgroup. It has taken appropriate action on all the recommendations from the previous report. The playgroup is judged to be outstanding.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- advise parents of the need to keep their child with them, and not to run ahead, when walking through the main school grounds, especially near the car park, when coming to and leaving the playgroup

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The playgroup is fortunate in having an active committee of eight parents to support an experienced manager and a strong team of dedicated and enthusiastic staff. The recommendations from the last report have all been met. The activities provided for the children are carefully matched to the aims and principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are monitored at regular intervals. Work is well planned and detailed short and long term plans exist. Staff are encouraged to undertake training and rotas ensure that staff experience a range of activities which contribute to their own development and motivation. Good records are kept of children's progress. These are shared with parents, who are encouraged to be part of this monitoring progress. Safeguarding issues, safety reviews and risk assessments are undertaken at appropriate times and action taken accordingly. The building forms a secure facility. A strong focus is given to health and hygiene, with the toilets being checked frequently in each session. Most of the staff have had training in First Aid. Fire drills are undertaken each term and the children are given clear instructions of what to do at such times. The manager has a firm understanding of the need for effective reviews of all that the playgroup undertakes and identifies where action is required. For example, during each session regular tallies are taken of the frequency at which children visit certain activities. Reviews are done in collaboration with her staff, the committee and parents who are all asked for and encouraged to contribute their opinions. Clear attention is given to devising required policies and guidance, relating to health and safety and educational aspects and these are kept under review. The manager aided by her staff has conducted a robust self evaluation of all aspects of the playgroup's organisation and planning and are instigating modifications where required.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

All staff have a very thorough understanding of the importance of creating a safe and welcoming environment. As a result, children entering the unit for each session clearly feel at home and quickly settle to productive activities which have been carefully set out round the room. At such times all the staff are active in ensuring that no child is unattended or on their own. Any signs of distress are quickly resolved by hugs from caring staff. The children clearly have good relationships with all of the staff and will readily move from one activity area to another. Health aspects are given a high priority with children being reminded of the need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating food. The toilet areas are regularly checked for cleanliness, liquid soap supplies and paper towels. Supplies of drinking water are always available and milk on request.

The playgroup has children from a variety of backgrounds and with differing needs. However, at the present time they are all identified as 'able bodied', so this limits the children's experiences and understanding of the needs of others.

Children feel safe in the knowledge that they can trust staff and even at this young

age have a good understanding of what will make them healthy. Plans exist for the children to grow their own vegetables later in the year and to enjoy eating their own fresh produce. Parents are asked to provide healthy snacks for their children and staff will talk about the importance of having such foods. Snack times are conducted in an efficient and friendly manner with no undue pressure placed on the children and they observe good table manners.

The school's drive to develop independence and raise children's self-esteem really works, with children continually growing in confidence and being prepared to have a go at everything. Children are very friendly and cooperate exceptionally well with the staff and with each other. They respond particularly well to opportunities to make choices and plan what they will be doing during the day. The free-flow of activities enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning and development. The outside area is suitable for use in most weathers and is popular with the children. It has been particularly well planned with a good selection of toys and equipment and activities which contribute to the areas of learning and development.

There is a strong commitment to learning through play and curriculum planning is exceptional with thorough short and long term planning. This planning ensures provision for children to develop their horizons in terms of knowledge and understanding of the world and how they can represent and record what they see creatively. For example, a variety of wall charts are on display, the reading corner is well stocked and sessions end with a story, singing and movement activities. All help to develop an awareness of the world in addition to memory skills as well as promoting a joy of music. Planning also aims to create opportunities for the children to be made more aware of other cultures. For example, celebrations of world religious festivals and a recent focus on Chinese food, when the children had the opportunity of using chopsticks.

The manager and her staff regularly review and evaluate all procedures and the values of activities provided and look for new learning opportunities. They share a common goal in planning exciting learning experiences based on the children's interests and enthusiasms. Staff carry out informal observation of activities whilst children are at play. These observations are then jointly discussed with other staff and form the basis for the entering of information in the profile document for each child. Such information is regularly shared with parents and they are encouraged to contribute. A system exists by which parents can inform staff of useful information relating to their child by a daily 'sharing' board. This can form a very useful starting point for verbal interaction between staff and children.

Parents are also encouraged to play a role in the operation of the playgroup. Their active involvement is indicated by the opportunity for parent helpers to participate in the sessions, to help with the various and successful fund raising activities undertaken and by the fact that the responsibility for the playgroup is with the committee of eight parents. Apart from observations of incidental safety issues which were largely unique to the day and happened outside the playgroup facility, it provides a very safe and secure environment.

A comment from a parent effectively sums up their regard for the playgroup: 'I do not know what they can do to improve'.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

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?	1
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?	1
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?	1

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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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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 have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.