

St Oswalds Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	206874
Inspection date	16/03/2009
Inspector	Joanne Harvey

Setting address	St Oswalds School, Mayfield Road, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 1AS
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises
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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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

Description of the setting

St Oswalds Playgroup opened in 1987. It operates in one room attached to the local school. The group have access to toilet and hand washing facilities adjacent to the room and two outdoor play areas. The playgroup is situated in Ashbourne on the borders of Derbyshire and Staffordshire and takes children from both areas. The setting is registered to receive Nursery Education Funding and currently 36 children are in receipt of this. The setting is on the Early Years Childcare Register and is registered to take a maximum of 20 children in the early years age group at any one time. There are 46 children currently on roll aged from two years to under five years.

The setting, which operates in term times only, opens every morning from 09.00 to 12.00 and in the afternoons from 12.45 to 15.15 on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. The setting caters for children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The setting is fully accessible for adults and children, including those with disabilities via a ramp to one of the doors. Seven part-time staff work with the children. Five have a recognised qualification at level 3 or above and two are currently enrolled on a level 3 course. The setting receives support from the Derbyshire Early Years Development Officer (DEYDO) and works in partnership with the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of provision is outstanding. Exceptional leadership from the setting manager, supported by an enthusiastic and committed team, ensures that provision for both children's welfare and their learning and development is outstanding. Children's needs are met exceedingly well because provision is tailored to meet each child's requirements and everyone is fully included in all that the setting has to offer. The high aspirations of all who work in the setting have ensured that the setting has continued to go from strength to strength since the last inspection, demonstrating an excellent capacity to continue to improve in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend the use of information and communication technology to improve outcomes for children in all areas of learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management of the early years provision are outstanding. The manager demonstrates high levels of energy and enthusiasm in her leadership of the setting. Her approach and vision are infectious and it is clear that all adults are united behind her in their drive to collaborate together to continue to improve outcomes for children. All have extremely high expectations for children's learning and for their welfare. These high expectations are met consistently because of the adherence to carefully thought out systems for checking that this continues to be the case. The close attention paid to the detail of everything that happens throughout a session means that everyone is absolutely clear about their roles and responsibilities. This ensures not only that the setting runs smoothly every day but that outcomes for children are central to everyone's work.

All the required policies meet and often go beyond requirements, including arrangements for safeguarding children. They are regularly monitored and reviewed and tailored specifically to meet the needs of the children in this setting and to make sure that everyone, whatever their need, is fully integrated and included. All staff know the setting's strengths extremely well because they are all involved in evaluating them in a meaningful way. The excellent methods of continuous reflection and self-evaluation quickly identify any improvement actions which might be required and everyone plays their part in action planning and making sure that identified goals are achieved. For example, close monitoring and analysis of children's progress in all areas of learning identified a relative weakness in their communication, language and literacy skills. This area has, therefore, become a focus for the current topic theme, with additional opportunities being offered to develop these areas. That there is no complacency is evident from the excellent way leaders have responded to the recommendations from the previous inspection which have been met in full. In some cases, such as the development of the outdoor provision and the knowledge and implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, their action has resulted in exemplary practice.

The manager leads very well by example. She demonstrates a passion for education in the early years and has an excellent understanding of how young children learn and of how to plan learning opportunities and organise the setting so that children progress very well and are extremely happy and well cared for. Staff receive ongoing training so that they understand and share her ethos and vision. This ensures that everyone is up to date and skilled in meeting and often exceeding all requirements. The manager also works with children in the local school. She is well known to parents, children and staff and this means she is able to use these valuable relationships to ensure a seamless transition for them as they move on to the next stage of their education. Her excellent knowledge of their abilities and the information gathered about their progress are valued and shared with all stakeholders to ensure seamless transition to school and continuity in children's learning. Other positive and beneficial partnerships are formed and utilised for the benefit of the children. For example, taking advantage of everything that the Derbyshire Early Years Development Officer has to offer has helped

considerably with training and the careful development of systems for self-evaluation.

Partnerships with parents are particularly strong. The response of those interviewed at the time of the inspection was overwhelmingly supportive about the setting's provision for the learning, development and welfare of their children. They were unanimous that their children were happy to come to playgroup and one volunteered that the only time her daughter cried was on the days that she did not attend. They also feel well included and that their views are listened to and acted upon. They say they are well informed about their children's progress. In return for the high quality provision they are happy to offer their practical support, for example, in the major contribution they have made in helping to develop the outdoor provision to include a 'Global Garden'.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

A key strength of the provision is the outstanding way in which learning opportunities are planned. All planning is carefully based on the ongoing and careful assessments carried out by all adults. At regular planning and evaluation meetings, adults review the progress of each child, identify possible emerging gaps in learning and decide on how best to fill these. The assessments and photographs collected build a valuable and detailed profile of each child which the children call their 'scrapbook'. This is shared regularly with parents and carers whether at regular formal meetings or on an informal and sometimes daily basis. Parents' contributions to this profile are valued right from the start as a basis for the earliest assessments and then to add valuable insight into children's developing preferences and ongoing achievements at home. There is an extremely well established key worker system. This means that there is always someone on hand with an extremely detailed knowledge of children's needs and interests and who enjoys a particularly close relationship, not only with individual children, but with their parents and carers. The information about individual children is also collated and analysed to give an overview of achievements in all areas of learning across the setting. This gives staff a strong indicator of the setting's strengths and areas where additional development may be required. In this way for example, leaders have identified that opportunities to support children's learning through the use of information and communication technology are relatively underdeveloped.

The thorough planning values all areas of learning equally whether they are to be experienced indoors or outdoors. It is extremely well focused on the desired learning outcomes for children and for example includes helpful prompts about appropriate questions to ask to extend learning further. A great deal of time is spent in the excellent outdoor area where children are encouraged and are delighted to be active. The setting was recommended to further develop this area at the time of the last inspection. In addition to the existing hard and soft play areas, sensory garden and abundant natural and man made resources, there is now a 'Global Garden' which includes international themed areas including a Japanese garden which can be used for quiet reflection, an African garden, currently offering the opportunity to explore the literary theme of 'Handa's Surprise' and a polar region.

Learning opportunities are presented to children through continuous and integrated themes. These ensure that children have lots of valuable opportunities to revisit and practise what they are learning in many different ways and always through purposeful play. They have so much fun they do not realise how hard they are working and as a result make rapid progress. For example, through the topic 'Sunflowers' children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through examining and growing seeds and their problem solving and reasoning skills through counting, weighing and measuring them. Their speaking and listening, creative and fine motor skills are also developed extremely well. For example, they evaluate a Van Gogh painting, listen to and tell stories on a related theme and make number lines and Mother's Day cards for which they select their own resources, mastering cutting and sticking skills. Children's speaking and listening skills are consistently well developed by the incisive questioning of adults working alongside them who are also skilled at standing back and letting children experiment with their own ideas. Their understanding of religions and cultures is developed extremely well as they share stories and get involved in role play, for example when they make and dress as a Chinese dragon to sing songs and learn traditional dances. The many first hand experiences to help out and take responsibility ensure that children's contribution to the community is strong. They look after themselves, each other and resources. They are proud to raise money for others less fortunate and have a strong sense of the importance of their place in the local community through regular trips to the local shops, the fire station and the library. They enjoy helpful chats with people in the community, such as the fire service and health professionals who help them learn to keep themselves safe and well. These regular excursions also add considerably to children's understanding of issues such as road safety and 'stranger danger'.

Providing for the outstanding welfare of children is of central importance to the ethos of the setting. Excellent caring relationships are formed, and indeed during the inspection, children were seen to be happy to go to any adult to share their interests or worries. Importantly, adults ensure children develop the skills to be able to think through and sort out their own problems, giving them skills which help to prepare them extremely well for the future. Highly rigorous routines to ensure safety, health and hygiene are adhered to by everyone. Areas for food preparation are kept spotlessly clean and children replicate this at snack times when they help themselves to healthy fruit and other healthy snacks and carefully pour their own drinks. They do not often have to be reminded to wash their hands before and after eating. They use equipment safely and conduct themselves sensibly around the setting where their behaviour is exemplary. They demonstrate a remarkable ability to cooperate and take turns because adults have modelled this for them consistently and helped them to understand the benefits of achieving their high expectations for their behaviour. They quickly become confident well rounded young people who are independent and make their own sensible choices because adults have taken care to encourage them to direct their own learning.

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?	1
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?	1

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?	1
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?	1
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 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 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.