

Stilton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 221872
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Inspector Ann Taylor

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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 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

Stilton Playgroup opened in 1969. It operates from mobile buildings within the grounds of Stilton Primary School. The group serves the local, rural community. The playgroup is registered to care for a maximum of 25 children aged 2 to 5 years of age at any one time. There are currently 40 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:45 each morning and 12:45 to 15:15 Monday to Thursday afternoons. The playgroup is placed on the Early Years Register. It is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Five staff work with the children. All of the staff have or are working towards, early years qualifications to NVQ level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority's Early Years Foundation Stage Adviser. Access for those with restricted mobility is satisfactory as there is a ramp. The playgroup is moving into the school building in 2010. The inspection took place during a morning when the children visited the next door school for activities in the hall and a shared playtime. This was part of a programme to help them settle in when they move in September.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The quality of provision at Stilton Playgroup is good. It meets the needs of the early years children well. They make good progress in their learning because staff are skilled in talking to and questioning children, getting them to think for themselves and then assessing how well they are doing. Children are cared for and looked after well. Every child is fully included in the activities because the playgroup is led effectively. It has improved its provision since the previous inspection and is well placed to continue to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve further children's knowledge of letter sounds and the way letters blend together to form words and evaluate how effective these sessions are enabling children to meet the Early Learning Goals
- improve parents levels of involvement in and understanding of their children's learning

The leadership and management of the early years provision

This is a successful playgroup because the strong team of well trained staff is keen to improve further. Whilst the current accommodation has limitations there are firm plans to move and staff have ensured that the current situation has not compromised the quality of provision offered to the children. For example, the way that children's progress is checked and recorded, and weaker areas identified for further work, has improved significantly since the last inspection. The manager has

identified astutely the playgroup's strengths and areas for development. Staff have been recently trained in child protection procedures and this has resulted in a better understanding and more stringent preventative work. Children are kept safe and secure because there are clear policies in place and staff are well trained, for example in first aid. Beneficial relationships with the next door school ensure there is a good programme of activities to help the children happily adapt to the move from playgroup to reception class. Day-to-day relationships with parents are strong and parents are supportive of the playgroups' work. However, the playgroup recognises it needs to work harder and be more proactive in involving parents in their children's learning. Suggestions for parental meetings to discuss their children's progress have elicited little response. The staff also recognise more work is needed so that parents and the playgroup are working in a closer partnership and sharing more in the interests of the children's development. Some parents spoken to say they would like to know more about what their child has been learning about each week so they can talk about it with them at home.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children achieve well because they receive good support. They develop basic skills, such as counting and letter recognition, well. This is because staff use many opportunities, through carefully planned activities, to develop children's pencil control, ensure they learn to write their name, to count, recognise colours and to start to add numbers together. As an effective way of preparing the oldest ones for school, they all found their own work books as soon as they arrived in the morning. With careful staff support and challenge, they made good progress as they took part in counting, letter and colouring activities. Ongoing assessment is used well as staff recorded key points confirming the depth of children's knowledge and understanding. This good learning does not yet extend to a structured programme to teach children about letter sounds and how words blend together. Staff have been trained in how to deliver a phonics programme, and this will form part of a new approach from next term. However staff recognise more training is needed, particularly in seeing others deliver the programme so they can learn from best practice. They also realise that, once in place, they will need to check how well it is working. The manager is working positively to develop further the relationships with the school as a means of sharing knowledge in this respect. Children's behaviour is good and is largely managed well. Occasionally, when children are not fully occupied, their behaviour starts to get silly and they do not listen as well as they should. There is scope to use activities such as looking through books and singing songs and action rhymes, as purposeful opportunities to promote their learning and engage them more. Some good work was seen on helping children to listen, when they were asked to be silent, to hear a bird song and in so doing, they also heard the clip of horses' hooves.

Children develop their physical skills well, for example, when running in the school hall, and they are beginning to understand the effect that exercise has on their heart and how it makes them feel hot. This is because staff take the opportunity to talk to them about how their heart is beating faster. Much enjoyment was evident, (as it also was with the parachute games with reception children) when children played 'Greedy Gorilla' and staff used the opportunities this provided well to talk

about healthy foods and to help children take turns. Children enjoy fruit and the 'once a week' biscuits for their snack and are confident in pouring themselves milk or water. Staff care for the children well and they happily go to any adult at playgroup. Staff are proactive in looking after the children and ensuring they are feeling secure and safe. For example, when children were being collected at home time, staff went to sit with those on tables alone, so that they did not feel they had been left behind.

Children know about keeping healthy and safe by, for example, automatically putting tissues in the bin and reporting if their shoes are muddy. Children are encouraged to be independent. As they mature and become more ready for school, opportunities increase, for example, they carry out jobs like handing out mats, and choose activities they want to play with. With their well developed social skills and confidence, they leave as children who love learning and are ready, eager and excited about the next stage of their education.

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?	2
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?	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?	2
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?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
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

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