

Croft Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	109058
Inspection date	17/07/2009
Inspector	Rosemary Davies
Setting address	Marlborough Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 1RA
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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).

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

Croft Playgroup opened in 1972. It is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It operates from one room in the Croft Sports Centre in Old Town, Swindon and serves families from the local urban area. The playgroup opens each weekday during school terms. Sessions run from 09:15 to 11:45. There are two afternoon sessions, which run on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:15 to 14:45, with a lunch club offered on Tuesdays and Fridays from 12.45 until 12.30. All children attend part-time for a variety of sessions. Children access toilets via a short flight of stairs, although there is wheelchair access to the playroom and to the main building.

The playgroup is registered on both the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 55 children aged from three to under five years on roll. The playgroup employs nine staff to work with the children, of whom six have appropriate early years qualifications at level two or above. One member of staff holds qualified teacher status.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding. All children thrive in this caring playgroup, receiving a warm welcome whatever their background and having equal access to all experiences. The playgroup caters for children's individual welfare needs exceptionally well. Strong partnerships with parents and outside professionals, contribute significantly to children making good progress overall in their learning and development. This is owing to highly effective leadership from the senior management team, which focuses on improving outcomes for the children through accurate self-evaluation. The playgroup shows strong capacity to maintain improvement, owing to the determination of all involved with its work to provide the best possible education and care.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue with plans to move to purpose-designed premises, placing more emphasis on outdoor learning when in the new premises
- further develop links with all schools to which children transfer, including teaching the same letter formation used by those schools.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The senior management team does its utmost to provide appropriately for every child in the playgroup. The team evaluates the quality of the provision effectively,

accurately pinpointing the playgroup's many strengths and identifying areas for development. This includes a clear vision for the playgroup's future, detailed in its development plan, as part of a new children's centre with purpose-designed premises.

The manager provides clear leadership to the staff team, many of whom have been in the group for a considerable time. She deploys staff extremely well, utilising individual areas of expertise, which helps all carry out their roles well and with enthusiasm. Staff work hard to overcome the disadvantages of shared accommodation, creating a suitable learning environment daily that meets children's individual learning and development needs extremely well.

Effective systems for maintaining the children's safety and good health stem from staff following stipulated procedures and policies carefully. Daily monitoring procedures are followed meticulously. A suitable record of risk assessment is kept, which is reviewed annually or as necessary. All staff are vigilant for children's safety when moving around other areas of the Sports Centre. As a consequence of all these measures, children are safeguarded exceedingly well.

Exceptional partnerships contribute to children's individual needs being met for both their welfare and education. Parents speak appreciatively of all the group does for their children stating that staff know children extremely well. They receive accurate information about their children's progress and are encouraged to support children's learning at home, for example, through borrowing 'book bags'.

Links with the local school, to which most children transfer, help them make the transition smoothly, although links with other schools are less well developed. Nevertheless, all schools receive copies of the Swindon assessment of children's progress, so teachers are advised of children's capabilities.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children thrive in this playgroup, thoroughly enjoying the experiences provided. They achieve very well owing to effective teaching and support. This is due to staff having a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and providing children with a suitable learning environment full of interesting activities, carefully planned to reflect their individual levels of development and interests; older children enjoy completing complex jigsaws, for example, whilst younger children match picture dominoes.

Staff provide good role models to the children and their enthusiasm rubs off, so children are motivated to try new things and do their best. Children develop their physical skills well, happily exploring a variety of interesting apparatus, such as 'spiky balls' and a 'spinning saucer'. Staff teach children how to play with equipment safely, so they use it in ways that are safe for themselves and others. Children behave extremely well, knowing just what is expected of them, such as listening to staff when a bell tinkles.

Children experience a broad and mostly balanced programme of experiences. Staff

are careful to follow the playgroup's equal opportunities policy, so that activities are rotated through the week and all access these. Planned activities include an excellent balance between those that are adult-led and those that children choose for themselves. There is less balance between indoor and outdoor play, owing to the lack of a secure outdoor area, so children cannot make their own decisions about when to play outside; this affects those who learn better through playing on a larger scale.

Children progress extremely well in gaining skills for their future lives, with firm foundations laid for literacy, numeracy and information technology; however, whilst the playgroup promotes the writing style of the nearby school, to which most children transfer, letter formation used at other schools is not necessarily known and encouraged.

Children benefit from regular exercise, which contributes well to learning about healthy living. They wash their hands before eating without reminding and learn about foods that are healthy for them. The group displays many posters about healthy eating, although the Food and Drink Policy does not give information to parents about appropriate food content for packed lunches. Excellent procedures prevent cross-infection; parents receive advice on what to do about suspected 'swine flu', for example.

Children use a safe environment owing to excellent risk assessments and daily checks. All staff fully understand their responsibilities for safeguarding children's welfare. They follow stipulated procedures meticulously for taking children to the toilets in the main Sports Centre, so protecting them from persons who have not been vetted.

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?	2
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

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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