

Cottis Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Felicity Gaff

Setting address

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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 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).

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Description of the setting

Cottis Playgroup first registered as a privately owned home playgroup in 1971. It re-registered with a new owner in 2000, and moved to the adjacent church hall in Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex. Children use an activity hall, an additional small quiet room and an enclosed outdoor play area. They also have access to an additional hall on two days a week. The setting opens each weekday from 9.15am to 3pm on Mondays and Thursdays, 9.15am to 12 noon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays during school term times. A maximum of 40 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 39 children on roll within the early years age range, who are drawn from the surrounding rural area. There are nine members of staff, six of whom hold recognised childcare qualifications and two others are in training. One staff member holds Early Years Professional Status. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy a warm, welcoming environment where they feel secure and at ease. The provider continuously monitors the quality of the service she offers and effectively motivates her staff to develop their practice. Improved systems for monitoring what children do enhance the ability of the staff to identify what they know and understand. Staff use their knowledge of each child's interests and achievements to plan activities that engage their enthusiasm and support all areas of learning. Children confidently follow their own interests and eagerly share their learning with adults and other children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- update safeguarding procedures in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance and procedures, and ensure that they can be implemented, for example by ensuring all relevant documentation is readily to hand
- create a welcoming environment for all children and their families by developing, for instance, the use of posters, pictures and other resources to provide positive images of ethnic, cultural and social diversity

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff fully understand their responsibilities for child protection and are able to recognise, record and report any concerns. However, the provider has not updated the safeguarding procedure in line with that of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The full procedure is not always accessible on the premises. The provider,

who also manages the playgroup, carries out rigorous checks to ensure staff are suitable to care for children. She supports staff in undertaking professional training to develop their skills. She effectively assesses and minimises risks to children on the premises as well as on outings. The good organisation of space and equipment, and effective deployment of staff, enable all children to participate in worthwhile play activities that promote their learning well. The premises are suitably maintained and well arranged to meet children's individual needs. For example, staff organise a small group for two sessions a week that is suitably adapted to support the specific needs of younger children.

Children enjoy a continuously improving environment because the provider makes good use of advice from the local authority in identifying areas for future development. She monitors established practices, such as the organisation of circle time, identifies areas for development and works effectively with her staff to develop practice. For instance, staff have introduced daily routines to involve children in counting and comparing numbers. They skilfully use techniques designed to support children receiving speech therapy to extend the language development of all children. There are very good systems for exchanging information with parents about children's interests and achievements as well as about their welfare needs. These allow staff to establish each child's starting point and interests, when they first join the playgroup. Well-used contact diaries enable staff and parents to exchange information regularly. They also serve to provide a link with other early years settings children attend such as childminders. This effective three-way communication keeps parents well-informed about the progress their children make and promotes coherent and complementary provision to promote children's learning. All the documentation required to support children's welfare is in place.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children form exceptionally strong relationships with staff and with each other. Many children play together in small groups, and staff respect the preferences of those who choose to play alone. Children reflect the courtesy shown them by the staff in the warm welcome they extend to visitors to the playgroup. They begin to recognise how their behaviour affects other people; they recognise, for instance, that they need to speak in turn 'so everyone can hear what you are saying'. Children behave safely because staff explain the reasons for the simple, consistent rules. They understand how to share large toys, such as the rocking boat, by making space to enable other children to join in. Staff plan interesting activities that intrigue children. They use reference books and mark-making materials imaginatively in order to motivate all children to use them. They observe how children use materials in their freely chosen play, and use their own knowledge of each child's interests to plan for the next steps in his or her learning. For example, observing a group of children using the Noah's Ark as a garage led staff to provide materials for them to make their own garages. There are suitable procedures in place to ensure that the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met. Staff understand how to support the language development of children who are acquiring more than one language. For instance, they use

pictorial timetables and prompts to support children who lack sufficient vocabulary to express their needs and preferences. However, they provide limited resources such as posters, books and toys representing positive images of ethnic, cultural and social diversity.

Children are confident, curious and articulate. They use their initiative to find out for themselves why an electronic toy does not work, and explain to an adult it is because the batteries have come out. A three-year-old explained that when you see your face in a Christmas tree bauble, it is a 'reflection'. Children use their knowledge of the natural world to suggest places where minibeasts may be hiding. They use language skilfully to describe what they find. They treat living creatures with respect, looking at them closely with magnifying glasses, showing them proudly to others, and returning them carefully to where they found them. Staff have high expectations of the children, who learn to use words such as 'camouflaged' confidently and correctly. Staff promote children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle by providing options for active physical play, inside and out, throughout the session. They discuss the weather and help children decide whether they need to wear a coat when it is cold. Children have good opportunities to talk about what constitutes a healthy diet during numerous cooking activities and when sharing nutritious snacks.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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