

Milldene Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Isobel Randall

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Milldene Playgroup opened in their current building in 2002. It operates from a demountable building within the grounds of the primary school in the village of Tiptree. The group serves the local area. There are currently 43 children from two years to five years on roll. This includes 28 funded three- and four-year-old children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and could support children who speak English as an additional language. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:30am until 1:00pm on Mondays; 9:30am until 12:00 midday on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; and afternoon sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00pm until 3:30pm. Seven members of staff work with the children. Three have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 3 and three members of staff are working towards early years qualifications to Level 2. The setting receives support from the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Key persons use their assiduous observations of children's activities and achievements to plan effectively for the individual enjoyment and progress of all children. Well-established routines ensure that children are safe and feel secure. Parents' views are central to the direction of the playgroup through their involvement on the committee and their response to questionnaires. Staff are well informed as a result of good links with the Pre-School Learning Alliance and the local authority advisory service, so that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Strong partnership with the adjacent school helps children moving onto full-time education to enjoy a smooth transition. The committee and managers use regular self-evaluation well to improve their provision, and have addressed all of the recommendations from the last inspection.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop opportunities for children to experience and enjoy the use of new technologies, such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- develop the outside area so that children can enjoy the full range of activities throughout the year.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The playgroup is well led by a group of knowledgeable managers and an active committee on which parents are well represented. The setting is efficiently organised with recognised procedures that effectively support the learning and well-being of all of the children. Adults work well together with weekly meetings in which ideas and plans are developed collaboratively. As a result, they have a common focus that strengthens their impact on the children's development. The committee, managers and staff use the views of parents and children in combination with staff observation of each other's work to form an accurate view of their strengths and weaknesses, and to plan for future developments. A recent parents' questionnaire shows that parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the impact that the playgroup has on their children. Several made comments similar to that of a parent who said, 'my daughter loves her sessions, and she is developing well'. Their major wish for improvement is to extend the number of sessions available for each child. Parents feel very well consulted and exceptionally well informed about their children's lives in the playgroup. Leaders have robust recruitment procedures to vet applicants' suitability to work with children. They make sure that the environment is safe and hygienic, with secure boundaries and entrance procedures. One parent commented, 'I like the security; I know that my child is safe'. Thorough self-evaluation has brought about good improvement since the last inspection, and there is good potential for further improvement. Managers responded rapidly and effectively to a question raised over the procedures for changing nappies. Since the last inspection they have improved staff assessment and recording of children's progress across all areas of learning, sharing personal folders with parents who are invited to be involved in compiling them. These records show good improvement in children's attainment, with a wide range of activities across all areas of learning. Planned improvements in approaches to learning, supported by a good programme of training for staff, have led to increased development of children's independence in making choices. Planning also gives good attention to support needed for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Boys and girls are encouraged to play together. The playgroup has shared experiences of parents and children who come from other countries, so that the children settle down well with the others and make good progress. The outdoor area has improved in that there is a well-used range of new play equipment with good opportunities for exercise. At present when it is wet the outdoor area has a limited space for play and there is no covered area. Leaders' efforts to improve the physical environment have been slowed by the need to gain permission to rebuild on a new site, but they have been vigorous in raising funds and are now ready to move forward.

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

Children make good progress across all areas of learning in the welcoming and lively environment of the playgroup. Key persons encourage them to think about and explain what they are doing, so that every activity is made interesting. As a

result, they are enthusiastic about coming to the group, showing that they get on well together, so that the newcomers have made friends quickly. They develop their understanding of number well in practical ways, for example, by counting themselves into the group, singing number songs and using the computer for simple mathematical games. Adults encourage them to write their names on their paintings and to recognise simple words on labels. Their use of ICT is limited at present, but they enjoy the games that help to develop their understanding of shape and number. The children enjoy healthy foods and drinks at snack time. They pay attention to hygiene. After messy play they know that they have to wash their hands, as they do after going to the toilet and before snack. Children enjoy taking responsibility for clearing up after activities. Adults encourage them to feel that they are helpful. For example, one child enjoys pretending to take the register daily, learning to recognise her friends' names and making a mark after them if they are in the playgroup. Although the outside area has limitations in poor weather, almost all children on the day of the inspection chose to play out of doors, enjoying their climbing, riding and ball play. They feel safe in the outdoor area, learning to take turns to use equipment. Key persons know their children's needs well, with the result that individuals flourish, given attention to their particular needs. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities therefore make good progress. Those whose first language is not English are encouraged to take pride in their language and customs by being asked to share their experience with the others. Children are confident about approaching adults to express their ideas and needs. They enjoy singing songs that adults use to define parts of the session. The time goes quickly for them, with several expressing surprise when it is time to go home. Adults encourage children to work independently, choosing their own activities and working out the problems that confront them, so that they learn confidence and self-reliance. Their perspectives are broadened by visitors from organisations, such as police and fire brigade and by occasional visits to different parts of the local area. They spend some time in the main school so that they can become confident about moving on. Children are therefore well prepared for 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

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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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