

Charlton and District Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Charlton and District Playgroup opened in 1978. It operates from two rooms in the church of St Thomas in the village of Charlton, near Andover, Hampshire. It serves families in Charlton itself, other villages in this rural area and from nearby Andover. The playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee and is a registered charity. It provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds. Children use a large hall and a smaller room with access to an outdoor play area. The playgroup opens for five weekdays during school terms. Sessions run from 9.00am to 12pm daily with an optional lunch club until 12.30pm. On Tuesdays and Thursdays sessions run until 3.00pm.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 38 children may attend at any one time, aged between two and five years. There are currently 38 children aged from two to under five years on roll, all in part-time places. The playgroup currently supports a number of children who learn English as an additional language.

The playgroup has eight staff, of whom seven hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 2. One member of staff holds qualified teacher status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy a positive experience of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and make good progress overall in their learning and development. All children are welcomed warmly, including those with additional needs. Staff provide an inclusive environment, in which children's needs are met well overall. Staff establish excellent partnerships with external professionals to meet children's needs. The senior management team identifies the playgroup's strengths and weaknesses accurately, for the most part. They place emphasis on staff undertaking training and gaining further qualifications. Consequently, the playgroup is strongly placed to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reconsider ways to provide a better balance of indoor and outdoor learning, ensuring all six areas of learning are offered outdoors, regularly
- reconsider the focus and content of group times, making sure these suit the needs of younger children and those who learn English as an additional language.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and committee chairperson work together well to make sure that children are cared for by suitable and appropriately qualified staff. They ensure that all who work or volunteer in the playgroup are cleared as being suitable to be with children. All staff undertake safeguarding training, so understand their roles in protecting children's welfare. Effective risk assessments identify potential hazards to children's safety. Staff remain vigilant throughout sessions to maintain safe environments; they supervise children closely at all times. A comprehensive record of risk assessment is kept. A suitable range of policies and procedures guides the smooth day-to-day running of the playgroup. The complaints procedure works effectively in practice. As a consequence of all these measures, children are safeguarded well.

Evaluation procedures lead to improvement. Parents' views are sought. Senior managers act on the advice of outside professionals in developing suitable plans to improve outcomes for children. All recommendations from the last inspection have been actioned effectively and a range of new measures introduced; these include an audit of staff qualifications, introduction of a 'rolling snack' and re-organisation of the available space. Resources are deployed suitably, with staff working hard to overcome the disadvantages of shared accommodation; the outdoor area is underused, however. Equality and diversity are promoted well overall, although group times are not all managed effectively; for example, story time is interrupted as children put on coats to go outside.

The playgroup engages well with parents, who receive regular information about their children's progress, as well as helpful information about what the playgroup offers their children. Wider partnerships contribute significantly to meeting children's individual needs. The playgroup draws on the advice and support of outside agencies exceptionally well, to help meet the needs of those children who learn English as an additional language or any who have speech delay. They liaise well with local schools and childminders to aid transitions.

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

Children enter the playgroup confidently, greeting their friends and making their own decisions about what they wish to do. They enjoy high levels of choice, owing to the effort put in by staff to create welcoming and enabling learning environments. These cover all six areas of learning effectively within different 'zones' across the two playrooms, such as those for music and construction play. Staff cover the large premises well, knowing whether they remain in a particular area, for example to support 'messy' play, or moving around to respond to children's needs, such as accompanying them to the toilet or helping with dressing up clothes. The room set up supports children's growing independence as learners well. Clear labelling of resources helps all understand where items are kept, including the younger children and those learning English as an additional

language.

Staff support children well, extending their learning through pertinent questioning about activities. They make good use of their secure knowledge of the EYFS in the daily routines, expecting children to 'sign' their work, such as when creating paintings. This helps children gain suitable skills for their future lives. Children's creative work is a strong aspect of the provision that has developed well since the last inspection. All children benefit from the high adult to child ratios, receiving lots of individual support.

Staff understand the importance of observing children and assessing their progress against the EYFS framework. They use their understanding of children's interests and capabilities to plan the next steps in learning. Some aspects of group times are inappropriate for the very youngest children and those learning English as an additional language. This is because some concepts discussed are beyond their understanding and insufficient use is made of repetition. There is a lack of balance between indoor and outdoor learning, which hinders those who learn better in outdoor environments. Nevertheless, all children benefit from outdoor exercise and fresh air daily, although there is too much emphasis on physical play and insufficient on the other learning areas.

Children learn about healthy living well. Snack time is particularly well managed, supporting children's developing personal skills, as they serve themselves and pour drinks. They use clean facilities, with staff preventing the possible spread of cross-infection effectively through following stipulated procedures, for example, using hand sanitizer. Children learn good personal hygiene routines.

Children respond to staff expectations well. They know that sand needs to be swept up to stop people from slipping on it and hurting themselves. They do this chore willingly and unprompted, illustrating the efforts staff make to keep children aware of safety issues. Relationships are good across the playgroup and contribute significantly to children's feelings of security. Older children start to form firm friendships.

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	3
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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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