

Sevington Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	127532
Inspection date	26/03/2010
Inspector	Stacey Sangster
Setting address	Weir View Hut, River Lawn Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1EP
Telephone number	01732 367391
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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

Sevington Playgroup opened in 1994. It operates from a Scout hut hall in the town of Tonbridge. There is a large hall with kitchen and toilet facilities. The playgroup mainly serves the local area.

There are currently 82 children in the early years age range on roll. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

The group opens five days a week during school term. Sessions are from 09.30am to 11.30am and 12.30pm to 3.00pm. A lunch club operates for the period 11.30am to 12.30pm and can be attended by children following a morning or before the afternoon session if parents choose. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and may care for a maximum of 30 children aged between two and five years at any one time.

There are seven members of staff who work with the children and all hold a recognised early years qualification. All staff hold a current first aid certificate.

The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Local Authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

The setting is not fully meeting the needs of the children attending. Management and staff express a commitment to ongoing improvement, but do not focus appropriately on priorities, effectively tackle barriers or respond to issues identified at an acceptable pace. Self-evaluation is ineffective as the setting fail to track which systems are in use, and so cannot evaluate how effective they are.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- ensure that all adults who offer care to, or who are in regular contact with children are suitable to do so (Suitability of adults) 18/04/2010
- ensure that a record of the risk assessment is maintained, clearly stating when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and any action taken following a review or incident (Documentation) 18/04/2010

- ensure that all six areas of learning are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities (Organisation) 18/04/2010
- maintain the required written records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children, and refer to the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that all of the required records are being kept (Documentation) 30/04/2010
- ensure that records are easily accessible and available for inspection by Ofsted (Documentation) 18/04/2010
- make systematic observations and assessments of children's achievements, interests and learning styles; use these to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child, benchmarking observations, so that it is clear if children are progressing, above, below or in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (Organisation) 18/04/2010
- promote the good health of the children by improving arrangements for monitoring and supporting children's hygiene habits to prevent the spread of infection. (Promoting good health) 18/04/2010

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- provide sufficient equipment for children to share, so that waiting to take turns does not spoil enjoyment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding arrangements are inadequate and do not sufficiently protect children. Although the setting report that they hold satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau checks for all staff they do not know where these are and could not provide evidence of them at the inspection. Management confirmed that two volunteers present on the day of the inspection had not had any checks completed on them by the setting. One has been a regular volunteer for a number of years the other, a month. The setting had recorded no information about the newest volunteer and the only information the setting had about the other volunteer was in relation to her child's previous attendance. Records of staff and volunteer attendance are not routinely kept. Children are at risk because the setting does not ensure that all adults having regular contact with children are suitable to do so. Children are afforded some protection because the setting does not allow volunteers to have unsupervised contact with the children.

The setting have not notified Ofsted of changes to the committee and no checks have been carried out on its members. The provider has committed an offence by failing to notify Ofsted of a change to the committee who manage the early years provision. This is a specific legal requirement in the Statutory Framework for the

Early Years Foundation Stage. Ofsted does not intend to prosecute on this occasion.

The adults in the setting are aware of potential environmental hazards, such as the close proximity of the river and work hard to ensure that this is not a risk to children. They take appropriate steps to ensure that the building, outside area, toys and equipment used by children are safe and carry out daily checks. They have not yet recorded the risk assessment in line with legal requirements.

The setting are struggling to maintain the required written records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children. Staff and management describe feeling overwhelmed. There is a commitment expressed in relation to working in partnership with others. Evidence of regular meetings and visits from their Local Authority Advisory teacher detail action plans to address many of the issues raised at the inspection. However although there is evidence of many improvements being achieved, not all of the suggestions have been responded to in full, or at a speed which is effective to impact on the children currently attending.

The setting are aware of the requirement to develop partnerships with others who provide the Early Years Foundation Stage to children who attend their setting, they have limited arrangements in place but are in the process of establishing a system to support this requirement. Partnerships with parents are satisfactory. They receive basic information about their children's day, provide information to the setting to support the care of their child and are invited to look at assessment records on a regular basis.

Self-evaluation has become ineffective as the setting are no longer clear about which systems they are using and which they have replaced. Several times during the inspection the manager confirmed compliance with a requirement, only to find when she went to obtain evidence within the documentation that it was either lost, a system the setting had not kept up with, or was a record the setting had forgotten to complete on that day. While the manager was aware that she and the staff had stopped using some of the systems, she appeared surprised that others were not in place.

The setting has a wide range of resources but do not always make best use of these. Although the resources are rotated on a regular basis to prevent children from becoming bored, the number of items out is limited and waiting to use them spoils children's enjoyment. The arrangements for including all children meet the requirements. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Children from a range of ethnic backgrounds can find images that represent them and their families and all children get to experience a range of cultural festivals and celebrations as part of topic work.

The staff and management express a commitment to addressing the issues and demonstrate a desire to improve the service to children. The staff team have worked in the setting for a number of years and express a commitment to build on the positives of their setting. They work co-operatively with each other, enjoy their

work and have some well established systems which are working effectively. Rotas in place ensure that all staff know which tasks are their responsibility.

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

Children have good relationships with staff and most children enjoy large sections of the time spent at the setting. They are given lots of freedom to run around and choose from what is on offer and many of the children love to let off steam by screaming loudly as they re-enter the building, to hear it echo. There is lots of laughter and staff get down to children's level to chat to them about their ideas and listen to the descriptions of what they are doing.

There are times, however, where a lack of forethought leaves children waiting aimlessly for popular equipment. Children are observed to queue six deep for the computer, vying to see the screen, pushing and becoming restless, which in turn distracts children who are using the computer. Outside up to seven children at a time watch the other children on scooters and ride on toys, rushing for them if they are left and spending considerable time complaining that it is their turn now. Staff describe bags that have been put together to provide more interesting activities and ensure that all children can be occupied outside, but state that it is too difficult to organise easy access to these.

The periods at the end and beginning of lunch time sessions and lunch time itself also results in children spending long periods without anything to do. Children are seated at tables to enable staff to safely manage the arrival and departure of part time children. At one point 24 children were seated at tables with only seven books between them, staff stated that children use this time to chat to friends, but several were observed to be sitting completely unengaged and looking bored and restless. Mealtimes take longer than they need to, with children being asked to first sit at tables, then queue for the toilet and to wash their hands, before being given their lunch boxes when they are all back at the table. Poor organisation sees the slowest eaters, being served last. Most children are made to wait, again with nothing to do while others finish lunch, apart for the slowest eaters who are left eating alone, while staff tidy up around them and the other children go and play.

Some effective hygiene procedures are in place, with ill children being sent home and exclusion periods for infectious illnesses being made clear to parents and staff. Antibacterial sprays are used to wipe down tables and the toilet facilities are satisfactory. However, although staff are present to monitor the children, the practices observed reduce the effectiveness of the hygiene practices. Children use the toilet while others jostle to wash their hands in the same room, paper towels run out leaving some children wiping their hands on their clothing. Some children do not wash their hands after using the toilet and others who do, do not use any soap.

Generally the behaviour of the children is positive. Children appear to understand the basic rules of the setting, they play co-operatively most of the time and can sort out minor disputes without the need for staff intervention. They enjoy story

time, paying attention to the story teller and are interested and engaged as the member of staff tells them about the book and author. Most children enthusiastically join in with repeated refrains in the story showing clearly that they have heard it many times before. Key workers organise the assessment files of the children. Only one assessment file was available for inspection as staff reported that they had taken all others home to update. Staff have adapted the local authority system. They concede that they do not fully understand how to make best use of it, but are working hard to ensure that records are updated regularly and that they track children's progress. The system in use does not yet include observations from other providers, or parents, nor does it benchmark how well children are making progress. Evidence could not easily be ascertained about children's rate of progress from the system. Observations are not frequent or sufficient in detail to enable staff to plan specifically for children's individual next steps.

Key workers know their children's personalities, family background and history well and engage with children about their siblings, past holidays and other subjects, demonstrating that they listen to what children have told them. Children receive some support when they self select activities, in discussions, and investigations with staff, which staff feel supports their general development. Children are helped to make progress because of this, but the rate of progress is limited because of the lack of specific focus on each child's individual learning and development needs. As such, children are not being supported to reach their full potential.

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?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	4
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	4
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	4
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	4

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