

Snakes and Ladders Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

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Inspector

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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).

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.

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Description of the setting

Snakes and Ladders Playgroup have been registered since 2003. It is located in St. Aidens Community Centre in the Brunton Park area of Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne and operates from one room. Local amenities and public transport systems are within walking distance. The group have sole use of the large hall within the centre. Although there is no outdoor play space there is a park within short walking distance, which children go to daily.

The group is registered to care for a maximum of 34 children and are registered on the Early Years Register. Sessions run from 9.30am to 12pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during term time only. There are currently 39 children on roll. The group is in receipt of nursery education funding.

There are eight members of staff who work directly with the children; of these, five hold a recognised childcare qualification. The group are members of Playgroup Network and receive support and training opportunities from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff provide a happy, relaxed and welcoming environment for children and their families, where they feel valued and fully included. Effective relationships have been established with parents to ensure children's needs are met and they receive good information about their children and the setting. However, they are not fully included in their children's observation and assessment process. Children are making good progress in their learning and development and the staff provide a wide range of activities, which cover all areas of learning. Resources are generally organised effectively allowing children to make choices and extend their learning. Staff have good systems in place for monitoring and evaluating their practice to maintain continual improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's observation and assessment process
- extend the range of resources in the mark making area in order to promote children's interest in extending their pre-writing skills.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff provide a safe and secure environment where children feel safe and their welfare is promoted effectively. Good recruitment, vetting and induction

procedures ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff who carry out their roles proficiently. Staff are secure in their knowledge and understanding of child protection issues to ensure all children are safeguarded. Effective risk assessments and safety procedures are carried out by staff to ensure children remain safe at all times, both in and out of the premises. A wide range of comprehensive policies and procedures, effectively underpins the work of the setting and enhances all aspects of children's care, welfare and learning. Staff work well together and develop positive relationships with the children, ensuring they feel secure and well cared for.

Staff demonstrate an ongoing commitment to further developing their skills and knowledge to improve outcomes for children. They are supported well by a dedicated management team who have a clear vision for future development, which they share with all staff. A number of improvements have been made since the last inspection, such as, providing children with more independent access to resources and the introduction of story sacks, which parents are able to take home to continue to support their children's communication, language and literacy skills. All recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully met. The staff team have prioritised targets for future improvement, for example, developing an outdoor play area, staff training and re-organising snack time. Regular appraisals and staff meetings are used effectively to identify areas for development, share knowledge and skills and provide staff with updated information. The manager and staff are highly committed, enthusiastic and motivated, providing a good quality service to children and their families.

Children thrive in the supportive environment. They are able to move around freely making independent choices from the wide range of well maintained resources. However, the limited range of resources in the mark making area prevents older children developing their interest in extending their pre-writing skills. Staff are deployed effectively, providing all children with good levels of support.

Effective relationships with parents and carers means that children's unique needs are consistently met. Comprehensive information is obtained from parents prior to children starting at the setting to ensure that their needs are met. Parents are provided with a good range of information, which keeps them fully informed about all aspects of the setting and the care, welfare and learning of their children. Regular newsletters keep parents updated with any changes, forthcoming events and activities their children are involved in. Parents are welcomed into the group and are able to help out at any time. Parents views and opinions are actively sought through the use of a suggestions box and daily discussions with staff, which help them feel valued and included. However, they have not been invited to contribute to their children's observation and assessment process. Good links have been made with local schools that children will attend so that children's transition to other provisions runs smoothly and relevant information is passed on. Parents report that they are very happy with the provision and that their children are happy, settled and making progress. They speak highly of the staff and feel they are well informed about all aspects of the setting.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well. Staff work effectively with parents and other childcare professionals to ensure

children are fully supported and continue to make good progress in their learning and development. Staff actively promote equality and inclusion, ensuring that children develop respect for individual and differing needs.

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

Children arrive at the setting happily and enthusiastically. They eagerly self-register and independently access the activities they want to play with around the room. Some children seek out familiar staff and initiate conversations about what they have seen on their way to the setting or what they have done since they were last there. Staff are very sensitive and take time to listen to what children have to say helping them to feel valued and respected. Children quickly settle into the activities they have chosen and become engrossed in their play. Children who are new to the setting are helped to settle and make choices by supportive staff who offer affection, encouragement and praise. They are aware of children who may become unsettled during the day as changes occur to the routine and make sure that they are nearby to provide support.

Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and provide all children with a wide range of experiences that promote and enhance their development and learning skills. Activities and themes are planned based on children's interests and cover all areas of learning. Good systems to observe and assess children's progress are used to effectively plan the next steps in children's learning. A good balance of adult and child-initiated activities are organised effectively. This ensures that all children are well supported and have good opportunities to practise and consolidate their learning. All children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Throughout the session all children are actively engaged in a wide range of activities that are fun and stimulating. They enjoy imaginative play as they dress up as princess' and act out familiar scenario's in the role play area, such as, feeding and washing their 'babies'. Staff sensitively engage children as they play, supporting their communication and language skills as they ask open questions, such as, 'why is your baby crying?' or 'what are you going to feed your baby?' As children play a 'feely' game, staff encourage them to describe what they can feel by using words such as, hard, soft, smooth, rough and squashy. Children are confident enough to initiate conversations with staff and each other. They happily talk about what they are doing, what they want and about their families. Older children show a natural curiosity as they ask the inspector what they are doing, what they are writing and why. Children enjoy stories and staff involve them in the story telling by asking them to describe what they see in a picture or what happens next. Books, puppets and action songs are used effectively to support children who are developing their language skills.

Children are provided with good opportunities to develop their problem solving and mathematical skills. For example, counting is brought into everyday situations, children work out how to construct a train track by selecting pieces of the correct length and shape to fit together and discuss if they need a longer or shorter piece.

They learn about volume and capacity as they play in the water emptying and filling containers. Staff ask questions, such as, does the large container contain too much water to fill a small container. All children thoroughly enjoy a wide variety of activities in which they can express their creativity. They design their own collages using a broad range of man-made and natural materials, paint, draw and chalk pictures, play musical instruments and make objects from play dough. They particularly enjoy making snow pictures from glitter snow. Children experiment with the glitter, shake it through their fingers, feeling it as it falls and describe how it tickles their hands.

Staff are positive role models for children and actively encourage them to develop good social skills. They offer children praise and encouragement and give them responsibilities, such as, clearing their own plates and cups away after snack and helping to tidy up. This promotes their confidence and boosts their self-esteem. Children show care and consideration for each other as they share and take turns with toys, listen to one another and help each other out. Staff sensitively promote children's understanding of equality, diversity and respect for others through discussions about differences, using a wide selection of books, resources and activities and by celebrating a range of different cultural festivals. Children learn about how things grow and how to care for animals as they plant daffodils and enjoy a visit from a local vet. Themes and topics about farms, jungles and the coast provide good opportunities for children to learn about the wider world.

Children enjoy a variety of experiences that promote a healthy lifestyle. Good daily opportunities for physical play inside and outside help the children to enjoy exercise and develop new skills. They enjoy tasting a broad selection of healthy foods at snack time and make home made pizzas. They have joined in food tasting activities linked to a favourite book about a 'hungry caterpillar'. A visit from a local dentist helped children to understand the importance of oral hygiene and healthy eating. Older children independently manage their own personal care well, for example, they follow consistent daily routines for hand washing, take a rest and a drink when they want to and have access to tissues and wipes. Children are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Staff encourage children not to run indoors, be aware of each other and use equipment safely. Children are involved in regular fire drills and have discussions with staff about general fire safety. All children particularly enjoyed a visit from the community police and road safety officer.

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	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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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