

# Sunbeams Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspector** Ann Taylor

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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

Sunbeams Playgroup is a committee run provision in Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire. It is placed on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The group has been operating for over 20 years, and works from a portal-cabin in the grounds of the local primary school. The group has access to two enclosed outdoor play areas within the school grounds. A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 52 children on role who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Of these, 36 receive funding for their early education. The group operates between 9.00 am and 3.00 pm during term-time only. There is a Children's Centre within the same building. The playgroup has a productive working relationship and benefits from the advice and support from the Children's Centre Advisory teacher. The playgroup currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It also supports children whose first language is not English. Four full-time members of staff work with the children. All are suitably qualified and all are working to gain further qualifications. The manager is working to gain her Foundation Degree. A high number of adults provide voluntary as well as paid support. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and the Birth to Five services. The playgroup has a developing relationship with the school and enjoys the use of its facilities.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Sunbeams Playgroup provides a happy, relaxed and inclusive environment where the individual needs of all children are soundly met by caring adults. Children make satisfactory gains in their learning as a result of these conditions. The playgroup has coped well with many changes over the last couple of years both in its organisation and the way it helps children learn and develop. As a result, its capacity for ongoing improvement is satisfactory.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve children's speaking and listening abilities by providing planned opportunities in all daily activities. Through this, develop extended conversations, both with adults and between children, with more adults modelling how to read and enjoy books and telling stories and more modelling of role play
- develop further the learning partnership with the school in order to improve the rate of progress children are making in their early speaking, reading and writing skills
- use the more successful aspects of the focused group learning times to engage children in more interesting and stimulating ways of writing, and

- especially writing for a purpose, including helping them, when appropriate, to gain a better understanding of letters and the sounds they make
- make better use of self-evaluation to gauge how well various learning strategies are impacting on children's development, in order to identify and build on the most efficient methods of teaching children the basic skills.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

The manager leads a willing and dedicated team who are undertaking a good deal of training in order to develop their skills. One testimony to the good will evident is the amount of work provided on a voluntary basis. All policies and practices designed to keep children safe and secure are in place. Appropriate checks have been made on those who work with the children. There is a good awareness of health and safety and a pro-active response to reducing any risks. Staff are well trained and experienced in dealing with children who have specific medical conditions or particular needs and all hold First Aid qualifications. Parents are particularly appreciative of this. Mindful of the needs of the community and proof of the strong team spirit was the successful way the playgroup kept open during recent snowy weather.

The playgroup has been honest and accurate in reviewing its own strengths and areas for development. However, in light of the new methods it has introduced, it does not yet have systems to accurately measure the progress children are making in response to these changes. This means it is difficult for staff to tell what is working best for their children and what is not. Self-evaluation is not firmly enough fixed on the playgroup's success in improving children's outcomes. Partnerships with parents are strong; parents are known well, home liaison books are encouraged and support given for families where it is needed. Parents spoken to were unanimous in their appreciation for the playgroup.

The playgroup's relationship with external support agencies is also strong and they make good use of specialised help for children who have specific needs. The manager recognises the time is right to develop the relationship with the school in terms of building closer learning links. This is to supplement the good relationships already in place helping children's welfare and care.

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

Children enjoy their time here and most are very settled and happy to be left. They get on well with each other, for example, they know to ask an adult and use the timer if there is a toy to be shared. They know what is expected of them with their behaviour and need only occasional reminders about this. Sometimes adults' raised voice with '123 Can you listen to me please?' spoils the positive atmosphere and is more obtrusive than other methods of getting children's attention. There are occasional valuable chances for conversation, especially using James the puppet. This happened during the focussed group learning sessions, when children were

talking about various different vegetables. Here, children made faster gains in their knowledge and understanding because of the more in-depth teaching and better planning of what they were to learn. There was also a greater insistence on a reply and time given for this.

Sometimes, for example, during the free play and in story time, chances for children to answer questions and chat with adults are missed because adults talk too much. Positively, each child takes a turn in saying what they like about the story, but responses which mirror what the previous child has said are often accepted and not probed further. Adults sit unused when they could be talking to children in small groups. Chances for children to chat to their next door neighbour when in a circle listening to a story are also missed. Children enjoy story time and sit in a circle nicely. However, the encouragement for them to sit and look at a book throughout the morning with an adult is limited. There is an inviting book corner and again this is an improvement since the last inspection. Similarly, changes in practice mean the encouragement of conversation promoted by adults, through role play in the home corner is limited.

A writing activity is always offered, and this is another improvement since the previous inspection. Children sit and draw contentedly, with staff careful to correct pencil grip. However, the activities are not as interesting as they could be and any writing lacks a sense of purpose. Similarly, adult's displays on the wall of questions about writing and the writing and numbers on the activity sheets (which are thoughtfully tailored to children's interests, for example, snakes and cheetahs) are often too small for children to recognise and easily copy. Since the last inspection the playgroup no longer offers more able children the opportunity to start to learn letters and the sounds they make. Pupils enjoy playing outside, especially shovelling snow. There are regular chances for them to play outside and good use is made of photographic evidence to chart their development.

Staff are getting to grips with new ways of assessing children's progress and information gained is generally used to plan new learning. Children feel safe and secure and staff are kind and caring. Staff look out for anyone on their own and encourage them to join in with the others. Children are beginning to understand those foods which are good for them. They are sometimes unduly wary of basic foods and hesitant to try them. The self-service aspect of the snack bar, whilst encouraging children's greater independence, for example though preparing fruit, means chances to sit round a table with adults, socialise and be encouraged to be braver with different foods and try them are missed.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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