

# Soham Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY390532  
**Inspection date** 14/01/2010  
**Inspector** Gill Bosschaert

**Setting address** The Weatheralls Cp School, Pratt Street, Soham, ELY,  
Cambridgeshire, CB7 5BH

**Telephone number** 07789316851

**Email**

**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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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

Soham Playgroup is one of two settings managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It opened at Easter 2009 in its present purpose built premises situated in Weatherall's county primary school, Soham, Cambridgeshire. The setting is on the Early Years Register and is able to accept a maximum of 25 children within the early years age group at any one time. There are currently 60 children on roll. There are two sessions one from 9.00am to 11.30am Monday, Wednesday and Friday. An afternoon session from 12.15pm to 2.45pm held Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Currently the afternoon children are the older funded children while the morning sessions are for the younger children. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs four members of staff. Of these, all including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. Children have use of a group room with adjacent toilets, kitchen and secure outdoor play area.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Soham Playgroup meets the needs of the early years children well, there is good support for their learning and development, and their welfare is effectively promoted. This is an inclusive setting where the needs of each individual child are met well, and there is good support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. Partnerships with parents are good, and the setting works effectively with the school and other agencies to ensure all children receive the necessary support and guidance. Improvements have been made since the last inspection and leaders have shown they have good capacity 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:

- ensure a single central record is kept of staff suitability
- ensure children have more opportunity to grow in independence and self-help skills.

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

Leadership and management is good. A wide range of policies and procedures and accurate completion of records ensures children's needs are well met and that they

are fully safeguarded. Risk assessment take place daily and is recorded. Effective systems are in place to ensure that all staff are suitably qualified and appropriately vetted, although at present this documentation is held on file, it is not confined to a single central record. All staff are well trained and very keen to keep up-to-date with their training taking every opportunity to attend courses and other training. One member of staff is attending a course on Travellers, which has encouraged staff to think about Diversity and Equality for all members of the community. Two members of staff hold paediatric first aid certificates. The recommendation from the last inspection has been implemented.

Partnership with parents is very good, they have many opportunities to know and understand what their children are doing and how well they are achieving and meet and get to know their child's key worker. Regular newsletters are produced and little notebooks sent home with children to keep parents informed about their child's day in the playgroup and playgroup staff of any difficulties at home. Planning is on an individual basis. Key workers focus on areas for development, observing, assessing and recording, this includes 'next steps', all notes and records are kept in children's files and sent home for parents each term. Child and parent have an opportunity to discuss achievements and report back in note form to staff. Helpful booklets containing photographs of children at various stages of play are displayed, these would benefit from annotations to help parents understand the developmental stages.

Staff show great warmth, care and attention to the needs and safety of the children putting the child at the heart of all that they do. There are good, well-established, links with local health services and others, for example, the local Lollipop lady, Fire service, adjacent nursery, dentist and doctor all of whom are welcome visitors to the playgroup.

Self-evaluation is very good. The Self-evaluation form is not yet on line but it has been completed with staff. Links with the county adviser for evaluation ensure standards are well understood and recorded in an Early Years Quality Framework file, which has areas to develop included.

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

The quality of the provision is good. Learning areas are well defined, resources are plentiful, bright, well kept and easily accessible to the children allowing them to develop their independence and show initiative through free choice. Staff are adept at placing themselves in areas where the children can involve them in their play and discussions, encouraging language development and questioning skills. Planning is broad covering all areas for development. Individual planning for focus children includes assessments. Behaviour is excellent, children are encouraged to share and be kind to each other, which they do willingly. Staff are vigilant at ensuring all children are involved in some form of activity and the most reluctant are encouraged gently throughout the session. The book corner has a good variety of books including some bilingual Polish books, staff are actively looking for other bilingual books as the playgroup has children from European and eastern European

counties on roll. More multicultural understanding could be developed with utensils in the home corner, clothes in the dressing up box and other resources, such as small world people, puzzles and picture books. There are opportunities for mark making using both large and small paper and a variety of tools, problem solving and several types of small world equipment all of which were well used during the inspection especially the pets' world table. Children wash their hands before snack time and are also reminded to do so after visiting the toilet. Independence is also encouraged at snack time when children pour their own water or milk, the jugs are a little large and spillages would be less frequent if smaller jugs were used but the opportunity to be independent is given. Mopping up being a sought after occupation all part of their learning and development and self-help skills. Children washing their own mug and discarding rubbish themselves could further develop this area. Children have access to water at all times. One snack table for children to sit and eat when they wish would ease the squeeze and allow some children to continue in their play if they are so inclined. As well as the healthy snacks that are brought into school staff discuss other fruit and vegetables at these times to encourage healthy lifestyles. Staff too, bring in a healthy snack to enjoy while talking to the children acting as good role models.

Music and movement to well-known nursery rhymes and songs ensure children take some additional exercise during the session while also encouraging their development and understanding of the English language. The fun and enjoyment of the session was visible on the happy smiling faces and the laughter while struggling to remember words and actions within this safe learning environment was enjoyed by all present. Good opportunities are given for children to explore musical instruments and learn their names during this fun time.

Normally there is free access to a well appointed outside area but work to a manhole, impeded by the snow, has meant that most children go out at one time into the school playground. This they did willingly, in spite of the rain, running, using the large climbing equipment and also with tricycles and prams. Children are encouraged to put on their coats using the hood first, most were able to then put their arms in themselves. Extra care is taken at home time when children sit at tables to wait until a parent arrives, while two members of staff man the door. This ensures swift, smooth departure for the children and any children left are then quickly diverted to the books and involved in discussion by the remaining staff members thus ensuring that the child is well occupied.

Children make good progress in a warm secure setting enabling them to develop the necessary skills to readily embark on 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
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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