

Pierremont Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 24/02/2010
Inspector Julie Morrison

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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

Pierremont Playgroup has been registered since 1999 and is managed by a committee. It operates from a large hall within the Holy Trinity Youth and Community Centre close to Darlington town centre. There is access to an outdoor play area. The building is shared with other users but the group have sole use when in sessions. The playgroup is open Monday to Thursday from 9.30am to 11.30am during school term time only. The group is registered on the Early Years Register to care for up to 26 children aged from two to five years of age. They currently have 43 children in this age range on roll. The pre-school employs seven members of staff, two of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Children and their families are warmly welcomed into the setting by friendly staff, who have adequate procedures in place to gather sufficient information about children's individual needs. Children take part in a suitable range of activities which cover most areas of learning. However, the setting has not developed procedures to plan activities based on children's individual needs. This does not support their progression towards the early learning goals. The manager has some understanding of areas for development, however systems to evaluate the practice are not established to ensure continuous improvement. Consequently, several of the specific legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are not being met. This does not effectively safeguard children or promote their welfare.

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:

- develop the record of risk assessment, clearly stating when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and any action taken following an incident (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 31/03/2010
- ensure that half of all staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification (Suitable people) 30/06/2010
- ensure that Ofsted are kept informed of significant events, including changes to members of the management committee (Suitable people) 31/03/2010
- ensure that the individual needs of all children are met by implementing an effective key worker system (Organisation) 31/03/2010

- undertake sensitive observational assessments in order to plan experiences which meet children's individual needs (Organisation).

31/03/2010

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further support children's understanding of good health by encouraging them to wash their hands before a snack
- develop systems to ensure that all staff are fully familiar with the behaviour management policy and understand how to implement age appropriate techniques for managing children's behaviour
- promote effective continuity and progression by sharing relevant information about children's learning and development with other provisions and parents.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Organisation at the setting is not sufficient enough to effectively safeguard children and ensure that all legal requirements are being met. The playgroup ensures that suitable procedures for the vetting of staff are implemented. However, they have not ensured that Ofsted have been informed of changes to the management committee. This means that suitability checks have not been carried out for all members of the management committee. The manager and her deputy both hold appropriate qualifications. However, they are not meeting the legal requirement to ensure that half of all remaining staff hold an appropriate level 2 qualification. Some staff are currently attending training to meet this requirement, however, at present, this does not effectively safeguard children. A member of staff with a current first aid certificate is present at the playgroup at all times. This is combined with appropriate procedures to obtain consent for emergency medical treatment, which ensures that they could deal with any emergencies quickly and appropriately. Staff have some procedures in place to keep children safe at the setting, including keeping external doors locked, keeping a record of visitors and doing weekly checks of all space and equipment. A checklist of risks is in place, however, this does not meet the requirements. It does not highlight the action taken to minimise risks and it has not been updated to include action taken following any incidents. For example, it does not include the play telephone box where there has been incidents of children trapping their fingers. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. This is supported with a written policy and a named person responsible for safeguarding children.

Staff form friendly and welcoming relationships with parents, who speak positively about the care their children receive. They comment that the setting and staff, are 'very friendly' and that their children 'enjoy coming'. They have suitable procedures in place to ensure that parents are informed about the setting. The manager discusses key policies with parents at the start and important information such as certificate of registration and public liability insurance is displayed for parents to see. Parents are kept up-to-date about their child's activities and care through

daily verbal feedback. The setting has developed positive relationships with some other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, they talk to childminders about what the children have been doing. However, they have not developed procedures to share information about children's progression towards the early learning goals with parents or other providers. This does not ensure continuity of learning. The playgroup currently has no children attending with special educational needs and/or disabilities, however, the manager demonstrates a positive attitude towards working with other providers if required, to help to meet individual needs.

The manager attends regular playgroup network meetings and gathers feedback from parents to help to develop practice. She has positively addressed the recommendations raised at the previous inspection which helps to promote outcomes for children. She has an adequate understanding of areas for improvement, for example, improving children's access to information communication technology (ICT). However, systems for developing self-evaluation are not effective and other weaknesses have not been identified. Consequently, several breaches of the legal requirements have been made. This does not foster a culture of continuous improvement. Staff make good use of the available space so that children can move around and access a wide range of activities and resources. This helps to encourage children to make choices about their play and to develop independence.

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

Most children are generally happy and settled at the playgroup. They part from their parents confidently and immediately engage in play with their peers. However, although some children are comforted and cuddled when upset, the setting has not assigned a key worker system to help children become familiar with the setting and to feel confident and safe within it. This does not meet the legal requirements and does not ensure that all children have their individual needs met. For example, some of the quieter unsettled children go generally unnoticed by staff and remain disengaged in any activities or with any staff for most of the session.

The manager has basic plans in place for each week, which ensures that most areas of learning are being covered through the provision of resources and some planned activities. Resources to promote children's awareness of ICT are limited, however, the manager has identified this and is currently addressing it. Staff set up a variety of activities which promote children's creativity, such as painting, play dough and glue. A suitable range of resources such as books, dolls and play wheelchairs combined with planned activities, for example, celebrating the Chinese New Year helps children to begin to learn about diversity and different cultures. Children independently select books, which they take to staff to read and begin basic mark making as staff encourage them to write a 'shopping list' as they role play. An appropriate range of equipment, such as jigsaws and construction materials helps children to develop problem solving skills. For example, they make towers out of blocks, talking about how big it is and pretending it is a trumpet.

Generally, staff interact appropriately with most of the children, take an interest in what they are doing and encourage them to talk about animals and what their babies are called. Some staff extend learning as they ask children to name colours or to count how many blocks they have. However, staff do not understand the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager does have a limited understanding of the requirements and has developed individual learning journeys for each child. These include photographs of the children with captions of what activities they have been involved in. However, they are not linked to the areas of learning and are not used to inform future planning. This does not support children's progression towards the early learning goals. Staff read stories at circle time and sing well known nursery rhymes with the children. However, this does not fully engage all children and some, especially the younger children, lose interest. This has a negative impact on some children's behaviour. A written behaviour management policy is in place, however, effective age appropriate behaviour management methods are not consistently employed by all staff throughout the session. This does not effectively promote children's self-esteem or promote positive behaviour.

Children have some opportunities to learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a range of nutritious and tasty snacks, such as bananas, apple and raisins. Staff remind them to wash their hands after using the toilet or after messy play, however, they do not wash their hands before a snack. This does not promote their good health. The children sometimes have opportunities to use the outdoor space for play, benefiting from fresh air and exercise. This is combined with opportunities to be physical within the playgroup, for example, exploring the slide and climbing frame, crawling through tunnels and bouncing on the mini trampoline. They participate in practising the emergency evacuation procedure, to ensure they are confident of what to do should an incident arise. This helps children to begin to learn about keeping themselves safe.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	4
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	3
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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