

Parkwood 'Poppets' Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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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

Parkwood Poppets Playgroup opened in 1977 and operates from one room in a community centre. It is situated in Parkwood, Gillingham. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday, term time only, from 9am to 12pm. Children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school is registered to care for up to 16 children in the early years age group. There are currently 30 children aged from two to five years on roll. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

The playgroup employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children receive an individualised service which is adapted to meet their needs. They benefit from good, sensitive support as they are each valued and treated with patience and respect by the staff who work well as a team. Staff have a good understanding of their home circumstances, individual needs, interests and abilities. Children benefit from the implementation of policies and procedures which support close relationships with parents. However, there is no record of the risk assessment and the procedures to evaluate the current service are not robust, mainly due to the move to temporary accommodation which has prevented improvements being implemented. As a result, some aspects are satisfactory and other areas of children's welfare, care learning are good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- maintain a record of aspects that need to be checked regularly and a record of when and by whom they have been checked (Suitable premises, environment & equipment) 31/07/2010

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

- ensure induction training is provided for new staff to help them understand how the provision operates and their role within it

- introduce a self-evaluation system that helps to identify the strengths of the setting and the areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and have attended training to safeguard children. There are regular emergency evacuations to familiarise staff and children with the procedures. Induction procedures for staff are not secure as there is no written information for them to refer to if they cannot remember the verbal training they receive when they first start. There is no record of the risk assessment although staff do review safety informally and have ensured hazards are minimised. This is a breach of a specific legal requirement. However, the premises are very secure and the staff supervise children vigilantly, ensuring there are no hazards.

There are sufficient resources available to meet children's needs although staff have had to reduce these due to very limited storage space while the rooms they usually use are being refurbished. Staff find it very difficult to bring out large toys and resources from the store in the car park and arrange these in the room they use. The staff tend to rely on their input with children to challenge and extend learning rather than providing lots of resources for children to select from and extend their own play experiences. There are toys and resources which children can access, including those reflecting disabilities and diversity, such as books and dolls. Staff use their considerable skills in developing good relationships with children and their parents to support children with English as an additional language and those with special education needs and/or disabilities. Staff make it a clear priority to get to know children well and to use their observational skills to settle them in and encourage their confidence to develop. Parents are given the opportunity to complete learning journals which provide information about children's experiences outside the group. Staff use this to inform their work and try to develop opportunities to encourage all children and parents to share experiences and information. For instance, they have been given home made samosas and chapattis and later made their own.

Copies of the policies and procedures are given to parents so that they are informed about all the arrangements to care for children. The staff work closely with parents, sharing information about their needs, abilities and progress, and obtaining consent from parents whenever needed. Records are shared with parents and there is a good exchange of information facilitated through the use of the learning journals for each child. The parents are very pleased with the service they receive: they are kept informed about the experiences of their children through the use of verbal and written feedback. The children's individual folders are shared with parents and regular discussions enable consistent practice between children's care at home and their care here. The staff work with other specialist agencies and organisations in order to support the children, mostly by using information parents give them. Staff take advice from the local authority specialists whenever this is needed, using consent from parents.

Staff have not effectively evaluated the service they offer at present as this is affected by the move to temporary accommodation. They feel they have had to make concessions and compromises as they have less resources available and they are unable to adapt the current premises successfully. They have been unable to use the outdoor play area regularly as this is often affected by the building work and therefore not suitable. However, staff are looking forward to returning to the improved facilities which they have helped to design, in the near future. Staff have worked hard to enable children to benefit from the close relationships they have established and to continue to enjoy interesting play and learning experiences.

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

Staff support child initiated learning successfully by building upon the individual interests of all the children. There are records showing that all children contribute to the play plans through their conversations with staff and requests for particular toys. This means that the play opportunities provided are always popular with children which results in children enjoying the activities, even though the opportunities to select toys and resources for themselves are restricted because of the use of temporary accommodation and storage difficulties. There is a system for recording children experiences and achievements, and staff use this to plan for their learning. All staff effectively promote opportunities for children to progress through the activities they plan and deliver. Staff use their knowledge and understanding of children to plan activities and enable children to achieve the next steps in their development.

Staff ensure every area of learning is covered by their observational assessments and this enables learning priorities for each child to be identified accurately. Staff are sufficiently skilful to allow children to extend their experiences and explore by asking good questions and making suggestions to further their play and learning. Children are not currently able to benefit from regular opportunities to use the outdoor areas, as use of these is restricted by building work while their usual accommodation is being refurbished. They do sometimes go out in the locality and discuss the outside environment and have opportunities to engage in vigorous physical play inside.

Children are encouraged to develop their understanding and sense of responsibility by assisting in tidying up. For example, they help to tidy away some toys and are familiar with the routines, happily sitting in small groups to enjoy their snack and drink and discussing their preferences with others. All the children feel secure and show how confident they are by helping themselves to different fruits and healthy snacks. Children are familiar with good personal hygiene practices, such as hand washing, and staff are vigilant in providing tissues for them. They enjoy well balanced snacks, comprising various fruit, cheese or breadsticks and a drink of their choice during the break. They are able to pour drinks of water using the jug and cups provided although they are not reminded of this. Children with particular dietary needs receive support to ensure these are met by staff who refer to their records if in any doubt. There are limited opportunities for children to use outside areas for play at present.

Children enjoy a varied and interesting range of play activities to support their progress towards the early learning goals. Adults work very closely with them, listening to what they say and encouraging them to express their own ideas and follow their own interests. Children's relationships with each other reflect the inclusive attitude of the staff who are welcoming and friendly towards families and visitors. All the children play harmoniously together and behaviour is good. This results from the sensitive attitudes of staff who meet the needs of children of different ages and stages of development and who enable children to settle in quickly and feel relaxed.

Children really enjoy their learning, they show great enthusiasm for the activities organised for them and particularly enjoy the input from staff. For example, children enjoy sharing books when staff read these and remain in the improvised book corner to continue looking at these. Staff are very enthusiastic and praise children's achievements all the time which results in keen learners who are confident and engaged. This also compensates for the restriction of not being able to display the children's work. Children enjoy using the bikes and slide inside as there is plenty of space for them to do so. Occasional trips outside encourage children to take an interest in nature and observe the natural environment. They also enjoy regular use of the computers at a neighbouring school and use the v-tech and other programmable resources here frequently. Staff ensure the resources are used to maximum effect and spend time and effort ensuring suitable toys and equipment enable good progress for individuals. For example, children who are not confident speakers are allowed to use, and to take home, the talking tins which record their speech and play it back. Cooking is popular with children and staff ensure there are weekly opportunities to do this and there are always varied resources available for imaginative play which is popular.

Children learn to keep themselves safe because the staff remind them to use play equipment sensibly. They are cared for in clean premises and they participate in regular emergency evacuations which are recorded and planned. Staff care for sick children appropriately and manage any accidents using their up-to-date first aid skills. Accidents are recorded promptly although the record used does not enable confidentiality as there are two accidents noted on each page; however, this record is due to be replaced soon.

Children have very good opportunities to learn about aspects of their own cultures and those of others; they do this by celebrating festivals, learning about varied foods and using books and resources reflecting different cultural traditions. There are clear and well understood procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are welcomed into the setting. Children with English as an additional language are successfully enabled to develop their communication skills by staff who employ a variety of skills and interesting resources to support them.

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	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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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	3
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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