

Battle Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Liz Margaret Caluori
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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

Battle Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1967. It operates from two rooms in purpose-built accommodation in a residential area in the village of Battle, East Sussex. There is also a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register to provide care for a maximum of 30 children under eight years at any one time. During term time the group offers a service to children in the early years age group and this is extended to include the older children during the school holidays. There are currently 57 children on roll attending a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

During term time the group opens five days a week with a morning session running from 9.15am until 11.45am, a lunch club from 11.45am until 12.15pm and an afternoon session from 12.15pm until 2.45pm. Opening hours in the holiday periods are 9.00am until 3.00pm.

There are eight staff working with the children, of these, seven hold a recognised childcare qualification including two who have early years foundation degrees.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress in all areas of their development as a result of the care and attention given to identifying and addressing their very individual needs. They play and learn in a safe, inspiring and extremely child-centred environment. Good communication and information sharing with parents, carers and other professionals ensures that children receive carefully planned, co-ordinated and consistent care. A strong capacity for continual improvement and highly effective self-evaluation enables staff to offer a service which is constantly evolving to meet the needs of its users.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- offering greater encouragement for parents and carers to contribute to the setting of educational and developmental goals for their child.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Extremely robust arrangements are in place to ensure that children are effectively protected, including stringent recruitment procedures. Risk assessments are undertaken on all aspects of the provision and are skilfully aimed at encouraging children to develop independence in a safe, secure environment. One member of staff takes lead responsibility for co-ordinating child protection concerns and has attended the advanced training course provided by the local authority to support her in this role. Clear written policies outline the procedures to be followed should staff have any concerns about any child.

Outstanding leadership and effective team working result in a service which is clearly focussed on providing the best possible outcomes for the children attending. Ongoing reflection and self-evaluation is used very effectively to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the group. This has resulted in a number of recent improvements being made, including significant adaptations to the outdoor play areas. The play surfaces have been improved and a large covered structure has been provided to offer shade in the summer and shelter in the rain. In addition, refinements have been made to the systems for observing and monitoring children's development and all written policies and procedure are in the process of being reviewed.

Parents and carers receive a very friendly greeting as they deliver and collect their children. They are provided with an impressive range of written information including policies, newsletters and notices displayed in the entrance lobby. In addition, they are very well informed about the progress their child is making and attend regular meetings with their child's key person. They are given very clear information about the next steps identified for their child in each area of learning. They have extremely good opportunities to share observations from home and to comment on these next steps although they are not all routinely becoming involved in the setting of their child's developmental goals. The group has been extremely pro-active, and successful, in its efforts to create good working relationships and effective communication with other professionals. This includes other childcare providers involved in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. This supports staff to ensure that they are able to provide care which is carefully co-ordinated to meet children's very individual needs.

The staff team demonstrate a complete commitment to providing a fully inclusive environment for children. This results in a provision which is very thoughtfully and competently organised to reflect the needs of its users and to promote an understanding of, and respect for, diversity. The building is fully accessible to wheelchair users and staff are trained to care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting also has effective strategies in place to work with children and families who have English as an additional language. Children have access to an exceptionally good range of toys and resources. These have been carefully selected to ensure that they promote positive images of people from throughout the community and do not reinforce stereotyping. This has been extremely effective in supporting children to develop their understanding of the

lives of others, for example they have previously enjoyed a visit from a person who is registered as blind. There is a wheelchair that they can use in their freely chosen play. This allows them to gain first hand experience of steering and manoeuvring which make them more sensitive to the practical issues faced by wheelchair users.

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

Children have tremendous fun in the pre-school and are making outstanding progress as a result of the excellent level of support they receive from the staff. They are supported to explore and investigate their environment and to develop the confidence to experiment, fail and try again in a safe, caring environment. As a result, much of their learning and development is based on real-life practical experiences. The majority of each session is given over to freely chosen play which is almost entirely child-led. Staff also plan a range of activities which have a degree of adult direction but these are very clearly planned to reflect children's interests.

Children have access to a range of wonderfully imaginative and well resourced activities aimed at addressing all areas of their development. They have exceptionally good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, they are enthusiastic gardeners, planting and tending their flowers and vegetable patches. In addition, staff have created a shallow muddy pit, with a removable lid, to create an environment to encourage bugs and mini-beasts. Children show great interest and care as they study, and confidently discuss, the snails, slugs and woodlice they have found. Staff are highly skilled at extending children's learning by giving them additional information in a way that children find fascinating. An example of the outstanding quality of the experiences provided includes an activity in which staff created large orbs of ice encasing small, brightly coloured plastic toys. This activity was enormously successful in inspiring children's imagination. One child was almost unable to contain his excitement, virtually exploding with questions about the properties of ice and suggestions on how to free the toys. This led to a very animated discussion in which children confidently put forward a range of theories and spoke confidently about freezers and ways in which to make ice melt.

Children are developing extremely good social skills and are beautifully behaved. They very confidently select the resources that they want to play with and make very good use of the well organised environment. They benefit from the free-flow arrangements which allow them to move between the indoor and outdoor play areas. They have excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills such as climbing, balancing and running in the imaginatively landscaped outdoor play space. There is also a lot of space inside the building for physical games, an example of this being a child who decided to express himself through the medium of break dance. His skills were praised by the manager who, despite her best efforts and the expert tuition of the child, was unable to master the technique of 'head spinning'.

Children are very well supported to understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles. Nutritious snacks are offered midway through each session and drinks

are constantly available. Those who stay all day bring in lunches from home and parents and carers are given a very good range of advice on how to promote healthy eating. Children are also developing excellent self-care skills. Most children are able to visit the toilets independently although staff are always on hand to offer support when needed. Children routinely wash their hands and are also encouraged to use tissues to blow their nose when necessary. They enjoy visits from a range of health professionals and are currently making very good use of a large 'medical centre' role play area.

Overall, the pre-school offers children an outstanding service which ensures that their individual potential is fully developed and that they are well prepared for the transition into school.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
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	1

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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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