

St Leonard's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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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

St Leonard's Playgroup opened in 1976. It run by representatives of the church and operates from the church hall in the village of Oakley, near Basingstoke. The playgroup has use of a large hall that has recently been refurbished. The playgroup has access to an enclosed outdoor area. The playgroup is open from 9.10am to 12.20pm Monday to Thursday mornings and from Friday from 9.10am to 2.45pm. The playgroup opens during school term time only.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children from two years to the end of the early years age group. There are currently 25 children on roll in the early years age group. Children attend from the village and local surrounding area. The playgroup is able to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and support children who speak English as an additional language.

There are eight staff currently working with the children, seven of whom hold a recognised early years qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a good range of activities and play experiences that support their development well. Monitoring and planning systems to ensure children's progress are not always consistent. The playgroup makes some positive improvements and self-evaluation is beginning to evolve and develop further. Staff demonstrate a suitable awareness of safeguarding issues. However, the playgroup does not always make effective use of the safeguarding policy and procedure. The playgroup develops good communication and partnerships with parents and others.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure the safeguarding children policy and procedure are suitably implemented, for example, to effectively liaise with parents and other agencies when appropriate
- ensure observations and assessments of each child's achievements are systematic and use these observations and assessments to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child, consistently match observations to the expectations of the early learning goals
- develop self assessment and evaluation to extend and develop children's outcomes further.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff benefit from the cascading of safeguarding training to them by a member of the staff team. This adequately supports staff's knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children. Staff demonstrate a suitable understanding of the potential signs and symptoms of abuse and the steps to take in the event of concerns. However, the playgroup lacks a strong understanding of the importance of liaising with parents and other agencies when appropriate. Risk assessments for the premises, outdoor area and outings are clearly completed and regularly reviewed. This reduces potential risks and hazards to children. The playgroup practises the evacuation procedure regularly. This enables staff and children to become confident in the procedure, supporting them well in the event of an emergency.

The playgroup is beginning to make some positive improvements, such as, seeking out further information about children's backgrounds and purchasing resources to reflect these. They suitably base some of their improvements from information from inspections and the local authority advisors. The playgroup is considering sound ways to gain further views from parents and children, such as, introducing a questionnaire. Staff attend some further training and meetings to support and develop practice at the playgroup. As a result, the playgroup makes appropriate continuous improvements to benefit the children and families.

Activities and low level storage units enable children to select from a good range of resources. This enables children to initiate their own play and ideas well. The playgroup gains good information from parents during initial discussions about their children's individual needs, such as, languages spoken and cultural needs. The playgroup encourages parents to supply words in home languages so that they can support and meet the needs of children who speak English as an additional language well. The playgroup develops good working partnerships. Parents have access to a very informative prospectus along with notice boards. Effective arrival and departure procedures enable parents to speak to staff and exchange information. This promotes good consistency and continuity for children. Staff are relaxed and approachable and parents have time to settle their children. The playgroup works closely with other settings and the local school. This supports transitions well.

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

Children settle quickly and happily on arrival. Staff positively welcome them and their parents and carers. Most children confidently decide what to do, such as, finding their friends or choosing an activity. Staff have a warm, kind and caring approach towards the children. This helps children feel appropriately safe and secure in their care. Staff make children suitably aware of their own safety, for example, through reminders to be careful. Role play also supports their understanding of their safety outside the playgroup, such as, road safety. As a result, children begin to develop a sound awareness of their own and others

safety.

Good clear transition experiences are in place. New children and parents benefit from effective settling in procedures that meet their individual needs. Teachers from the local school visit the children at the playgroup. This enables children to make links to the school and their new teacher prior to starting school. The playgroup supports children's understanding of the transition to school well, for example, through providing 'school' role play with dressing up items that include the local school uniform and bags. Good communication with childminders promotes consistency and continuity for children.

Children play cooperatively with each other and develop good friendships with their peers. Children initiate their ideas during group activities well, for example, building towers. Staff very soundly use these experiences to extend children's knowledge and understanding, such as, asking questions to support children's critical thinking skills and introducing mathematical language. This effectively supports children's learning through play. Children take good care of the playgroup environment; they water the plants and tidy up. As a result, they contribute positively to the playgroup and develop a sense of responsibility. Children benefit from celebrating a good range of religious and festival dates at the preschool, many of which reflect the individual backgrounds of the children and families. This effectively values the children's differences and supports children's understanding of people different to themselves well.

Free flow play to the outdoor area ensures children benefit from plenty of fresh air and physical activity. The outdoor area has activities that reflect the six areas of learning well. Children make good use of the outdoor area, demonstrating high levels of enthusiasm for being outside. Older and more able children show understanding of protecting their own and others good health, for example, they find their sun hats and inform their peers that they 'need to wear a hat'. Children independently help themselves to water from the drink dispenser. This enables children to keep themselves hydrated. Children benefit from involvement in preparing snacks. This increases children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle, as they wash their hands and cut up fruit.

Children learn well through their play and staff interactions. As a result, children develop good skills for the future. Good support from staff encourages children to count and recognise numbers as part of their play, for example, using foam number tiles. Children show great enthusiasm for using information and communication technology equipment. They enjoy using a laptop to create pictures, take photographs, and then proudly view their efforts. Print and name cards in the environment soundly support children's understanding that print carries meaning, such as, the self registration system, and menu and name cards used at snack time. Children write for a purpose, the older and more able children label their artwork without prompts from staff. Children benefit from experiences and resources to mark make and use their emergent writing, for example, in the role play area and outside on the chalkboard. Observations of children's achievements are regularly undertaken. However, these do not always fully evaluate children's progress or consistently identify the next steps of learning for

children. As a result, there is not always sufficient focus on planning for individuals to ensure children reach their absolute potential.

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?	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
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	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	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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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