

Windmills Opportunity 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

Windmills Opportunity Playgroup was registered in 1984. It operates from one large room within Sheddingdean Community Centre in Burgess Hill, West Sussex. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup is open Tuesday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.45am until 12.15pm.

The playgroup is registered to care for a maximum of 16 children aged from two to five years. It is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 26 children aged from two to five years on roll. A number of the children have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and a number are learning English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group is run as an educational trust and attendance at the group is through referral from the child's doctor, health visitor, social services or through self-referral.

Eight staff work with the children. Three of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications, one is in training for Early Years Professional Status, and two other staff are also in training.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff are skilled in recognising the uniqueness of each child and in meeting their individual needs effectively. This results in the children making good progress in their overall learning and development given their particular starting points, as well as helping to narrow the achievement gap. Staff are highly committed to supporting the children and their families so that each child, particularly those with additional needs, receives appropriate support within the group and through the good partnerships staff have with external agencies. There is also a strong drive to improve the outcomes for children, with clear and realistic priorities for improvement, in order to continuously drive the group's achievements forward.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance the organisation of snack time to promote children's personal and social development
- develop further children's learning opportunities in the outdoor environment
- consider ways to promote further children's enjoyment of books to support their developing communication, language and literacy skills

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding procedures, including being fully aware of the possible symptoms of abuse and how to report concerns in order to help protect a child. A copy of the child protection policy and published guidelines are also easily accessible to parents. Staff and volunteers have appropriate checks to ensure their suitability to work with children and all staff follow effective induction and appraisal procedures. The premises are clean, safe and secure, and staff have effective procedures in place to ensure children's safety. These include good supervision of children both in and outdoors, as well as the completion and daily carrying out of risk assessments. All of the mandatory documentation required in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in place, stored securely for confidentiality and appropriately maintained.

The staff work well together as a team, to provide children with good levels of care and education. Staff are well deployed for the majority of the time, although the organisation of snack time does not always provide children with a calm, sociable time of day, in order to support their personal and social development. There is a good range of equipment easily accessible to the children, which is well used and enjoyed by everyone. Staff actively promote equality and diversity through their careful attention to children's individual needs, strong partnerships with parents, and the provision of activities and resources reflecting people from different backgrounds. Parents are happy with the playgroup, commenting how they feel welcome and supported and know they can seek advice and support at any time. There are also strong partnerships with other agencies and local childcare settings that children attend. Events such as a 'Health and Wellness Day', in cooperation with a local Children's Centre provide valuable opportunities for children and their families to learn more about healthy eating and exercise. Speech therapists regularly visit the group and take part in song times each week with the staff and children at the end of the session, using visual aids to help communicate with the children and encourage their participation. This highlights the successful partnership working between the different agencies.

Staff have a clear ambition to narrow the achievement gap for the children who attend and to drive improvement. This includes increasing staff's knowledge of particular special educational needs and disabilities children may have, as well as improving the outdoor environment and the long-term sustainability of the playgroup for the children. Staff appraisals are used to identify good practice and any training needs, to help each member of staff develop their professional knowledge and skills. They attend many training courses, work together to evaluate their practice and identify key priorities for improvement. The views of children and parents are sought through discussion and questionnaires to improve the provision. External audits by the local authority, along with quality improvement initiatives also provide the group with good opportunities to review and enhance their practice, to benefit the children's care and education.

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

Children are happy, secure and active learners within the enabling environment of the playgroup. They have formed good relationships with their peers and adults in the playgroup, creating a friendly and inclusive environment where everyone is valued and treated with respect. Staff are skilled and experienced at working with children with special educational needs and disabilities, successfully adapting their teaching to the capabilities, needs and interests of each child. This results in everyone making a positive contribution, feeling valued and gaining a strong sense of belonging. Staff work with a higher than required ratio of adults to children, and have a secure knowledge and understanding of their children's key needs and likes. They plan a good range of meaningful, interesting and challenging activities, based across all six areas of learning, both in and outdoors. For example children have been learning about fireworks and bonfire night, using paint and collage materials to create their own firework pictures, with children commenting how the paint feels 'slippy' on their hands. Children particularly like the free-flow between the indoors and garden, although staff do not always take full advantage of the available space and equipment to challenge and support children's overall development.

All of the children are observed and assessed on a regular basis, to identify next steps for their learning and development, which are achievable and realistic. Their learning journals are a positive reflection of their time at the group, and are shared with parents on a regular basis to encourage them to be fully involved in their child's learning. All of the children are developing key skills for the future, regarding communication, language and literacy, numeracy and information technology. They delight in touching the buttons on the computer, learning how to count as they throw objects into a net outdoors and learn new words, sounds and signs to aid communication. There is a good range of books easily accessible to the children, but they do not always make full use of the available literacy resources as they begin to understand that print carries meaning.

Children are familiar with routines, such as snack times and nappy changing, and learn about good hygiene practices, such as washing hands before eating. Snacks are nutritious, and drinks of water are freely available as part of a healthy diet. They get plenty of fresh air and exercise, as part of a healthy lifestyle, learning how to move their bodies in different ways in a safe way. They also enjoy painting large boxes in the garden, delighting in getting messy and working on a large scale. Children's safety is given a high priority and they are taught important messages about staying safe as they play. Positive behaviour is encouraged and the children behave well; this helps maintain a safe, comfortable environment for everyone.

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	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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	2
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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	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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