

Playtimes Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Lynne Talbot

Setting address

Ferriman Road, Spaldwick, HUNTINGDON, Cambridgeshire,
PE28 0TQ

Telephone number

01480 890077

Email

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

Playtimes Playgroup registered in 2002. The provision operates from a purpose built building in Spaldwick, Huntingdon. The building access is level in all areas. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

The provision is open each weekday during term-time only. Sessions are offered for breakfast club from 7.30am to 9.00am, and the playgroup session from 9.00am to until 3.00 pm. An optional lunch club is incorporated with children able to attend a flexible day within the opening hours. A maximum of 25 children may attend the provision at any one time. The provision receives funding for Nursery Education. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are currently 15 children on roll in this age range.

There are currently 26 children on roll within the early years age range. Some children attend other settings such as the early years unit of the local primary school or childminders. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children for whom English is an additional language. There are seven staff members, of whom five hold relevant childcare qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage is fully-focussed and child-led, supported by responsive planning covering all areas of learning. This ensures that children receive imaginative experiences that foster rapid progress in their learning and development. The staff group create a highly welcoming environment, using significantly effective safeguarding procedures and thorough risk assessments. These ensure that they have cohesive knowledge of each child's needs to ensure that every child is fully included. Partnerships with others agencies, together with those with parents and carers, are strong meeting all children's needs. The managers communicate ambition and drive, using developing self-evaluation procedures to secure purposeful continued improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing further the use of information gathered about children's learning to enhance their good progress towards the early learning goals with particular reference to using parental input into the learning programme
- broadening understanding of reflective practice in order to confidently

identify aspects of the service that are done well, and those aspects that might be improved, so as to continue to promote good outcomes for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Comprehensive and detailed safeguarding procedures ensure that children are fully protected. Senior management and administrative support ensure that all persons required undertake the appropriate checks to safeguard children. Daily routines within the premises and staff vigilance, ensures that safeguarding procedures work at all times. Close monitoring of visitors and the inner magnetic door release support the overall security. Senior management and committee implement in-depth recruitment and induction for staff to ensure that the staff group remain effective at all times. Annual appraisals and training programmes are in place to promote continued staff development. Risk assessment for the premises and outings undertaken are systematic and scrutinised to ensure their efficiency. An accident log is maintained and reviewed each month by the safety representative to identify action plans to address any recurring issues. All policies and procedures are thorough and reviewed regularly; every staff member has an input into the reviews with named responsible persons identified to ensure ongoing development. Senior management are highly enthusiastic and have clear expectations for progression. There is commitment to ongoing professional development throughout the staff group resulting in a positive impact on the care and learning provided. Self-evaluation processes are underway including quality review with input from their Cambridgeshire advisor, internal review in staff meetings and self-review documents to show how the Early Years Foundation Stage is met. However, the process does not yet fully incorporate reflective practice in order to confidently identify aspects of the service that are done well, and those aspects that might be improved, so as to continue to promote good outcomes for children.

Children's individual learning styles are fully respected. The provision offers care for children from two-years-old to entry into school at five-years-old. Close work with parents and the organisation of the sessions allows older children to be more independent whilst younger children receive close support to guide them in making choices from the activities on offer. This ensures that every child achieves. Staff are extremely well-deployed throughout the day with children having free movement between indoors and outside initiating their own learning. The environment is highly conducive to learning, safe and well-cared for, with an excellent range of quality play provision used to achieve the planned goals. The highly inclusive systems of communication used to engage parents and carers ensure that there are consistent and productive partnerships. Methods include an informative prospectus, a website, home visits, parent feedback sheets and periodical questionnaires, as well as parent consultation evenings. However, the provision is yet to show how they incorporate parental feedback and involvement within the planned learning programme for children. Parents comment that they find the provision 'fantastic' and that they are 'more than happy'. They also comment that they find it 'more challenging for their child than other settings'. Consequently outcomes for children are excellent due to the commitment of staff,

close attention to children's interests and the use of resources.

The managers and staff actively promote equality and diversity and tackle unfair discrimination. They are highly committed to working in partnership with others and play a proactive role in establishing effective working relationships. They use telephone contact, face-to-face meetings and shared learning plans with other settings. The provision work closely with several other professional agencies where support for children is required. Within the provision they incorporate visual timetables and symbols, 'what are we doing today' 'timelines', and signing to help all children to be fully involved in all areas. They show a committed and forward-thinking attitude towards the overall care for every child and make links to work cohesively. The managers and staff make the most of events and festivals to broaden children's awareness of each other's home culture. For instance, key words in other languages are learnt and shared, and they celebrate events and festivals to stimulate children's interest. The provision invite people into the group to share their culture or profession seeking to challenge stereotyping by encouraging children to view and be aware of people carrying out different roles within the community. This helps children to appreciate the local and wider society around them.

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

Children are offered well-planned activities that help them to make rapid progress in their learning and development. Assessment through recorded observation is clear and the information gained is used proactively to identify next steps and goals in an individual plan. Progression is fully detailed and closely monitored. Children play a full and active part in the planning for the provision. For example, periodical questionnaires are used, children are asked about their favourite things such as toys and television, and children have free choice over developing the pergola in the garden into a themed area. These surveys are displayed on the 'interest fish-board' which has space for both the provision and parents to display news and events. As a result of such surveys, weekly themes such as the previous one of 'princes and princesses' and the current one of a popular character are developed. Staff are skilled in capitalising on children's emerging interest. For instance, children learn to research unfamiliar things such as looking on the internet to research a Pomelo, a fruit with which they are not familiar, and beginning to use technology. When children ask if they can place cars into the water outdoors, staff quickly support their curiosity into floating and sinking by suggesting new things to try and guiding them through thinking about why some items will or will not float. Staff make frequent close observations during all sessions using a digital camera to enhance the assessment. Children question the use of technology around them and quickly become involved in taking photographs of each other. They competently use the computer and mouse, choosing programmes and changing the discs with help. Children use remote controlled cars and robots with ease as well as exploring binoculars and magnifying glasses. They are showing the curiosity needed to explore early science and technology for future skills.

Children show an avid interest in reading books and stories enjoying sharing these with each other and staff. Story sacks are used very effectively, especially with younger children, helping them to maintain concentration, anticipate endings to stories and linking actual objects to those in the text and illustrations. Story sacks are successfully used to help younger children settle into the day and make links with home. Story sacks to borrow and a shared library reading scheme foster the literacy links between the provision and home. Children use initial letters and sounds, identifying names confidently. For example, using dough and letter stamps they identify the name and sound of the letter. They have ample opportunities to begin mark-making in a variety of forms. Notebooks, diaries, labels and a huge variety of creative materials presented in labelled areas invite children to explore early writing. Children follow basic recipes when cooking, such as, during National Baking week, and show excellent recall when they describe how they make malleable dough. Children explore early tactile experiences to explore textures and materials, developing concentration skills and dexterity as they manipulate materials. This includes herbs, flour, tea and coffee as well as wet materials.

All children are physically active and have free access to the indoor and outdoor areas. Excellent facilities include natural materials such as planks, crates, logs and bricks to explore construction. Planned learning includes the use of circuits in the outdoor area, road safety works using the roadway and the zebra crossing around the garden, and the exploration of the natural world and insects. Children enjoy digging in the free garden plot as well as beginning to understand the cycle of growth. For example, they plant seeds including mange tout, tomatoes, potatoes, herbs, strawberries and sunflowers. They help to care for the growing plants, later harvesting them and preparing them to enjoy with snacks. Children gather the seeds from sunflowers to begin the process once more. Children make links between foods and health when enjoying cooking activities and snacks. They confidently tell adults about washing their hands with soap to remove germs before preparing or eating foods. They also know that most fruits need washing but that some, such as, bananas, need no washing as their skin protects the fruit inside. Incidental opportunities maximised by staff are incorporated into daily routines. For instance, when enjoying a snack children count the number of pieces of fruit needed to allow one piece each and calculate how many need to be taken away to leave the correct amount. They are able to make simple calculations to add and subtract. Children spontaneously use their knowledge during daily activities. For example, they say please and thank you, with little prompting, many children confidently saying thank you in French, Chinese, Spanish, German or Slovakian. They thoroughly enjoy discussing the different languages and know that some children within the group, or their parents, speak these languages.

Children play an active role in safety within the provision. They take part in regular evacuation routines and use high visibility tabards and walking rings to hold when on outings. Listening walks are completed regularly with children observing and recording what they see and hear around them. Children also carry out risk assessments in the premises using charts with picture and text to check basic hazards within indoor and outdoor areas. This exceptionally good practice helps children to fully understand their own safety. Children are developing excellent social awareness through a range of methods and fully exploring environmental

issues learning about sustainability. They independently work out rules for sharing, and fetch and use timers to take turns. They enjoy using the 'tidy up tree' which displays 'leaves' for children who are especially helpful. Project works focussed on the care for new equipment and items brought from home supports the development of care for the possessions of others. Children use recycling bins each day, use the 'ragbag' scheme collecting fabric and textiles from home, and gather items into shoe boxes to take part in the charity scheme. Children are clearly learning the skills and attitudes necessary for future learning and taking their places as part of the community.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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	1
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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