

Crescent Playgroup (The)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	123582
Inspection date	18/10/2010
Inspector	Jane Mount
Setting address	St.Lukes Church Hall, The Crescent,Bricket Wood, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL2 3NF
Telephone number	07879 850713
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

The Crescent Playgroup registered in 1993 and operates from St Lukes Church Hall in Bricket Wood, Hertfordshire. The setting has use of a large hall and associated facilities including toilets and a kitchen. There is a secure outside play area.

The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 34 children may attend at any one time with none under the age of two years. There are currently 30 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. Of these, 14 children receive government funding for early years education. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The Crescent Playgroup operates term time only and is open every weekday morning except Wednesdays from 9.15am to 11.45am. On Thursdays, a lunch club is available and an afternoon session operates until 3.15pm. The provision employs six members of staff, three of whom have appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Strong partnerships with parents and carers positively contribute to the setting's knowledge of individual children and ensures children's needs are met. An inclusive and welcoming environment is provided to all and a committed staff team effectively implement the setting's policies and procedures to ensure children are safe and their welfare is fully protected. Staff support children well in their learning and development and children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. The provision has a positive attitude to improvement and is aware of its key strengths and some of the areas it wishes to develop further. Systems to more effectively monitor the quality of the service offered, such as, self-evaluation, are in the early stages of development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further a quality improvement process, such as, self-evaluation, to monitor and extend effective practice to ensure continued improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are secure and children's welfare is protected. Staff have a secure knowledge of safeguarding procedures as they regularly update their child protection knowledge through training. There are two designated members of staff who are responsible for ensuring the correct safeguarding procedures are followed if there is a concern. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure staff are suitable to work with children and, therefore, children's welfare is protected. Children's safety is paramount with risk assessments in place to ensure the environment is safe. Staff closely supervises children and good security of the premises ensures no unauthorised person can gain access to the hall and that children cannot leave unsupervised. Consequently, children remain safe at all times.

The setting is committed to fully implementing the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are guided by a management team who strive to provide a quality service. They are aware of their key strengths and have some systems in place to monitor and assess the quality of the provision, such as, using staff meetings to evaluate practice and seeking feedback from parents through the use of questionnaires. A self-evaluation system to systematically identify the settings strengths and areas requiring further development has been introduced but is still in the early stages of development. The setting aims to actively use this as a way of ensuring continued improvement. All required documentation to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting is in place. This is informative and well-organised. Effective communication ensures staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and consequently they work well together as a team, which has a positive impact on outcomes for children. Continuous professional development is encouraged and staff have attended a variety of early years courses and workshops to ensure they are well-informed and their childcare knowledge is kept up-to-date.

Good use of space, resources and effective staff deployment ensures an environment that is safe and fully inclusive. As a result, children are happy and confident in their play and develop a strong sense of belonging as they feel included and welcomed into the setting. Children's specific needs are met because staff have developed positive relationships with parents and carers, which ensures information is effectively exchanged. A key person system and daily verbal communication with parents and carers ensures children's individual needs are met and children receive continuity in their care and learning. Parents are made aware of the setting's policies and procedures and they are kept informed of their children's progress and achievements through their children's learning journals. Newsletters are used to share information about current themes and topics. The setting shows a positive attitude and awareness to liaising with other early years providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and they have established links with the local school to fully promote the integration of care and education.

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

Children's learning and development are promoted. Staff understand that every child is unique and have systems in place to ensure they work closely with parents to meet children's individual needs. Staff monitor children's learning through regularly observing and assessing children to identify achievements and progress over time. Children's individual learning journals show how they are progressing and this information is informally used when planning future play experiences. Staff know the children in their care well and plan activities and play experiences which cover the six areas of learning and which take account of children's interests. Children are encouraged to use their independence skills when they take off their own aprons after a painting activity or help to tidy away resources before snack time. Resources are organised so children can make some choices in their play. They have regular opportunities to express themselves creatively. Children enjoy feeling the consistency of paint between their fingers when hand painting or exploring the texture of play dough when cutting and rolling it into shapes. They use their imagination when they pretend to buy different fruits and vegetables whilst playing shops. They listen and respond with enjoyment when looking at books and listening to stories. Children become familiar with the written word when they find their name card on arrival at the setting or before they sit down at snack time. They are beginning to understand about how writing has a purpose and keenly make shopping lists. Children's numeracy skills are fostered when singing songs that involve numbers or when counting how many chairs are around the table at snack time. They have access to some resources that develop their knowledge and understanding of technology and staff promote a positive awareness of diversity through discussion and some activities. Children learn about the wider world and about other cultures and religions and enjoyed making masks and lanterns for Chinese New Year and listening to traditional Chinese music. They talk about their families and home life, learn about the local community and have visits from the police, the local vicar and a postman. Children learn about the environment through activities, such as, finding insects in the garden and learning about them or talking about the seasons and collecting leaves to make a picture.

Staff are proactive in implementing some effective strategies to promote and safeguard children's health. For example, highly effective systems are in place to deal with children with food allergies including staff undertaking additional training. Hygiene procedures are applied at snack time, such as, cleaning the tables and ensuring hand washing takes priority before children eat. Consequently, children's health is protected. Through discussion and a variety of activities children are learning how to stay healthy and about personal care routines. For example, children are aware of the need to wash their hands before they eat and after visiting the toilet. When asked they are able to confidently say the reasons for doing so. Healthy eating is promoted and staff encourage discussion about the benefits of eating plenty of fruit and vegetables. Children develop self-confidence in their physical skills as they use a varied range of indoor and outdoor equipment and activities on a daily basis. They are learning that exercise can be fun and enjoy participating in a variety of parachute games. They have opportunities to climb, balance on beams, develop their jumping skills on a small trampoline or negotiate

around obstacles on small bikes. Children demonstrate a strong sense of security and are confident and self-assured in the setting. Positive relationships between staff, children, parents and carers enable children to feel secure. The environment is safe and children are learning how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they are aware they must not push others when waiting in a line to go and wash their hands. Staff sensitively remind children not to run when indoors in case they fall and hurt themselves or others. Behaviour is managed in a positive manner with clear boundaries set by staff and, as a result, children behave well. Praise and encouragement ensure children develop high levels of self-esteem. Staff reinforce sharing and taking turns and discuss how children's behaviour can have an impact on others. Children are valued as individuals and in turn are learning to respect each other's differences and to manage their own behaviour.

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

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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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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