

South Witham Village Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	253492
Inspection date	08/12/2010
Inspector	Edgar Hastings

Setting address	South Witham County Primary School, Water Lane, South Witham, Lincolnshire, NG33 5PH
Telephone number	07840 598203
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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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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

South Witham Playgroup is a committee run provision, which opened in 1988 and was registered with Ofsted in 1994. It is situated in the centre of South Witham village and serves the local rural community. It operates from a classroom in the main building of the village primary school. The playgroup has use of the school hall, playground and school field.

The playgroup is registered to care for 18 children at any one time. Currently, there are 20 children on roll who are within the early years age range. The playgroup is in receipt of funding for early years provision. It is able to support children who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The playgroup is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The playgroup opens each weekday morning during school term times only. Sessions are held from 8.45am to 11.45am. Three members of staff are employed on a full-time basis and all have suitable childcare qualifications. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority. There are close links with the host school and with other providers of early years education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy attending this welcoming playgroup because of the largely interesting and stimulating range of activities that enable them to make good progress in their learning and development. Staff ensure that all children are fully included in the daily life of the playgroup and go to great lengths to ensure the particular needs of each individual child are met. Strong partnership with parents enables information on children's progress to be shared regularly and parental views are valued as part of the playgroup's improvement process. The supervisor and staff work together well as a team and are engaged in analysing the strengths of the playgroup and identifying areas for further development. They clearly demonstrate that they have a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend opportunities for children to access regular indoor physical activity when other play areas, such as, the outdoor area is not available.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The safety of children is given high priority as all staff have received training in the safeguarding of children and have a clear understanding of how to keep them safe in line with the playgroup's policies. Procedures for recruitment are rigorous, with strict vetting procedures for all staff to ensure their suitability to work with young children. The premises are secure and strict monitoring of access to the playgroup ensures children are safe at all times. Careful arrangements exist for registering children and handing them over to parents and carers at the end of sessions. Staff are deployed effectively to supervise children. Daily risk assessments are carried out to ensure the premises, both inside and outdoors, are safe to use, and equipment and resources are also checked effectively. Regular fire drills and evacuation procedures are carried out and visits from the local fire service have provided fire safety advice and guidance. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid and follow good hygiene practises.

The playgroup is well led and managed as the staff work effectively together as a team. All are involved in, and contribute their ideas to, the planning process on a regular basis. They use their knowledge of the children's interests and stages of development to good effect. The staff team have also been heavily involved in the recent development of the self-evaluation process, leading to the production of an improvement plan that has accurately identified the playgroup's strengths and areas requiring further development. They have acted effectively and enthusiastically upon the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. A programme of staff development is well established and effective staff appraisal processes improve their practice and increase their skills. New and attractive storage units have been acquired to enable children to access resources for themselves. Children now have free access to craft materials and this is fostering greater opportunities for children to develop their creative skills. Resources are of good quality and organised into areas of learning in an attractive manner to provide a stimulating learning environment. However, during inclement weather the playgroup does not have a wide supply of indoor resources to provide for children's physical development, which limits the options of play activities. However, in fine weather good use is made of the outdoor environment where children have a chance to explore the natural environment.

Partnerships with parents and carers are very strong and an 'open door' policy provides them with regular opportunities to discuss learning and progress, or to 'stay and play' to help settle children new to the playgroup. Parents say they are kept well informed of their children's progress and the staff are available daily to discuss matters of concern and interest. They are confident their children are safe and say how much their children enjoy attending. Before children start at the playgroup parents are asked to provide detailed information to enable the staff to plan initial starting activities and to have some idea of their interests and favourite things. Annual questionnaire responses help staff to put into place any ideas that will improve the provision and also offers another forum for responding to parental concerns and ideas. The notice board keeps parents informed about activities, special events and fund raising activities. Great care is taken to ensure all

children's needs are catered for, and the playgroup seeks advice from outside agencies for children who may have special educational needs and /or difficulties. The playgroup's inclusive attitude to all children is greatly appreciated by parents and helps children to gradually build confidence and to ensure their gradual integration. The good links with the school ensure that transition is a positive experience for children about to leave the playgroup, as they meet the school staff and participate in a number of activities through the summer.

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

The leaders have created a welcoming and colourful environment in which children enjoy learning through play and where they can make friends with others. The well-planned range of activities allows all children to benefit from the experiences on offer and enables them to make good progress in their learning and development. Children are developing good levels of confidence and feel safe because of the high standards of care and the strong relationships they have developed with the staff, who interact effectively with them and engage them in enjoyable activities. Children have lots of fun learning as there is a good balance of self-chosen play and activities led by adults. They are developing in confidence through making their own choices and are learning to share with others. The playgroup is well resourced and organised to cover all areas of learning, although limited facilities for physical development exist indoors when the outdoor area is unavailable for use. Behaviour is good because it is consistently well managed in a kind and supportive way. Children are cooperative and readily join in with tidying up and helping to put equipment away.

The learning environment reflects many of the children's experiences through its displays of their work, including paintings and other creative pieces. Children are developing good levels of fine motor skills through engaging regularly in craft activities. They use pens and brushes, cutters and rollers when they are modelling with modelling dough. When working with an adult to make a Christmas card children show the ability to match shapes and pictures and know how to use glue safely to fix the pictures on the card. They sprinkle glitter to produce an attractive finishing effect. Children are able to use their counting skills to identify different numbers of objects in a set with confidence and show a good level of persistence and reasoning when trying to fit a Christmas card into an envelope. When using a computer children demonstrate good mouse control and are able to match a series of objects. Mark making is encouraged and children enjoy trying out different coloured pens to create colourful and intricate patterns. Children move from one activity to another and at times staff will join in with children's imaginary games, as in the role play area, and skilfully intervene to make the experience enjoyable and productive. Their support during activities keeps children interested and the use of open ended questions encourage children's thinking skills as well as developing their speaking and listening skills. Children enjoy the challenge of building towers out of pots. They show good levels of skill and understanding in ensuring the largest pots are at the bottom to support the smaller ones on top. The good progress children make across the areas of learning ensure they have a good base from which to begin the next stage of their education.

Children develop a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They develop sensitivity towards other children when they are playing. They learn to use equipment responsibly, for example, as they prepare real vegetables in the home corner when they are making a meal. Fresh fruit is provided at snack time and they are able to make their own choices from apples, oranges and bananas. Good promotion of hygiene practices has ensured all children know about the need for hand washing at the appropriate times. Water is available at all times for children to help themselves. A recent visit from the local police provided valuable lessons on personal safety for the children.

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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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