

Kestrel Under Fives Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Kestrel Under Fives Playgroup opened in 1976. It is a community group that is managed by a committee of parents. It operates from two large rooms in a church in Lordswood, Chatham. A maximum of 40 children may attend the group at any one time. The playgroup is open from 9.15am to 3.00pm, Monday to Thursday, term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Three and four year olds receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The committee employs fifteen members of staff including a book-keeper. Of the staff working directly with the children, 11 hold appropriate early years National Vocation Qualifications from level two. There are three members of staff who are working to improve their qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The provision effectively meets the needs of children by providing a good range of topical activities for them to participate in and explore. The provision is outstanding in their awareness of and arrangements for equality and diversity and in their relationships with parents. However, the provision's recording of children's development needs to be improved. Nevertheless, the group has addressed recommendations made at their last inspection which shows they are making good continuous improvement. Overall, the quality of this provision is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- monitor the children's development records to ensure that children's next steps are being clearly identified through the observational assessments and that these are used in leading future planning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The parent committee employ a competent manager to oversee the day-to-day running of the provision. The manager, her deputy and the experienced staff make up an effective staff team. The manager maintains an up-to-date Criminal Record Bureau check list. She helps the committee to administer the rigorous and robust

staff recruitment and vetting procedures when new staff are employed and she ensures all staff undertake induction and annual appraisals. Therefore children are looked after by suitable people. Staff are required to have a good understanding of the provision's child protection procedures. The security on the premises is of a high standard. Paperwork is well maintained and parents are required to sign accident and medication records for their children. The majority of the staff are trained in paediatric first aid. This shows that children's well being is promoted.

The manager has completed an on-line self evaluation for the provision. Staff, parent's and children's views are taken into account when evaluating the provision. The manager has identified areas for the improvement and has drawn up action plans to ensure they are addressed. For example, one item noted is to develop information technology resources. The rooms and outdoor area are used to their fullest advantage despite all equipment having to be cleared away at the end of each day. Toys and equipment are regularly risk assessed and are of good quality. The provision acknowledges that well trained staff are an important resource. Staff are encouraged to attend workshops and short courses and to up-grade their qualifications when possible. The provision is outstanding in promoting equality and diversity with the children. For example, staff have considered the different ways that boys and girls learn as they play and have provided appropriate activities which ultimately are available to all children. All staff have completed training for dealing with Autism. The provision proudly displays their accredited Autism Friendly logo. The provision's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator liaises with a number of agencies who are providing therapy or other services for individual children. She attends a variety of multi agency meetings and receives good levels of support from the local language unit. The provision also arranges their own funding for one-to-one support for individual children to ensure that no child is excluded. This shows that the individual needs of children are extremely well met. The provision liaises very well with childminder's and any other provision that children may attend. Childminders receive a copy of the planned activities for the term and Key-worker's have visited the childminder's homes. This means that children receive consistent support across provisions.

Parents are fully included in the decision making processes for the provision. They can join the parent committee, take part in surveys and give their views in questionnaires. Parents report that staff are extremely approachable. Parents know they can see their children's records at any time and can attend a parent's evening or talk to their child's Key-worker at any time. They are fully involved in their children's learning as they bring in items from home for the children to use, participate in children's 'homework' and attend concerts and fundraising events. Therefore, children receive excellent consistent care and the partnership with parents is outstanding.

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

Children and their families are welcomed warmly onto the premises. They are greeted by their keyworker who engages them in conversation. Children are happy

to discuss their home lives with staff. Children are also very happy to confide in staff and readily approach them for comfort and/or support. This shows that children feel safe within the setting. Children use a good range of activities every day which promotes their learning and development. Children choose their own activities either directly or by selecting from a home made catalogue of available activities. Children are encouraged to be creative as they produce books showing how they use different activities and themed play. They can also choose to display their pictures themselves on the corrugated cardboard wall area. Children are able to use a wide variety of tools to help them in their play such as tape measures, rulers and push button toys such as computers and musical instruments. They are offered a wealth of physical play activities both indoors and outside and they often visit the local park. Visits from a variety of people such as local police, paramedics and such like, help children to gain an understanding of the world around them. Children gain a good understanding of time and procedures within the group from the clocks and photographs displayed on the time-lines. The majority of children refer to them to see what comes next. Mathematical activities are widely used around the setting. Children use their problem solving skills throughout each session. For example, deciding how best to position a tube to run their cars through or how to activate the sand grabbers to move sand from one place to another. Children use equipment well.

The children's development is detailed in their observational records. The records contain all the appropriate elements necessary to measure children's development i.e. initial assessment, observation, assessment and next steps which inform the planning. However, some observations are not fully assessed which makes it difficult to identify why the 'next step' has been chosen. Not all the areas of learning are identified within the observation. This makes it difficult for managers to monitor nor does it help parents to understand the process. This also means that children's next steps are sometimes not specific enough to challenge children. The manager has a selection of Long term, medium term and short term activity plans. However, it is not obvious which plans are being included to target individual children.

Nevertheless, because the group offer such a wide range of activities each day the children are definitely making good progress towards the early learning goals and are developing a good range of future skills.

The children learn about staying healthy by using a wide range of good activities. For example, tasting different foods and discussing how their bodies work with staff. These help them learn about healthy eating and the need for regular exercise. Children make a positive contribution to the setting as they play well together and have concern for their own and each others safety. For example, children know the routines for emergency evacuation drills. Their comments about activities are noted by staff and when necessary acted upon. In many instances they initiate their own play. Children are active in recycling materials as they place paper towels in particular recycling bins and help staff take waste to the recycling bins at the adjoining shopping centre. Children are adopting good attitudes.

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	1
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	1

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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