

Meeting House 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

Meeting House Playgroup is privately owned and opened in 1967. It operates from three rooms in the Friends Meeting House, Shenfield, Essex. The playgroup serves the local area and is accessible, at ground level, to all children. Children have access to a secure, enclosed area for outdoor play.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and opens from 9am until 12pm Monday to Friday during school term time. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions with a maximum of 25 children attending the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 52 children on roll and the playgroup is in receipt of early years education funding for three- and four-year-olds.

The playgroup is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup employs nine members of staff. Of these nine, three hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 3 and above. The manager plans to begin training towards gaining Early Years Professional Status. One member of staff is working towards a level 3 qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development because they are given effective support to ensure that they are fully included and able to gain the most benefit from activities and opportunities offered to them. The well established staff team are committed to ensuring that all children are respected and encouraged and develop a strong sense of belonging. Staff methodically evaluate every area of the setting to ensure that they are able to build a comprehensive overview of their strengths and areas for improvement. They implement purposeful action plans for the future, enabling them to provide a service which is highly responsive to the needs of all children. Further key strengths are that the caring and highly committed staff team use effective assessment and planning procedures to ensure that all children are offered an extensive range of activities. Effective partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies ensure that individual children's needs are consistently met.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhancing partnership working with other childcare providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage, to ensure that progression and continuity of learning and care are fully promoted.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is significantly promoted as there are highly effective safeguarding procedures in place. For example, training relating to safeguarding children has been completed by all staff. There are effective recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Advanced safeguarding training is completed by the manager as designated person for safeguarding and this is fed back to all staff, further protecting children's safety. Highly effective risk assessments and daily checks, completed by all staff, mean that hazards and risks to children are minimised. Comprehensive well-written policies and procedures are robust, reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that the environment is safe and secure.

Children demonstrate an excellent awareness of adopting safe and responsible practice and are fully aware of the rules because staff use regular, gentle, reminders. For example, a member of staff reminds a group of children at snack time about the importance of sitting on their chairs, to avoid any unnecessary accidents. The manager and all staff demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm in relation to their work and are successful in setting and maintaining high standards. Extensive monitoring and evaluation has enabled the setting to develop exceptionally well-targeted action plans. These plans are based on feedback from staff and parents and mean that changes clearly lead to improvements in the outcomes for children. For example, parents questioned the organisation at home time as it was so busy on the crowded pathway with parents collecting their children. A one way system was introduced and children's safety further promoted.

Staff are committed to developing and maintaining excellent partnerships with parents and carers, and they are invited to discuss any issues that they have together with the staff. Comprehensive systems for exchanging information with parents ensure that staff are fully aware of the children's routines and preferences, and parents are full informed of their children's progress and activities. Regular newsletters, meetings with key people, open sessions and informative displays throughout the playgroup are also available for parents and carers. This enables them to develop awareness about what their children have been doing. Parents speak highly of the manager and her staff team. They state that staff are caring and create a highly positive environment where children are happy, secure and confident.

The playgroup staff places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the centre of their work. They pay close attention in enhancing their understanding of each child's background and individual needs, actively utilising this information when planning activities. Resources are well-organised and labelled to promote opportunities for children to self-select and make independent choices, ultimately promoting inclusion. Staff are always deployed appropriately to fully support children's individual learning and development. There are excellent opportunities for staff interaction as the manager always ensures that the minimum required staffing ratio is exceeded. The manager acknowledges that by continuing to self-

evaluate and reflect on the playgroup's current practice they will further enhance outcomes for children.

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

The playgroup is a vibrant, happy and very welcoming setting where every child and parent is very well supported. Staff show a genuine enthusiasm for their work and children respond appropriately to this. The children clearly enjoy the playgroup as they are consistently busy and show excellent concentration and perseverance skills. The exceptional planning means that children are offered an exciting and varied range of experiences that reflect their individual needs and incorporate relevant next steps to ensure that they make excellent progress. This is underpinned by practical observation and assessment procedures that enable staff to meet each child's needs in their child-focused planning. Staff are skilled in encouraging children to join in with activities, whilst offering them sensitive support where needed. This promotes children's confidence as they are eager to explore and are active in their own learning. All activities offer appropriate challenges and ensure that all children feel included. For example, children have chosen to look at weather during the next topic, after Christmas. As a result staff are planning a range of activities, in consultation with children, to ensure that the topic is exciting and interesting for them all to enjoy.

Children's play and activities are naturally extended because staff always participate at an appropriate level. For example, as children help to put away the see-saw, member of staff asks the children if they are 'pushing or pulling the see saw?' One child replies 'pushing' and the member of staff says 'well done, are you walking forwards or backwards?' The child replies 'forwards, you are walking backwards'. Children's learning is enhanced as staff skilfully capture their interest. For example, children are making individual Christmas trees with clay, glitter and tree branches. They are fully involved in this activity and they talk about the feel of the clay and how the trees sparkle with the glitter on them. Children make friends easily as they show respect and kindness towards each other. This was well illustrated during the inspection when two children playing in the home corner went to the art and craft activity. They asked another child to look after the resources that they were playing with. The child did this and, even though the resources had moved when the children came back, they then carried on happily playing where they were before, having thanked the child for helping them.

Children's behaviour is exemplary and they are gaining an excellent understanding of right and wrong. Staff act as excellent role models, remaining calm and consistent at all times, and the children respond positively to this by showing great care and concern for each other. The excellent procedures for working together with parents, carers and others means that children who speak English as an additional language or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are consistently offered highly appropriate support. Parents are extremely supportive of the playgroup and this is evident as a vast amount of parents arrive to watch the playgroup's Christmas sing-along. Children's self-esteem is very well promoted because their conversations and contributions are genuinely valued and their

communication, language and literacy skills are promoted. An example of this is where a member of staff is looking through a list of children's names to see if a child has made a Christmas tree. She gets down to the child's eye level and they look together. 'Can you see your name?' she asks the child. He responds by sounding out the letters in his name and then tells her it isn't on the list. He is effectively praised and encouraged to try and write his name. He writes his name and says 'I am still practising writing my name'.

Children's individual and specific needs are always taken into account when staff plan activities. For example, the type of flour used to make play dough is changed to ensure that all children, including those with a wheat intolerance, are able to join in, promoting inclusion. Children learn about the wider community as staff plan activities which are rich learning experiences. An example of this is where children recently learnt about Diwali. A parent came in to playgroup and shared different information about the festival with the children who went on to make 'diva lamps' as part of their Diwali celebrations. This was extended in the form of singing as staff made up a new rhyme called 'five diva lamps in a craft shop' which children thoroughly enjoyed singing. Children's development is highly promoted in all areas of their learning as staff make optimum use of children's interests. Their development in problem solving is naturally challenged as, for example, children help to sort the outside boots and shoes with a member of staff. As these are placed together in pairs one child says 'there are two pairs left to sort', the member of staff effectively praises the child and thanks the children for helping with 'good job' stickers, promoting their self confidence.

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	1
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	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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