

Bumblebees Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Martyn Richards

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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*.

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

Bumblebees Playgroup re-registered in 2005 and is run by a committee. It moved into purpose-built accommodation in July 2007. It has a spacious activity room, with a separate kitchen and office and a partially-covered outdoor play area.

The playgroup is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. It is registered to take a maximum of 34 children, aged from two to five years at any one time. There are currently 82 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. Children attend for a variety of the sessions on offer. The playgroup is in receipt of funding for early education places. It is open Monday to Friday from 8.50am to 11.50am and from 12pm to 3pm, term times only.

The playgroup has nine members of staff working directly with the children. The managers have level 4 National Vocational Qualifications in childcare and education. Three further staff have similar level 3 qualifications, and the other staff are qualified at level 2. The playgroup has links with the adjacent school and is supported by the local authority. It is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Bumblebees Playgroup provides a safe and welcoming environment for young children. Together with a broad range of play and learning activities, the quality of individual care it provides enables children to grow in confidence and skill. It is an inclusive playgroup, adjusting its programme effectively to meet the varied needs of its children, who find most of the activities provided engaging and enjoyable. Thorough arrangements for checking each child's learning, and then acting on this information are in place and these lead to good levels of achievement. The staff team is led well. Staff members are determined to strengthen their systems for evaluating the provision. They have a good capacity to continue improving the playgroup in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- plan continuous and outdoor activities with a greater emphasis on exciting children's curiosity, sustaining their interest and challenging their thinking
- develop further the systems for continued self-evaluation to support quality, extend practice and improve outcomes for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The committee, managers and staff give high priority to keeping children safe. The suitability of all adults working with the children is checked and all staff have regular safeguarding training. They understand child protection procedures and what to do if they have concerns. Visitors are carefully checked into the playgroup and the activity room is secure from intrusion or from children slipping out unseen. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis to ensure there are no unforeseen hazards. Every morning staff conduct and record a review of the furniture, toys and other facilities the children might use to make certain they are clean and ready for use. Minor accidents, bumps and bruises are also recorded and parents are kept fully informed. All staff have had appropriate first aid training. Regular fire drills are undertaken and staff are careful to vary the day and time of these to ensure that all children have fire evacuation experience. Very good levels of staffing mean that children have one-to-one attention when they need it.

The playgroup has sustained the strengths noted in its last inspection and has made significant improvements over time. Staff have implemented the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework effectively. New processes for planning children's activities and assessing their achievements have been established, resulting in good levels of learning and development over time. The introduction of a key person scheme has been very effective in ensuring that for every child there is a single adult with detailed oversight of their development. Parents speak highly of these arrangements. They value the chance to meet the key person at initial induction meetings and find it reassuring to be able to discuss any concerns they have with someone who knows their child so well.

Staff involvement with projects, such as 'Every Child a Talker', has had a significant impact. Staff have a good awareness of how to promote language during play. They realise that some children need extra support and the playgroup has established good links with local specialist agencies to advise them on helping children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The committee and staff are very keen to build further on the strengths of the playgroup and have good ideas about ways to bring this about. To make the process of self-evaluation more systematic they have recently introduced a more formal review process. This is still at an early stage, and while it provides a good picture of the playgroup, as yet it gives less attention than it could to the impact this makes on children's learning and development.

The playgroup has established good links with its adjacent school and with some of the other schools to which children transfer. These links help ease the transition of children as they get to meet their future teacher and visit the reception classrooms. Links with parents are strong. A regular newsletter samples parental opinion about the playgroup, and staff build upon parent's suggestions wherever possible. For instance, parents' concerns that children's individual trays were stored close together, making access difficult, were immediately acted upon. Parents hold the playgroup in high regard and comment on how much their

children enjoy their time there. The strong leadership and management of the playgroup underpin its success in meeting the children's needs.

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

Children's enjoyment of the playgroup is evident from the moment they arrive in the morning. Several go straight to staff members to pass on some news from home. Staff always make time for these discussions. Moments like these provide the children with the chance to explain an event in detail, to answer adults' questions or to correct their misunderstanding. Later, children settle in table groups with staff to talk about the activities which have been set out for them. This ensures children enjoy developing speaking and listening skills. Afterwards, children choose which activities to try first. One group use the computers and show considerable skill and coordination in changing an on-screen picture by picking elements from a menu. Others want to paint, so they put on their protective clothing and explore colour mixing. While some mix lots of colours together to produce a dull brown, others limit themselves to a range of reds and oranges and delight in the fiery patterns they make. They understand the need to wash their hands after messy play and few need prompting.

Most children are very confident with numbers up to ten, even when they see numerals upside down. Children delight in learning about how to stay safe. A large group join a member of staff on the carpet to play a floor traffic game with cars on a large road layout. A sense of fun, coupled with purposeful talk, helps children to associate positive feelings with learning. They understand ideas, such as 'opposite' and 'similar', 'larger' and 'smaller' and 'fast' and 'slow'. Children share equipment very well, showing patience when they have to wait and displaying confidence as they explain their game to a visitor. A small group join an adult in a quiet corner to look at books. They look through them with confidence, looking at the back and the front covers and they turn each page carefully. There is a good range of activities which children are free to choose between. The children behave calmly, and most are busily engaged until snack time, where they are encouraged to make good, healthy choices. After children have enjoyed their healthy fruit snacks, they can go outside. Here too they can choose how to play. They enjoy being energetic, and run and hop outdoors. They develop coordination in a catching and throwing game and play with careful regard to the safety of others because they know how to behave carefully and responsibly. However, interest amongst the children occasionally flags after a while because there is sometimes not enough variety and challenge in their outdoor play.

Staff planning of activities ensures a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play. Recently children have been learning about the weather. They make kites, and test them in the wind outside. They cut up plastic bottles to make rain gauges, some of which are taken home so that parents can be involved in the activity alongside their children. They also enjoy learning about the natural world. Children look under stones for insects and go on autumn and spring walks in a local park. Staff plan activities around children's own ideas and recently used these preferences to plan a session where they made pizza. Activities like these broaden

children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Staff plan activities well in advance, adding detail week by week in the light of children's emerging interests. Plans address most of the required areas of the framework well. Staff make careful records of each child's progress over time, in each area of learning. These show clearly the good progress made, and achievement level reached, from their varied starting points. They also allow staff to identify and fill gaps in learning and lead to valuable initiatives, such as using chalkboards to promote boys' early writing development. The skills, knowledge and personal qualities the children acquire in the playgroup will stand them in good stead in the next stage of their education.

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