

Fowlmere Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 221791
Inspection date 31/01/2011
Inspector Veronica Sharpe

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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

Fowlmere Playgroup opened in 1977 and operates from the chapel hall in Fowlmere, Hertfordshire. It is managed as a registered charity by a committee of parents. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday except Wednesdays from 9am to 12pm during school term times. The Friday session is for older children preparing for school. Children have an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from two and a half to under five years on roll most of whom receive funding for early years education. Children mainly come from the local area. There are a small number of children on roll who have English as an additional language. The playgroup employs three staff all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Children's welfare needs are not effectively promoted because the provider has not ensured that all the requirements from the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. Ofsted are not informed of all changes, essential checks have not been taken up on key staff and some parental permissions are not in place. Although some staff have an adequate understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, generally planning and organisation of the sessions fails to deliver individualised learning opportunities for children. Lack of self-evaluation means significant issues have not been identified and not enough action has been taken to ensure improvement. Generally systems to share information with parents are satisfactory and children enjoy their time at the setting.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- obtain necessary information from parents in advance of a child being admitted to the provision; this is with particular reference to written permission from parents to seek emergency medical treatment or advice, and information about who has legal contact and parental responsibility for the child (Safeguarding and 21/02/2011

- promoting children's welfare)
- make fresh drinking water available at all times (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 21/02/2011
- establish effective systems to ensure adults working with the children are suitable to do so. This must include obtaining an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure; ensure adults whose suitability has not been checked have no unsupervised contact with children who are being cared for (Suitable people) 21/02/2011
- take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by ensuring a practitioner is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children: ensure they attend an appropriate child protection training course (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 21/02/2011
- manage children's behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 21/02/2011
- plan and organise routines, resources and activities to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning experience that is tailored to their individual needs (Organisation). 21/02/2011

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop clear partnerships with other providers to ensure the needs of all children can be met
- increase parents' opportunities to contribute what they know about what their children can do at home
- promote children's safety by practising the emergency evacuation plan at regular intervals; record details in a fire log book of any problems encountered and how they were resolved
- develop systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision in order to improve the outcomes for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are inadequate. Ofsted has not been informed of a change in the manager of the setting and required checks, including those of the Criminal Records Bureau have not been obtained. The provider has committed an offence by failing to notify Ofsted of a change to the person who is managing the early years provision. This is a specific legal requirement in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Ofsted does not intend to prosecute on this occasion.

Staff have a suitable understanding of the setting's safeguarding children procedures and have attended child protection training but there is no designated

person to take responsibility for safeguarding matters. This puts children at risk. Staff deploy themselves adequately to ensure children are suitably supervised as they play. Risk assessments are checked and reviewed and these, along with daily checks, ensure the premises are secure and generally safe. Fire safety equipment is in place and has regular checks, but children infrequently practise the fire drill, which hinders their ability to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

The leadership and management of the setting is inadequate and does not sufficiently support children's learning and development or promote their welfare. Lack of a system for effective self-evaluation means the setting has not maintained continuous improvement, for example, some of the recommendations from the last inspection have not been addressed adequately. Suitable policies and procedures are in place and shared with parents. The management committee has completed appraisals on staff and encouraged them to increase their qualifications. However, until recently staff were not encouraged to take an active and involved role in planning for children's progress, which has limited their ability to impact positively on the outcomes for children.

Information is provided for parents about the setting and systems are in place for staff to gather information about children's individual care needs. However not all the registration forms have been updated and this means that permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice has not been sought for all children. In addition not all parents have been asked about other adults who have parental responsibility. This puts children at risk and is a breach of regulations. Staff offer daily verbal updates so that parents are informed about their child's care. Parents indicate they are satisfied with the quality of care and say their children enjoy attending the group. The setting has developed some partnerships with local schools, but there are no systems to share information with other providers, such as local nurseries or childminders.

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

Children generally enjoy their time in the setting and show they have developed firm friendships. During the period of free play they move around confidently and have some opportunities to select activities and resources set out by staff. Each child has a key person to provide links with the family and be responsible for maintaining the individual learning records, which helps children to settle into the setting. Staff are developing systems to observe, evaluate and assess children's progress, but as yet do not use that information to systematically identify appropriate learning priorities for each child. Planning does not adequately cover all areas of learning in a broad range of motivating experiences for each child's stage of development. As a result, staff are not able to adequately help children learn and develop to their full potential. Adult led routines and an imbalance of adult led activities further hinder children's ability to develop their independence and follow their own interests.

Children's behaviour is generally satisfactory, they understand about sharing the equipment, such as the bikes in the garden, and help with tidy-up times. However,

some staff have unrealistic expectations of young children's ability to sit still and wait, for example, at snack times, and this therefore sometimes leads to unwanted behaviour as children become unsettled and bored. Occasionally negative behaviour tactics are used to ensure children comply with rules, such as grasping them by the wrist to lead them to where they are supposed to be. This affects children's self-esteem and motivation.

Children's competence in communication, language and literacy is adequately supported. Children have opportunities to draw and have a comfortable area to look at books. They sit with staff and share conversations with them, which encourages them to express their ideas. Children learn about numbers and counting and can identify familiar shapes accurately. They use puzzles and construction toys, which helps to develop their understanding of problem solving. Activities, such as painting and gluing enable children to be creative. They enjoy a circle time with musical instruments and sing along to familiar songs, such as 'Ding dong bell'. But overall they make limited progress because they have few opportunities to extend their learning independently. Staff understand the importance of each child's uniqueness and they gather some information about children's home backgrounds and languages through discussion with parents. Adequate systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children enjoy fresh fruit for snack and are given water and milk. However, drinking water is not made available at all times so their health is not sufficiently promoted. Staff encourage children to wash their hands appropriately, such as before eating which minimises the risk of cross infection. Children have daily times to play outdoors and benefit from physical activity. They run around, competently steer sit and ride bikes and play on the trampet.

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?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	4
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
The effectiveness of partnerships	4
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	4

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	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	4
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	4
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	4
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	4

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- ensure there are effective systems to ensure that the registered person and any person caring for, or in contact with children is suitable to work with children; this must include obtaining an enhanced CRB check (Suitability of persons to care for, or be in regular contact with children). 21/02/2011

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- ensure there are effective systems to ensure that the registered person and any person caring for, or in contact with children is suitable to work with children; this must include obtaining an enhanced CRB check (Suitability of persons to care for, or be in regular contact with children). 21/02/2011