

# Blacklands Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY341110

**Inspection date**

10/02/2011

**Inspector**

Liz Caluori

**Setting address**

Elim Church, Elphinstone Avenue, Hastings, East Sussex,  
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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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## **Description of the setting**

Blacklands Playgroup is privately owned and has been registered under the current ownership since 2006. It operates from Elim Church in Hastings and has use of two group rooms and a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The Playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 35 children, from two to five years, may attend at any one time and there are currently 51 children on roll attending on either a full or part-time basis. The playgroup is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 09:15 to 14:45 during school term time.

The playgroup employs 10 staff to work with the children, nine of whom hold recognised childcare qualifications. The group receives support from the local authority advisory team and is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy the time they spend playing and learning with their friends in the safe, inclusive and child-centred playgroup environment. They make good progress in all areas of their development despite some very minor deficiencies in the systems for planning. Effective self-evaluation supports the management and staff team to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and to prioritise areas for improvement. Children benefit from the strong focus placed on maintaining good communication and positive relationships with their parents, carers and other professionals in order to ensure consistent and coordinated care.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- extend the systems in place for assessment and planning to more clearly identify children's next steps in order to monitor that they are receiving a consistent level of challenge across all areas of their learning and development
- address the minor inconsistencies in the quality of adult support offered throughout the day, specifically during lunch times and some adult instigated activities, to ensure that the level of adult input does not restrict children's independence or imagination.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Robust arrangements are in place within the playgroup to ensure that children are safe. The manager takes lead responsibility for child protection and has attended an advanced training course to support her in this role. Four other members of staff have also completed stages one and two of the local authority safeguarding course, with a further two currently undertaking the training. Clear and up to date systems are in place to support staff should they have any concerns about a child in their care and the contact details required to make a referral are easily accessible if required. Effective recruitment procedures ensure that children are cared for by suitable, fully checked adults. In addition, the security of the premises is good as the doors are locked and visitors are monitored. Risk assessments are documented and staff with first aid training are present each day.

The manager is successful in her aim to create a harmonious, relaxed and well organised environment for the children. This is achieved through highly effective team working and strong self-evaluation. Good systems are in place to monitor children's progress although the arrangements to identify their next steps are less effective. There is generally only one next step indicated in the records for each child and these are updated infrequently. The records maintained do not reflect the good practice that takes place and do not support staff to ensure that they are routinely offering a consistent level of support across all areas of learning. However, children are making good progress in all areas as a result of the very impressive range of activities and experiences on offer. There are one or two aspects of the provision where children's independence is not fully encouraged. An example of this occurs at lunch time as the staff have a tendency to open the children's snacks, such as yogurts and packed cheese portions, without being asked. There are also a few occasions when staff plan exciting arts and crafts activities but offer slightly too much direction in order to achieve their intended aim. However, overall children receive a very good level of support to explore and investigate independently, allowing them opportunities to try, fail and try again in a safe environment.

The playgroup employs a range of strategies to engage parents and carers. They receive a very friendly greeting as they arrive to deliver or collect their child and valuable information is shared verbally at these times. In addition, contact books are used to create a link between the playgroup and the child's home and newsletters are issued to provide regular updates. The views of parents and carers are sought in the form of questionnaires and contributions in their child's learning records. The playgroup also works closely with local authority early years advisors and a range of agencies, such as speech and language specialists, to improve the provision and meet the needs of individual children. Effective arrangements are also in place to work with the reception teachers at the local schools to ease the transition for the children. The manager is aware of the benefits to working in partnership with other childcare providers involved in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to the children in her care but has not yet been required to do so.

Space is extremely well used to allow a large number of activities to take place at the same time and to encourage children to move around safely and freely. Children have access to an impressive range of resources which cover all areas of their learning. These are well maintained and appropriate for their ages and stages of development. There are toys and resources available which represent different people from throughout the community and wider world including dolls, books and puzzles. In addition children take part in a range of activities which help them to understand and respect diversity.

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

Children are happy and settled in the playgroup and are developing very good social skills as they play with their friends and interact confidently with staff and visitors. Most of the session is given over to freely chosen, child-initiated play but there is also an appropriate amount of routine with adult lead activities and group times. As a result, children are developing independence and are also learning to operate confidently in small and large groups. Their developing communication skills are evident through their charming conversations and impressive vocabularies. They are extremely polite and use language very effectively, for example a child sensing an adult's interest in their pretend picnic says 'why don't you come and join us?'. Children concentrate well on their chosen activities. They take part in large and imaginative role play games, sit together to look at books and work cooperatively to build towers and assemble tracks. A good focus is also placed on promoting children's physical development. They enjoy playing on the bikes, rockers and bouncers set out in the hall and demonstrate a good degree of coordination. The outdoor area is also used regularly to allow children to benefit from the fresh air.

Children receive very good support to develop a range of practical skills such as computing, dressing, preparing snacks and washing up their own cups. This helps to prepare them for school and for later life. They are also encouraged to develop a social conscience by taking part in fun activities such as teddy bears picnics or spending the day in their pyjamas in order to raise money for a variety of charities. They demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the boundaries in place within the playgroup. They respond well to instructions and advice from staff and also learn about road safety and the need to be cautious around unfamiliar adults.

Children enjoy nutritious snacks during the morning and those staying all day bring in a packed lunch from home. Parents and carers are advised of the playgroup's healthy eating policy and children are encouraged to eat the most nutritious items in their lunch first. Drinks are constantly available and children are reminded to take a drink after periods of physical exercise. Children are very independent in their self care and routinely wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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