

Merton Poppets Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

511077

Inspection date

25/01/2011

Inspector

Debbie Newbury

Setting address

Romsey Close, Popley, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 9HB

Telephone number

01256351036

Email

Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

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

The Merton Poppets Playgroup registered in 1999. It is situated within the grounds of Merton Infants School in Basingstoke, Hampshire and operates from a self-contained unit attached to the school. The playgroup is run by an elected committee of present and past parents and members of the host school staff. It serves families from the local community. Children are accommodated in one large room with a fully enclosed outside play area and there is additional access to the school's playgrounds and garden area. There are suitable toilet and kitchen facilities available. The playgroup opens during school term times from 9am to 3pm Monday to Thursday and from 9am to 12 noon on Friday. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 44 children aged from two years nine months to five years on roll. The playgroup is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and/or children who speak English as an additional language. There are seven members of staff, six of whom hold early years qualifications to at least level 2.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and most enjoy the time they spend in the playgroup environment. They are cared for by kind and caring staff who work to meet their welfare needs and ensure everyone is included and valued. Overall, children are generally supported in making suitable progress in their learning, although there are some areas for development in this respect. Evidence of improvement since the last inspection indicates that the playgroup's capacity for continuous improvement is satisfactory. There is an omission with regard to documentation, which means that not all specific legal requirements are met. Staff foster successful partnerships with parents and other parties involved with children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- request written parental permission to the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future. (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 10/02/2011

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

- review the environment to ensure that it is interesting, attractive and accessible to every child so they can learn independently
- develop further mathematical understanding through all children's early experiences and enable them to discover things about numeracy in the environment such as numbers, counting and calculating through practical situations
- support and extend children's thinking by offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded because staff have a secure understanding of issues relating to child protection and the procedures they must follow should they have any concerns about a child's well-being. All staff have attended relevant training and pertinent reference materials are displayed prominently. Sound systems are implemented to ensure the suitability of staff. Annual appraisals enable individual staff members and management to discuss performance, identify training needs and thus plan for continuous professional development. The playgroup premises are secure and staff control access. Most required documentation is maintained appropriately. However, the playgroup has not requested written parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, which could compromise children's health and safety. This is a specific legal welfare requirement.

Most areas identified for improvement at the playgroup's last inspection continue to be addressed, apart from the need to ensure children are consistently dressed appropriately to play outside. This particular recommendation has been met well. The playgroup participates in local authority reviews to monitor existing practice and identify areas for improvement and is also receiving support from the head teacher of Merton Infant School, who has recently taken over as the chairperson of the playgroup's management committee. This input has led to the development of an 'action plan' so that specific areas can be considered, and thus, bring about targeted improvement within identified timeframes. This is very much a work in progress but does demonstrate commitment and a desire to move forward and build on existing practice. One particular aspect, which continues to be addressed, is the organisation and presentation of the learning environment. Some areas are not arranged to be interesting or inviting and resources are not easily accessible, for instance, in the mark-marking and craft areas. Consequently children tend to ignore them, which impacts adversely on some aspects of their learning.

Staff work together as a team and sessions flow generally well as all are aware of their allocated roles and responsibilities. Staff treat children with equal concern and strive to provide individual children with the support they need, for instance, new starters who are still settling. Children have some opportunities to find out about the wider world and to learn about similarities and differences. For example, there are some resources to raise awareness of diversity, although there is little reflecting positive images of disability and use of labelling in children's home languages is minimal. The playgroup is introducing different celebrations and

traditions to children and is seeking input from parents in respect of this. Some use is also now being made of the local community by taking children on trips, for example to the local church and inviting visitors into the playgroup to talk to the children.

There are good systems in place to encourage partnership working. Parents are well informed about the playgroup and are invited to share in their children's learning. Each child has a home-link book in which staff and parents can record any information they wish to pass on; this seems to be working well in most instances. Parents meet with their child's key worker on regular occasions and staff send home development progress sheets, which incorporate details of the child's next steps. Relaxed, friendly relationships exist between parents and staff. Parents are positive about the playgroup and the staff caring for their children, noting how approachable and friendly the staff team is and that their children are eager to attend. The playgroup also works effectively with other professionals and agencies in the local community and any other childcare settings that children attend. This brings benefits to children since adults share information and leads to a coherent and shared approach to promoting their care, learning and any extended support.

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

Most children enter happily, whilst those who are new and rather unsure, receive support and encouragement from the staff team who treat them with kindness. This fosters the development of good relationships and helps children feel safe and secure. Children are allowed to take some risks in their play and staff generally intervene promptly to guide them away from potentially unsafe practices and on occasions when some children misbehave. Children participate in fire drills and have taken part in a road safety exercise. Such activities help them learn how to keep themselves safe. Staff offer praise, thus building on children's self-esteem and confidence.

Suitable procedures are in place to promote most aspects of good hygiene and limit the potential for the spread of infection, which helps children stay healthy. They are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times although staff do not always notice when some forget to do this. Children decide when they are ready for snack and eat healthily at this time. They enjoy the responsibility of being the 'helper of the day' and pouring out drinks for everyone. However, this arrangement does mean that daily opportunities for each child to practise this skill are missed. Staff sit with children at lunch time and engage in conversation, which fosters social interaction and builds on their communication skills.

Children independently show awareness of mathematical thinking in their play, for example, when explaining that there can only be four children in the role play area at a time and as they talk about their ages. They complete puzzles and explore the concepts of volume and capacity during water play. Children help themselves to easily accessible construction toys. They fit these together using different items to create objects to support their imaginative play; for instance, creating fire hoses when they pretend to be fire fighters. The playgroup has introduced a free-flow

approach to outdoor play for a good part of the session and many children relish being outside in the fresh air. It is also able to utilise the school grounds and staff take children on nature walks and to use the larger fixed play equipment, which offers greater challenge and interest. Some children help themselves to paper and scissors in the art area, although the overall presentation of this area is not sufficiently inviting to encourage investigation. There is no paint and no malleable materials for children to explore. Similarly, children mostly ignore the mark-making area.

Staff facilitate and support some aspects of children's play and learning appropriately, for example as they demonstrate how to operate the mouse on the computer and sit and read to them in the book corner. However, staff do not consistently exploit the many opportunities that arise naturally during the course of the session. This results in missed opportunities to challenge them further in their thinking, for example through use of pertinent questioning, and enable them to make connections in learning. This is particularly apparent in respect of the area of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, which is not sufficiently embedded.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
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	3
------------------------------------------------------------------	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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