

Crowhurst Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	16/02/2011
Inspector	Sue Taylor
Setting address	The Village Hall, Forewood Lane, Crowhurst, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9AJ
Telephone number	01424 830329
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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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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

Crowhurst Playgroup is a committee run group. It opened in 1973 and operates from the village hall in Crowhurst, East Sussex. The playgroup use two rooms, and have sole use of the premises during opening hours, up until the lunch club when the hall is also used for the local primary school lunches. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup is open every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 12.55pm, during school term times only.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register, to care for a maximum of 24 children at any one time. There are currently 20 children, aged from two years, in the early years age range on roll. The playgroup is also registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register for children in the later years age group but currently does not care for children in this age range.

The playgroup has children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language on roll.

There are five members of staff, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification at level 2. The playgroup provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make good progress in their learning and overall their individual needs are well catered for. Effective arrangements exist to ensure their safety and encourage their involvement in the wider community. Positive links with parents are in place and in general they are very involved in supporting their children's learning. Partnerships with others are well established and make a strong contribution to supporting children's achievements and well-being. The playgroup supervisor and staff have a good awareness of their strengths and are taking effective steps to improve outcomes.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the value given to linguistic diversity and provide greater opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning
- develop current monitoring systems to clearly identify children's starting points and ongoing progress towards the early learning goals to enable the noting and narrowing of any achievement gaps

- strengthen the detail in children's learning records and contact books to show clearer links to the Early Years Foundation Stage and encourage greater parental input with supporting their child's next steps.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are well managed. All staff have current Criminal Records Bureau checks. A thorough recruitment process and annual appraisals help ensure the ongoing suitability of staff. Further training is encouraged and valued, helping develop practices and outcomes for children. Effective recording systems and procedures are in place to help keep children safe. The environment in which children are cared for is safe and supportive.

The available resources are used well to support children as they learn and develop. There are some resources such as books and puzzles and planned activities that help children gain an awareness of diversity and differences in the wider world. Children's home languages are respected but they are not actively promoted in children's play and learning. The staff group make best use of the environment. They utilise the available space well and provide very good supervision when the main hall is used for school lunches. Children particularly benefit from having easy access to the secure outdoor play area throughout the session. The playgroup is taking appropriate steps to ensure resources and the environment are sustainable.

The staff group communicate well and are keen to improve practices and children's outcomes. As a result of the staff's positive attitudes, children are keen to get involved in play and activity opportunities. Self-evaluation provides a good awareness of the playgroup strengths and plans for further improvement are realistic and achievable. Improvement since the last inspection ensures children are given wider choices, enabling them to make decisions, particularly in their creative play.

Children are making good progress, with their next steps regularly and clearly identified. Resources and activities are then planned for to support children's ongoing learning and development. Measures are taken to monitor children's progress from their starting points and identify children's next steps in their learning with planning for any achievement gaps. However, the current process tends to show where children are now in their learning rather than showing how well progress has been made. As a result, this makes it more difficult to clearly note any ongoing achievement gaps.

Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's achievements and well-being. A home to playgroup contact book invites some involvement from parents in contributing to the assessment process, although this does not always refer to their child's identified next steps. The written observations are not regularly noting links to the Early Years Foundation Stage and, as a result, it is more difficult for parents to recognise the connections or support for their child.

The playgroup uses contact books to liaise with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage where this is required for individual children, to ensure progression and continuity of learning and care learning. Partnerships with other professionals or agencies involved with individual children are well established. There are positive relationships with parents, who feel confident about the care provided. Annual questionnaires gain the views of parents and these are used to help evaluate the playgroup practices.

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

Key persons have a good knowledge of the learning and development needs of their key children, ensuring they are well supported with suitable play materials or planned activities. The positive attitudes of the staff encourage children to get involved. Children are very keen to communicate and tell others what they know. They are able to easily recognise familiar numbers and enjoy resources such as weighing and comparing the toy bears, supporting their problem solving, reasoning and numeracy development. Children's progress in skills relating to information and communication technology is developing well. The children become adept at using equipment such as giant calculators, remote control cars or a child's digital camera and make it part of their general play. They are encouraged to discover how to work things for themselves. As a result, they develop positive skills for the future.

Children get a lot of enjoyment out of the digging and planting area outside and the playgroup have plans to develop this area further. For example, a young child carefully places spades of earth through the trellis fence. The ride-on toys are very popular and the children manoeuvre them well and safely. Their creative development and use of imagination is well established. Children pretend to mend the table using the work bench resources or create different items from the pink play dough and other materials, such as pigs, shapes and love heart cards.

They demonstrate a willingness to keep themselves and others safe through their good behaviour. Some children are very good at showing care and concerns to others. For example, a child takes a younger child to wash her hands before lunch, gently reminding her to walk not run. Overall, they play happily on their own or with their friends. Children are very confident in approaching adults if they are upset or see a child hurt themselves. This demonstrates how safe the children feel in the playgroup and with the staff. They learn to keep themselves safe with regular fire drill practices, through activities and explanations from the staff.

Children follow good personal hygiene routines and gain an understanding of healthy eating. They know to wash their hands before eating and have easy access to the toilets, to encourage independence. Children engage in a wide range of physical activities, both indoors and out. They help care for the plants that they grow, such as vegetables and salad items, then enjoy eating the results. Children have some choice over when they take their snack and benefit from a variety of healthy choices, such as banana, apple, raisins or a savoury cracker with jam.

They are encouraged to spread their jam or pour drinks, supporting their developing independence skills.

Children display a strong sense of belonging and all appear settled and happy. They know they can make choices about their play, being able to access their coat if they choose to go outside. Their behaviour is very good and they share the resources well. Children are involved in the local community, for example, they take part in the annual fancy dress competition or Horticultural Society competitions. Local walks to the woods, post box or station support their learning about the world in which they live.

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	3
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