

Southchurch Park Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	07/02/2011
Inspector	Tina Mason
Setting address	Northumberland Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 2TH
Telephone number	07942 181039
Email	
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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Description of the setting

Southchurch Park Playgroup is run by a parent committee. It opened in 1968 and operates from the church hall to the rear of the United Reformed Church in Southend, Essex and is accessed via two steps up to the front door. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9.15am to 12.15pm term-time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time all of whom may be on the Early Years Register. There are currently 26 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs four staff. Of which all four of the staff, including both managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The inclusive nature of this pre-school ensures that all children receive a warm welcome and settle well with the support of trusted, enthusiastic and caring adults. All welfare requirements are met, which supports children's overall well-being. Staff recognises and value the uniqueness of each child and they work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all children achieve well in their learning and development. Children are offered a good range of stimulating activities and experiences across most areas of learning. The setting demonstrates a good capacity for continuous improvement and recognises that their system for assessment requires development to bring about further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to develop the use of the garden area all year to provide further opportunities for children to freely explore across all areas of learning
- develop the self-evaluation system to monitor the provision in order to identify strengths and weaknesses
- create an environment rich in print where children can learn about letters and words which in turn will support their early writing skills.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are protected as staff have a good awareness of safeguarding issues. They understand their role with regard to child protection and there is informative guidance available. Good recruitment procedures are in place to ensure only suitable staff are employed. Children's safety within the setting is promoted well. Robust risk assessments are in place and daily safety checks are carried out throughout the setting, which enhance the safety of children in all areas of the building and the outside area. Resources are regularly checked to ensure they are safe and suitable for the children. The setting has in place an extensive range of policies and procedures to support their good practice which are regularly reviewed and updated in line with changes in legislation. Children are cared for by qualified and experienced staff who are well deployed, ensuring they receive good adult support at all times.

Since the last inspection the pre-school team have worked hard to implement improvements within the provision. For example, the management and staff team have successfully reviewed the organisation of snack time to extend further children's play and learning. In addition, they have updated curriculum planning for the Foundation Stage which now provides a clear overview of activities provided and how they are linked into the early learning goals which further improves children's welfare and learning. Staff are committed to change and are always receptive to ideas for further improvements and have started to complete the self-evaluation process. However, this requires further development to ensure plans for the future are well targeted to bring about further improvement to the provision and outcomes for children. The deployment of resources is very good. The staff review and monitor the environment regularly, to ensure children's needs are met. The room is effectively organised to enable children to make choices and decisions as they play from the many continuous play areas created. These are very well resourced and fully cover all the areas of learning.

The pre-school establishes positive relationships with parents and carers, to ensure children's needs are well met. Parents express a high regard for the care and service the pre-school staff provide. They find the staff very caring, friendly and approachable, and their children are progressing well. Children's progress is well documented and recorded. Staff work with parents to obtain additional support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They also understand the importance of working with other settings children attend.

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

Staff support children's learning well. They offer them praise and encouragement and talk with them about what they are doing. Children make good progress in their learning and development as staff have a clear understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Staff obtain information about children's starting points from parents initially and then make their own assessments from

the observations undertaken throughout the sessions. The staff record individual progress files and learning journeys for each child detailing observations and photographs of their achievements. The information gathered is used consistently to track children's progress in all areas of learning. Children have access to free flow play to the outside area every day. Staff organise the outdoor area well to provide experiences across all areas of learning, however the outdoor learning opportunities are not currently fully included in the weekly planning to meet children's individual needs.

Children come into the setting confidently and separate happily from their parents or carers. They come straight into the hall and begin to explore what is on offer at each table and activity area. They quickly become absorbed in what they are doing and show good levels of concentration. Children enjoy creating collages using a range of materials. For example, they enjoy decorating heart shapes with glitter. Staff supervise with care but allow children to try to do things themselves so that they develop independence and take pride in their achievements. Restricted labelling and posters of words and letters around the room prevent children from learning that print carries meaning. They are curious, confident and eager to learn as they use the construction toys to design and build. They enjoy a variety of sensory experiences, because they have access to a wealth of natural and sensory resources which promote self-discovery. For example, children enjoy looking for insects and treasure when in the garden, using the binoculars and magnifying glasses provided. Children's creativity is well promoted through role play opportunities, which assists in developing their imagination. Children have access to everyday technology in the role play area, such as cash registers, telephones and play cookers. They explore information and communication technology competently, using the mouse with increasing skill and other programmable toys, contributing to their future economic well-being. Children demonstrate an awareness of size and shape as they play with the dinosaurs in the wet sand, they discuss which dinosaurs foot print in the sand is the biggest. They develop their physical skills as they play on a range of equipment that promotes their skills at balancing, climbing, catching and throwing.

Children are provided with drinking water throughout the session which is placed within easy reach so that they can help themselves at any time. Children enjoy a healthy range of snack options that include a good selection of fresh fruits. They wash their hands before eating, many without any support or direction from staff, and understand why this is important. Children move carefully around the setting. Staff discuss with the children how to keep themselves safe, for instance, pointing out the potential dangers of running inside the setting. They quickly become familiar with the boundaries that are set. Children confidently chat to visitors, happy to share what they are doing and talk about their favourite things. Children make friends as they play and chat together over a shared activity. A good range of planned activities, displays, toys and resources depicting positive images of people from different cultures, races and those with disabilities help children to learn about the wider world.

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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