

Dorothy Stringer Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

130740

Inspection date

04/03/2011

Inspector

Chris Mackinnon

Setting address

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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

Dorothy Stringer Playgroup has been an established day care setting since 1973. It operates within a purpose built building in the grounds of Dorothy Stringer School in Brighton and Hove. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor area. The setting is open five days a week during term time, from 9:00am to 12:00 noon and in the afternoons from 12:30pm to 3:00pm.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children within the early years age range may attend. The playgroup currently has 50 children on roll, and receives nursery education funding for children aged three years and older. There is a staff team of eight, and most have level three childcare qualifications, with one early years professional and a foundation degree staff member.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting is highly organised and a confident and experienced staff team provides excellent support for individual children's development. A highly attractive and consistently well planned and prepared play environment is provided, with continuous opportunities for free-flow and outdoor play. Children engage in a high level of child led activities and staff also provide high quality one-to-one teaching. The planning of the learning activities and use of observation and assessment is exemplary, with key persons closely involved in ensuring all children make significant progress with their learning. The setting maintains strong links and partnerships with parents and improvement is consistently well maintained through the detailed application of self-evaluation.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- considering further development of the range of learning opportunities provided in the outdoor area

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The playgroup is a well established sessional day care setting and has a well qualified and highly effective staff team. The setting has the benefit of an early years professional and staff who are trained to degree level. There is also a particularly high level of expertise within the staff team, which has a significant

impact on the quality of the children's learning and development. Regular weekly management meetings are organised for all staff, and the setting's key person system is highly effective in maintaining individual children's progress. The organisation of safeguarding within the setting is highly effective and children's welfare and security is continually monitored. Staff have completed training in child protection procedures and detailed policies and guidance are in place to support consistent safeguarding practice.

The setting provides an excellent and highly stimulating learning environment. Children have access to a purpose built child care unit, with a range of well planned play areas available, including a quiet room and a versatile central floor space for group activities. A highly consistent range of play resources and learning materials is provided to encourage children's exploration and promote child led play. For example, a well stocked role play and discovery play zone provides many opportunities for children to combine materials and develop their imaginative learning. Children have many opportunities for mark making and developing their awareness of writing and use of letters. An excellent range of resources is also presented to encourage problem solving, with planned activities exploring hot and cold and the how things change. Children also benefit significantly from being able to free flow with their activities out to the setting's well prepared outdoor play area where an excellent selection of physical activities and organised sensory, tactile and art craft based learning takes place. As part of the setting's ongoing development of their new building and surroundings, the presentation of a wider range of learning opportunities outdoors is an area where further development could be considered.

The setting is highly consistent in supporting individual children's achievement and ensuring their play and learning is planned to promote progress. For example, children's individual interests and next steps are well included in the weekly focused activity plans. Key staff also use their observations effectively to shape their children's experiences and work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure children are well integrated and included. Children have access to a wide range of resources and visual material that effectively encourages their awareness of diversity. Planned play projects and a series of festivals are celebrated throughout the year to help children form a positive understanding of other cultures. Staff are highly effective at maintaining positive partnerships with parents and other carers. A good range of links has been established with local schools to support transition and staff continually share practice with other settings. Key persons have frequent contact with parents and information on the play and learning themes is provided daily. There is also an active parents' rota and parents' committee that helps in the promotion of the setting.

The staff show a consistent approach in their application of reflective practice. The presentation of play resources and materials is consistently reviewed and staff show considerable skill with reviewing the effectiveness of activities and planning and developing learning themes. The setting has completed a clear and concise self-evaluation document which identifies a number of areas for development particularly the re-focusing of the current assessment system and ensuring children take full advantage of the new building and outdoor play area. The setting is effectively engaged with a local authority quality assurance scheme which

contributes to good practice and staff also make good use of their professional and degree level training to support the setting's continuous improvement.

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

The setting's planning for learning is highly organised and is a strong and consistent aspect of the play program. Each week different key staff members take turns to plan the activities and this always includes a well considered learning objective for the children to follow. For example, finding out how things change and how they work; through heating and cooling and planned 'workshop' role play with a range of play-tools. Another strong element within the planning is the inclusion of individual children's development within the six learning areas, such as providing support for specific aspects of physical development, such as ball rolling and manipulative skills. Children's interests are also well featured. For example, a favorite story book character is effectively used to plan activities about different animals and word and letter forming.

The quality of staff skill with teaching within the setting is outstanding. Staff make highly effective use of questions and demonstrate excellent skills in extending learning, with prompts for children to explore shapes and colors, practice counting and talk about feelings. The staff also demonstrate a highly detailed knowledge of the early years curriculum and are able to present activities for children which successfully explore all six of the required areas of learning. The observation and assessment of children is another highly organised aspect within the provision. Frequent notes are made on individual children's development and these build to provide consistent evidence of their progress across the learning stages. Staff also complete a full narrative assessment of each child's progress every term that is shared with parents and successfully used to plan and promote children's next steps in learning.

Staff take care to ensure children are made welcome and encouraged to feel safe within the setting. Staff follow clear procedures to maintain safety and security, and daily checks are made on all play areas. The setting has well organised risk assessments and clear records are kept of how areas of risk are reduced and action taken to remedy possible hazards. Staff pay close attention to promoting children's healthy growth and development and children learn about healthy eating. Children have well organised 'on request' snack times so they can eat when they choose and not have their play interrupted. Children's physical development benefits from many opportunities to be active indoors and in the setting's well planned outdoor play area. Children particularly enjoy a wide range of role play games and many activities free-flow to the outdoor area. Opportunities are also provided daily for whole group expressive singing and movement activities in the free central space within the building.

Consistent care is taken by staff to promote children's social confidence and ability to co-operate with others. Children demonstrate excellent social skills and a particularly high level of child-to-child interaction takes place. For example, during

adventure games and role play 'houses', children successfully share their thoughts and plan their games together. Children use the rich range of resources and play materials provided to successfully promote their future skills. A well prepared quiet room offers excellent opportunities for reading and one-to-one story times promoting language and literacy. The many challenging focused learning activities presented by staff provide significant support for problem solving, with children involved in making and measuring and noting how things change. Children are consistently encouraged to explore colors and shapes during creative art and craft sessions, and many of the children's role play activities contain strong elements of creative thinking and imaginative development. Learning about the wider world is also successfully brought into the children's experience, through themed play about distant places, people who help us and children talking about their homes and families.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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