

Brambles Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	221918
Inspection date	29/03/2011
Inspector	Fiona Robinson

Setting address	St. Helens Primary School, Colne Road, Bluntisham, HUNTINGDON, Cambridgeshire, PE28 3NY
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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

Brambles Playgroup registered in 2000 and is located in St Helen's Primary School, in Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire. It is run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the playgroup. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area and the playgroup has the use of the school hall and playing field.

The playgroup is open each weekday from 9am to 11.30am and 12.30pm to 3pm, during the school term. There is a lunch club which runs from 11.30am to 1.20pm. A maximum of 26 children aged between two and five years may attend at any one time. Currently there are 44 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. Of these, 31 children receive funding for early education places. Children come for the local area and attend for a variety of the sessions on offer. The playgroup is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 12 members of staff who work with the children, nine of whom hold early years qualifications to at least level 2. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are fully included in well-organised indoor and outdoor activities and achieve well. Staff take into account their individual needs and interests and plan effectively for them. Because of this, children enjoy coming to the playgroup. There are excellent partnerships with parents and carers, the host school and outside agencies, and information is shared very effectively. The manager and staff have a good knowledge of the playgroup's strengths and areas for improvement, such as the development of the wider outdoor area. They have good capacity to improve in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the use of information and communication technology and programmable toys in activities to extend children's learning
- develop problem-solving and sensory experiences in the outdoor area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff have an excellent knowledge of safeguarding and child protection procedures. Comprehensive policies and procedures are fully implemented to ensure children's safety. Risk assessments are robust and carried out daily to keep the indoor and outdoor environments safe and secure. Children use a wide range of equipment that is well-maintained, safe and suitable for their age. There are excellent staff recruitment and vetting procedures in place, which ensure that staff and adults having contact with the children are highly suitable. Security is given a high priority and there are rigorous collection procedures for staff and parents to follow when collecting their children. Fire evacuation procedures are practised very regularly so that all children are familiar with the routine. Staff are deployed very effectively to ensure children are supervised at all times.

Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding. Parents say that staff are very approachable and caring and that their children are very settled and enjoy their activities. They receive comprehensive information through newsletters, informal discussions and the parents' notice board. Key staff regularly share the children's learning records and profiles with parents and keep them very well-informed of their children's achievements and progress. Consultation meetings are held termly, and parents and carers are very appreciative of the detailed written reports they receive. Parents are very supportive of fundraising activities, such as treasure hunts. The relationship with the host school is excellent, and information is shared very effectively with staff. Staff are very experienced in caring for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are outstanding links with outside agencies and all children are supported well in their learning.

The playgroup is well led and managed. Good self-evaluation systems ensure that improvements enhance children's experiences. The manager and staff value the views of parents and carers and take these into consideration when identifying areas for development. Good progress has been made in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection. Activities are regularly monitored, and realistic targets are set for the children. The layout and organisation of the adjacent outdoor area has been developed. However, planning shows that opportunities for children to explore and investigate their wider environment by participating in problem-solving activities outdoors are not fully exploited. Staff make imaginative and effective use of a good range of resources to meet children's needs, although resources for information and communication technology are more limited, which impacts on the development of skills in this area. Staff actively promote equality and diversity to an outstanding level and ensure that all children are fully included in activities. Children enjoy listening to talks about Poland, Hong Kong and China from parents and grandparents. Staff meet together regularly and attend appropriate training to enhance their experiences and knowledge. They demonstrate a good capacity to improve through very good teamwork.

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

Children benefit from well-planned and purposeful indoor and outdoor play and achieve well. Staff have a good understanding of the children's interests and include these in activities. Themes, such as People Who Help Us, Traditional Tales, and Recycling, enhance the children's experiences. Key staff evaluate the achievement of the children and skilfully use the information gathered to plan the next steps in learning. Children behave extremely well and cooperate maturely with one another during activities. They are very confident and show positive self-esteem. The staff are excellent role models with high expectations of behaviour. Children are very respectful and caring towards one another. Staff actively promote their independence and continually encourage them to make their own choices. The children helped to compile behaviour rules for their playgroup, which they follow carefully. Festivals, such as the Chinese New Year and topics about other countries, such as India, give the children an excellent appreciation of other cultures, people and lifestyles and they enjoy access to a wide range of appropriate resources.

Children have a good understanding of keeping themselves healthy. They have daily access to outdoor play and are taught the importance of keeping fit and healthy. They learn to make healthy choices at snack time and help to prepare fruit salads, fruit kebabs and bread. They learn how to use equipment safely as they prepare vegetables and make soup. Their physical skills are developed well as they run, climb, balance and ride their pedalled vehicles. Children have an excellent understanding of keeping themselves and others safe. They benefit from talks on keeping safe and on fire and road safety from the fire and police services. They feel very safe and secure in their environment as staff supervise them at all times and are skilled at reinforcing safe behaviour.

Children are eager to learn and achieve well. Their creative skills are developed well as they create colourful patterns with potatoes and carrots. They listen attentively to stories and enjoy retelling the plot through role play. They skilfully build model houses out of straw, twigs and bricks and act out the words and ideas from the Three Little Pigs. Their communication, language and literacy skills are developed well through their work on letters and sounds. Opportunities for using the computer are welcomed; however, children are not fully involved in using the digital camera and programmable toys to record their experiences. This impacts on their ability to develop these skills. They benefit from visits to a local farm and enjoy growing sunflowers, potatoes, carrots and marrows on their allotment. Overall, children's excellent behaviour, good progress and outstanding appreciation of other cultures prepare them well for their future learning experiences.

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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	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	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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