

Littleton Pre-school Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	20/05/2011
Inspector	Louise Bonney
Setting address	The Hall Way,, Littleton, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 6QL
Telephone number	07765 916 006
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*.

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

Littleton Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1975. The pre-school is managed by a parent committee and is a registered charity. It operates from Littleton Memorial Hall. The pre-school serves the local area. There is an open area for outdoor play.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register and may provide care for no more than 26 children at any one time, aged from two years to under eight years. There are currently 26 children on roll. Children aged three and four receive free early years education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and there are flexible attendance times. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The group opens four days a week during school term times. Sessions are available on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings and are from 8.30am until 12.15pm.

There are five staff working with the children. Of these, three have early years qualifications and two are working towards recognised qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The committee and staff show ambition and drive as they evaluate their provision and continually introduce changes to improve and develop it. Most documentation is well maintained and procedures are implemented that safeguard the children and provide an inclusive provision. Staff plan and support a wide range of well-resourced activities that promote good outcomes overall in children's learning and development. Staff have strong links with parents and involve them fully in their children's education and in evaluating the provision. They usually promptly develop links with other settings children attend and specialists supporting children with special education needs and/or disabilities, in order to provide continuity in their care and learning.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure the record of risk assessment includes all outdoor areas used by the children and when and by whom more frequent checks are carried out. (Documentation)

03/06/2011

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

- develop planning further to clarify and support the delivery of individual children's learning aims, as well as those of the whole group
- implement systems to promptly seek information about children's learning and development from other provision they attend in order to provide continuity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The committee and staff implement a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that protect children's welfare and which are reviewed annually. The committee follows rigorous procedures when recruiting new staff and committee members. They take up references and carry out criminal record checks as soon as positions are accepted in order to check applicants' suitability. The manager has delegated responsibility for safeguarding and all staff have attended training relevant to their roles. Staff ensure children play in a safe environment through their thorough risk assessments and the reduction of hazards. However, staff do not sign and date the risk assessment record for more frequent checks and have not recorded their risk assessment of the new garden. This breaches the legal requirement.

The committee and staff work effectively as a team and methodically evaluate and develop the provision, identifying their strengths and most weaknesses accurately. Committee members attend external meetings to discuss ways to manage and enhance the provision. Staff attend cluster meetings or visit other settings to share best practice. They seek feedback from parents and act upon recommendations made at inspection, by their advisory teacher and special educational needs and/or disability specialists. They have a clear development plan and have introduced many changes that greatly benefit the children, sometimes with support from their local council and businesses. These include the provision of an enclosed garden where children grow fruit and vegetables and the development of planning systems so that children's interests and abilities are more effectively reflected. New monitoring systems support equal opportunities as staff assess individuals and groups of children's progress and any gaps in provision. Staff are encouraged to maintain their professional development and have an annual appraisal to help identify future training needs.

Children access a good range of resources which include natural and recycled materials and toys and posters that reflect social diversity. Staff set up the garden and hall daily, dividing it into activity areas that support children's choices. Recycled resources such as off-cuts of wood and large cardboard boxes, together with the new planting garden, help children develop awareness of sustainability. Staff solve the challenge of keeping indoors warm while enabling children to access the outdoor area freely by providing children with a bell to ring so an adult can open the door for them. They supply protective clothing so that children can keep their clothes dry while playing outside in wet weather. Staff are deployed effectively and those with Level 3 qualifications are allocated as key workers for

named children. Committee members and staff have clearly defined roles, which helps in the effective management of the provision.

Parents and staff develop strong partnerships that support the children's care and learning well. Parents provide information about their children's individual needs and starting points through the completion of documentation and discussions with their allocated key worker. Staff organise parent evenings and letters of thanks reflect how highly appreciative fathers are of having the opportunity to visit the setting. Children's key workers talk to parents at least each month about their child's progress. Parents take home children's learning files and receive termly written reports about children's progress and next possible steps, which they contribute to. Staff provide parents with activity sacks to take home and share with their children. This involves parents in their children's learning. Parents are able to join the committee if they wish to become more involved in the management of the setting.

Staff develop good links with others involved with children who have special education needs and/or disabilities. They attend meetings and work closely with specialists and schools to ensure continuing provision supports the children's identified needs. They agree children's next steps with parents and specialists, which provides good continuity in children's development. Procedures are in place to share information with other settings children attend, but these are not always promptly implemented. This delays the provision of continuity in some children's learning and development.

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

Staff set up a stimulating environment each day that encourages children to busily engage themselves in purposeful activities. Staff balance children's choices with some adult-led activities, such as when they join together to sing and march or for a story. All staff observe the children as they play and key workers maintain children's achievement records, assess their progress and clearly identify their next possible steps. Children who have special education needs and/or disabilities have their educational plans developed in liaison with specialist advisors and parents. Staff have good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements. They develop activity plans for the whole group and provide some adult-led activities to complement children's free choices. However, plans do not identify children's individual learning aims to further focus staff support and observation. All staff talk to the children and question them skilfully so that children develop understanding and think carefully about what they are doing. This leads to children making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children quickly settle on arrival and self-register as they find their names on the board. They show independence as they select their own activities from those set out by staff and organise their own play and learning confidently. Children show concentration as they follow their interests and use resources that promote problem solving, such as when building a castle outside with recycled materials or

constructing towers and arches that balance indoors using soft bricks. Staff support activities well. They introduce numeracy and simple calculation as they encourage children to count and compare, such as when seeing how many children return from the garden and how many stay outside. Children are motivated to learn and show high levels of creativity and imagination as they play. They use boxes, long tubes and bits of wood to create caves and castles. Their role play is well developed and supported by staff as they allow children to thoroughly medicate and bandage them. Children explore the natural environment. They cluster around spiders to examine them or exclaim 'they are beautiful' as they find the first strawberries and talk about them needing to grow bigger before they pick them. Children with special education needs and/or disabilities receive good support as they play. They develop confidence as staff gently encourage them to try new areas, such as the vegetable garden, and staff acknowledge their achievement when they happily visit it for the first time. Staff introduce supportive processes and children know to ask for a timer when they want a turn to fill their watering can with the hose. Children have opportunities to use technology. They show great interest in their new computer as staff teach them how to use the mouse and software and as they use the digital camera. Staff provide a print-rich environment with many low-level displays of children's clearly labelled work. Children show interest in writing and staff help them form letters correctly as they label their pictures or allow staff write descriptions on their pictures.

Children develop friendships as they play together and show confidence as they interact with staff and ask for their needs. They demonstrate understanding of how to behave as they remind others of the rules for politeness. They show care as they give another child their forgotten jumper as they return indoors. Children develop a sense of achievement as staff and parents share 'wow' moments, which are celebrated by all the children. Staff encourage children's awareness of safety through activities and suitable challenges. Staff help them assess risks, such as before they jump off a raised bed in the garden or as they use the raised planks indoors to balance along. Children adhere to the boundaries when playing outside and ask staff when they wish to go to another area. Children develop good health through playing outside daily, where they have space to run and ride on wheeled toys. They occasionally use the larger apparatus in the nearby play park or join in a coached tennis session each week, which provides additional physical challenges. Children follow hygiene routines and help staff prepare healthy snacks. Projects and displays promote children's awareness of how to maintain good health and safety.

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

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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