

Saxon Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 220201
Inspection date 10/05/2011
Inspector Susan Marriott

Setting address Church Rooms, High Street, Earls Barton,
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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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Description of the setting

Saxon Playgroup is run by a voluntary management committee. It was re-registered in 2000 and operates from three main rooms in the Church Hall in Earls Barton, Northamptonshire. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to provide care for a maximum of 30 children. It is open from Monday to Thursday during term-time only and sessions are from 8.45am to 11.45am and 12.15pm to 3.15pm on a Tuesday only. There is an outdoor play area attached to the setting and further outdoor play is accommodated through the use of local parks and walks.

There are currently 63 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 45 children receive funding for early education. The setting serves the local and surrounding communities. It currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and is able to support children who have English as an additional language.

The setting employs seven members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This is an extremely friendly and highly inclusive setting where the mature and established staff team work hard to capture the true essence and spirit of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff sustain consistently good quality interaction with children to draw learning from play and promote positive attitudes to learning. Children make good progress in their learning and development and have tremendous fun in the process. Most aspects of children's welfare are promoted well, observation and assessment systems are strong and there are good partnerships with parents and carers. Enthusiastic, strong leadership and honest, realistic self-evaluation secures the pre-school's good capacity for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that all of the records of Criminal Records Bureau disclosures include the date on which they were obtained
- include all relevant details when completing the accident records
- improve the system for recording the names of visitors, the purpose of the visit, and details of arrival and departure times.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is promoted well as the pre-school has effective safeguarding procedures. Staff attend regular training and review their procedures to ensure that they keep up-to-date with this area of work. Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children and the records include the unique reference numbers of Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures. However, these do not always include the date on which the disclosure check was obtained. Regular risk assessments and daily checks are appropriately recorded, ensuring that hazards are minimised and that the environment is safe for children. Good daily practice, such as ongoing explanations from staff, reinforces children's understanding of safety issues. For example, children are reminded that they must not run inside the building and need to respect other's personal space. Staff treat unknown visitors with appropriate caution, checking their identity before admitting them to the premises. However, the visitor record does not include the purpose of the visit, and details of arrival and departure times. Good health and well-being is encouraged and necessary steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection, appropriate action is taken when children are ill. However, accident records do not always include all relevant details.

Staff work hard in this pre-school to set out and pack away pre-school, ensuring that they create a bright and stimulating environment for the children on a daily basis. For example, posters are put up and mobile screens are used well to display children's work, numbers and print. These include displays which support children with English and an additional language. The good organisation of children's access and use of the small outdoor play area means that children have daily opportunities to play and learn in the fresh air. Admirable use of staffing resources enables small numbers of children to visit the nearby park on request.

The pre-school has a supervisor who is extremely proactive in addressing issues which impact upon the quality of provision for children. Since the last inspection, the pre-school has ensured that children have improved access to drinking water and staff provide further opportunities for children to access a wider range of activities and resources which promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. For example, the pre-school have purchased some new resources, they borrow from the toy library each term and have introduced some new activities. The Autumn term planning now focuses on cultures and celebrations. Planning methods have been developed as a result of improving the level of staff qualification. The staff are all very actively involved in the organisation of every aspect of the provision and they have a clear vision for the future, involving committee, parents and children in reviewing the daily practice. Staff work exceptionally well as a team and are actively supported in attending further training. This helps create a positive environment, where children feel secure and happy.

Staff have a clear understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to implement appropriate policies and provide a service which is inclusive for all

children and their families. They work with parents and carers to ensure that they understand each child's background and culture and are therefore able to meet their needs and promote children's awareness of individuality. Parents receive good quality information about the setting and their child's progress. Staff watch and notice each child at play in order to understand and support their individual well-being and development, enabling each key person and family to work together. The pre-school has effective working arrangements with outside agencies involved with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Individual education plans are devised immediately upon receipt of information and these are shared with parents and staff to enable best support for children's learning and development.

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

Staff give children a really warm welcome on arrival at the setting, greeting each one as a valued individual. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well-supported in their achievements because staff have a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The children's learning records are conscientiously completed with appropriate frequency across all key person groups. An effective baseline assessment is completed by staff when children join the pre-school and observations link closely to the Practice Guidance document to inform activity planning. Information gathered is used to identify the next steps in children's learning and targets are set and shared with parents. Overall, records demonstrate and secure the good progress that children make.

The indoor and outdoor environments are both set out attractively to reflect the six areas of learning. Plans ensure that indoor and outdoor activities are provided to support the same learning opportunities whether children choose to play inside or out during the session. For example, books are available in the garden as well as indoors in the book castle. Children can express their choices by asking staff for particular activities, supported by the choice board. Staff allow children to move equipment from one area to another. For example, children playing in the sand pit, choose to move the plastic number moulds to the water tray and staff maximise the learning opportunity this presents by asking which numbers the children recognise.

Children's enjoyment is enhanced and their learning effectively extended because staff join in appropriately with their play and discussions. As children paint the wall with water outside, staff speak clearly and calmly at all times, asking open questions and continually extending children's understanding. They acknowledge children's achievements with praise and actively promote children's independence. They include teaching about colours and counting in their commentary, so that children learn effectively through play based activities. Group activities and songs contribute significantly to the quality of the provision. Children join in enthusiastically with a lively dance session as they do the 'wiggly woo' and swing their arms.

Children's self-esteem is promoted as they are offered opportunities to talk about

themselves, their families and recent experiences. Children can take Saxon Bear on holiday with them to share their experiences through photographs and diary notes. Staff recognised that some children would not be going on holiday, so have introduced two toy ostriches, called Oscar and Olivia, who can fulfill the same role for weekends and special trips. Staff recognise that this is not a culturally diverse group and do all they can to promote children's awareness of differences. For example, a display board shows photographs of the children dressed in the extensive range of cultural dressing-up clothes and words for colours and numbers are displayed in Polish and English to support children with English as an additional language.

An extremely well-organised snack time provides some excellent opportunities for children and staff to interact in small groups. Staff maximise the learning opportunities for promoting children's independence and discussion about healthy eating. For example, children are encouraged to spread the butter on their french bread and pour their own drinks. Children's behaviour is managed well and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs. Children learn about the relevance of healthy lifestyles and develop skills for the future as they become independent, share ideas and work together. For example, staff encourage children to try to resolve a dispute over how much of the wall-mounted chalk board they can draw on and the children learn to co-operate and take turns fairly. Children are encouraged to adopt healthy habits such as washing hands, blowing noses, and putting tissues in the bin. This is managed by gentle and supportive encouragement increasing the child's independence and highlighting why these things are important. Children develop good habits, become independent learners, develop collaborative skills, problem solving abilities, creativity and creative thinking because they are happy, relaxed, supported and challenged by this stimulating, age-appropriate environment.

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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