

Sutton Valence Pre School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Jane Wakelen

Setting address	The Parish Rooms, Chart Road, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3AW
Telephone number	01622 842388
Email	svpreschool@btinternet.com
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

Sutton Valence Pre-School opened in 1981 and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents. It operates from one room within Sutton Valence Parish Rooms, next to the Church, in the rural area of Sutton Valence, close to Maidstone. The group has access to their own enclosed outdoor area. The pre-school is open five days a week during school term times only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 3.00pm.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 70 children aged from two to the end of the early years age group on roll. The pre-school currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

There are ten members of staff, eight of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ level 2. One member of staff is currently doing the Foundation Degree in Early Years and two other members of staff are training for an early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Overall, children make good progress in their learning and development because staff have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. However, the links between the observation, assessment and planning are not always consistent. Children play in a secure, welcoming environment, where all children are fully integrated, because of the excellent partnerships with outside agencies. Positive relationships with parents helps to involve them in their children's care and education and keeps them well informed of their children's progress. All staff are involved in completing the self-evaluation process resulting in an accurate diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision. The motivated staff team ensure continuous improvement to promote good outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further develop the assessment record by recording children's starting points and reflecting a clear link between observation, assessment and planning
- extend and improve opportunities for children to make marks and play in an environment that is rich in notices, words, pictures and rhymes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are well protected within the setting as staff give high priority to safeguarding children. A well-written policy is implemented effectively within the setting with all staff having a secure understanding of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about children in their care. Training for safeguarding is made available to all staff and updated on a regular basis, ensuring children are very safe and well protected. All new staff have a probationary period and thorough induction into the setting, with the necessary suitability checks taken up, promoting children's well-being. Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to promoting children's safety and carry out thorough risk assessments indoors, outdoors and on outings. Staff remind children about taking care using different equipment and explain why they should sit on the chair properly, supporting children's understanding about keeping themselves safe.

Equality and diversity is actively promoted by staff who demonstrate a genuine interest in ensuring all children are fully integrated into the setting. They have a good knowledge of each child and their backgrounds, enabling each child's individual needs to be met. The environment reflects diversity and different languages in the range of resources, posters and notices around the room. Recruitment of staff for the setting reflects the equal opportunities policy, providing children with good opportunities to extend their understanding and prevent discrimination. The setting is highly committed to working in partnership with others and takes a lead role in establishing effective working relationships. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (Senco) works exceptionally well with outside agencies to support children's individual needs. Agencies such as the Speech and Language therapist and physiotherapist are invited into the setting, to work with the staff, to support individual children. Individual Educational Plans are written in liaison with all parties working with the child to provide excellent support for children with additional needs.

Children are able to access a wide range of good quality resources independently from accessible storage around the room in an environment conducive to learning. Each area of learning has its own designated space within the setting, allowing children to make choices of equipment and resources according to their individual likes and interests.

Partnership with parents and carers is highly positive with parents reporting they 'feel extremely welcome in the setting and kept fully informed of their children's progress.' The setting regularly asks parents and carers for their views both verbally, at coffee mornings and through questionnaires. This information is used to inform the self-evaluation process and to inform decisions about the provision to ensure it meets the needs of its users. Children's views are also sought through questioning and through play to ensure children's likes and interests are fully explored and made available. Parents are given a prospectus when their children start at the setting and are shown the policies and relevant documentation. They are requested to give written consent for some aspects of care to further support

their children's well-being and security.

The manager is committed to offering a quality service to meet the needs of all the children. Her motivation, together with the staff-team's enthusiasm and dedication, ensure children are able to make good progress in their learning and development. The manager and staff have undertaken a system of self-evaluation to accurately identify the strengths and areas to develop. Regular monitoring of sessions and tracking of children's learning is evaluated to inform the self-evaluation process. This is supported by regular staff meetings enabling all staff to contribute their opinions and suggestions. The manager and committee have a good working relationship to ensure the setting moves forward with additional support from the local authority. They are confident about what the setting needs to do to improve further and have been successful in making and sustaining improvements.

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

Children arrive confidently and enthusiastically to the setting. They explore the soil, cones and bark on the table and use the magnifying glasses to see it more closely. Staff take many photos of children's achievements and encourage children to take their own photographs, understanding how the camera is operated. Programmes on the computer support children's literacy and numeracy skills, whilst learning about technology. Children use the scales to weigh the small bears and jigsaws to match the different numbers. They show number recognition counting in their play and finding numbers in the environment that are familiar to them, for example their age.

The outdoor area is a firm favourite with the majority of children. They show skills using the pedals on the tricycles and good balance on the scooters. Round pipes engage children's attention as they post the balls in one end and then try to catch them at the other, counting how many balls they can post before they roll out the end. Story time is promoted daily, with children eagerly asking questions or making comments about the story, demonstrating very good concentration skills. Children have some opportunities to make marks using sand, pencils and paint, but this area is not always fully utilised or explored. Opportunities to become familiar with words, letters and sounds is being developed through self-registration and scribing on children's pictures, but this is not yet fully established. Children are able to develop good skills for their future as they develop their literacy, numeracy and understanding of communication technology.

Children play well in small and large groups, moving around the setting with confidence and demonstrating the ability to work independently or collaboratively. Children enjoy using their imagination in role play situations both inside and outside, acting out familiar roles or situations, such as going to someone's wedding. Daily opportunities for creative play are offered using different mediums to work with, such as recyclable materials, glue, tape and paint. Children join in enthusiastically to action rhymes and songs in large group play, with opportunities to use musical instruments.

Children make good progress in their learning and development, including those children with disabilities and those with English as an additional language. Staff observations and assessments of children show a good understanding of child development, although the link between observation, assessment and planning are not always consistent or clear. Starting points are recorded occasionally, resulting in some activities not providing sufficient challenge for some children. Children are motivated and interested in the broad range of activities and make choices from a good range of resources available.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles as they have healthy snacks to eat and pour their own drinks, developing their independence. Children are able to help themselves to drinks of water throughout the session to help them remain hydrated. Good personal care routines are encouraged, with the majority of children able to explain why this is important. For example, children understand why they must wash their hands before they eat and put tissues used for their noses in the bin. Daily opportunities to benefit from fresh air and exercise help to support children's healthy lifestyle, especially on walks to the field. Children have a good understanding about keeping themselves safe. They know they must be close to the adults when on outings and must show good listening skills. They understand the importance of taking care on the climbing frame and are reminded about sitting on chairs properly. Fire evacuation drills are carried out regularly to enable children to understand the emergency procedures.

Children behave exceptionally well and understand the rules of the setting and expectations of the staff. They demonstrate how they take turns with the toys and share resources, such as offering their friend the tape when creating their models. Children are able to gain a sense of belonging as they see their work displayed around the walls. They develop good self-esteem because staff use praise and positive behaviour strategies. Children build close relationships with adults and their peers from different backgrounds and cultures, gaining an understanding and acceptance of each others differences.

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	1
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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