

Chestnut Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	221914
Inspection date	09/02/2011
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe

Setting address	The Cathodeon Centre, High Street, Linton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB21 4JT
Telephone number	07817 069 696
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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

Chestnut Playgroup was established over 30 years ago. It operates from rooms within the Cathodeon Centre in Linton, Cambridgeshire. There is an enclosed outdoor area. The group is registered on the Early Years Register to accept up to 25 children aged between two and five years. There are currently 16 children on roll. This includes 11 children eligible for early years funding. Children can attend for a variety of sessions. The group currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens from 9.30am to 12.30pm each weekday during term times. There are extended sessions available for children. There are four members of staff working with the children all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a Level 4 qualification. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The playgroup also operates a breakfast club Monday to Friday from 7.50am for school children. Children are walked to the two local schools in time for the start of the school day.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and confident because staff work well with parents to ensure children are settled and feel safe. Staff have a reasonable knowledge of safeguarding and know how to protect children from harm. Systems for staff recruitment are adequate, but records of checks do not meet the requirements. Children make suitable progress towards the early learning goals; systems for observation, assessment and planning are evolving and generally activities meet children's individual learning needs. Managers and staff have sufficient understanding of the priorities for improvement but the system to reflect on the quality of provision is not yet fully effective.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- keep records of the information used to assess suitability to demonstrate checks have been done. 04/03/2011
Such records must include the unique reference numbers of CRB disclosures obtained and the date on which they were obtained (Suitable people).

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

- review the policies and procedures to ensure they reflect current

- requirements and/or legislation
- further develop the system for self-evaluation so that it reflects effectively on the strengths of the provision and identifies areas for development
- improve the organisation of the sessions and the deployment of resources to increase children's ability to make choices and follow their own interests
- develop further the records of development by ensuring observations are used effectively to assess what children can do and decide on next steps.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are suitably trained and know what action to take in the event of allegations of child abuse. A suitable safeguarding policy is in place and is shared with parents but has not been fully updated to relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Systems are in place to ensure staff undergo the necessary checks on their suitability. However, not all of the records of the information used to demonstrate staff suitability to Ofsted are available, such as the unique reference numbers of Criminal Record Bureau Disclosures and the date on which they were obtained. This is a breach of regulations. Written risk assessments and daily checks of the premises help keep children safe. Staff are conscientious about supervising the children as they play, both indoors and out. They are particularly vigilant in the outdoor areas; they keep children safe and supervise them appropriately as they play on large equipment.

The rooms used by the children are clean and well maintained; cheerful pictures and posters mean children and parents feel welcome on arrival. Generally the setting is suitably organised so children have a range of age-appropriate experiences and staff are deployed efficiently to ensure children are safe and well cared for. However the deployment of resources and the organisation of sessions do not enable children to fully develop their own interests and therefore become active, independent learners. Required documentation, including parental permissions is in place and policies and procedures are appropriately shared with parents. Some policies and procedures have not been updated, for example, the inclusion policy, makes reference to past legislation, whilst others refer to organisations that no longer exist, such as the Area Child Protection Committee. This means information given within the policies and procedures is incorrect and parents and staff, potentially, have inaccurate information about the underpinning documentation.

The setting works well with parents, who express their appreciation about the quality of care given to their children. Staff and committee provide them with generally good information about the setting. Parents receive regular newsletters and are kept informed about changes and events. Settling in visits give parents time to become familiar with the setting and enable children to feel safe and comfortable with their key person. Parents share in their children's learning and development through contact books and have times when they can help in sessions. The setting is building links with other providers and has a sound relationship with the local school. Children due to enter reception benefit from visits to school and have opportunities to meet with their teachers. This helps to

ensure there is continuity of care. Although there are no children currently on roll with special educational needs and/or disabilities there are appropriate systems in place to support them, such as a recently trained special educational needs coordinator.

The new manager and the staff demonstrate an enthusiasm for their work and are developing their plans for the future. The management committee show a commitment to staff development to enable them to improve their knowledge and increase their qualifications, which helps to improve the outcomes for children. Managers and staff show sufficient understanding of the priorities for improvements, such as recruiting new qualified staff to support the current staff team. However, planning for the future lacks focus because the system for self-evaluation is not yet fully developed.

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

Children enjoy their time in the playgroup, they show good relationships with staff and each other. They behave well and understand the rules for good sharing, for example, they independently negotiate the sharing of a magnet so they can each try to find out what materials it will attract. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which enables children to make satisfactory progress overall. Systems for observations and assessment are in place and include ongoing contributions from parents to aid planning for individuals. However, observations are not used effectively to decide on the next steps in children's learning. As a result, some of the activities lack challenge and the sessions are overly- structured so children have limited opportunities for child-led exploration.

Children have good opportunities to draw and make marks in meaningful ways. For example, they operate a 'travel agency' and issue bills and receipts. They benefit from a comfortable area to look at books and access them readily during times of free play. Children learn about numbers and counting as they sing songs and rhymes, whilst puzzles and small construction sets help them to develop their understanding of problem solving. Activities like painting and gluing enable children to be creative and explore different media. Children enjoy using a digital camera to capture images of their friends and show the pictures to adults, smiling happily and showing good self-esteem. They have daily use of a computer which they use competently. This benefits their future learning. Staff understand the importance of each child's uniqueness and they gather information about children's home backgrounds and languages through discussion with parents. Parents contribute to children's understanding of other cultures and countries, for example, parents of Japanese background show the children origami.

Children benefit from daily use of a good-sized, well-equipped outdoor area. Large equipment enables them to climb and take acceptable risks, for example as they navigate the slide steps. Staff encourage children to be active as they help to kick the balls around. Areas are available for growing so children can learn about the

lifecycle of plants, including fruits and vegetables. Children enjoy a range of healthy and nutritious snacks, such as fruit, vegetables and breads. They explore new tastes, for example, they eat croissants from France. They recall they also tried sushi from Japan as part of their topic on 'countries'. The snack table is available for a period of time during the session, enabling children to choose when to eat and drink. Hygiene in the setting is promoted well; children show they understand the importance of washing their hands prior to eating or after using the toilet because staff provide good role models. Staff help children learn to keep themselves safe as they offer guidance to the children as they play, encouraging them to sit on their bottoms on the slide. Children and staff practise the fire drill at regular intervals so they all understand how to stay safe in an emergency.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
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	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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