Priory Park Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector: Janet Keeling

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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

Priory Park Playgroup opened in 1979 and is a registered charity managed by a voluntary management committee. It operates from a mobile building in the grounds of Priory Park Infant school in St. Neots, Cambridgeshire. Children have access to an enclosed, outdoor, play area. The setting serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas.

The playgroup is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm during school term times only. A maximum of 41 children from two to five years may attend the playgroup at any one time. Currently there are 98 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The playgroup is in receipt of funding for early years education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

There are 16 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, 12 hold National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 3 and above. The playgroup receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make outstanding progress in their learning and development at this vibrant and extremely welcoming playgroup. They are confident, independent and engage in a wonderful range of activities which fully support their individual needs and interests. The inspirational and dedicated team of staff strive to offer an inclusive service where the uniqueness of each child is recognised and celebrated. Excellent partnerships with parents and other professionals have been firmly established, ensuring continuity of care and education for all children. Most written information for parents is of an exceptionally good quality. The playgroup is led and managed by an experienced and highly motivated manager who embraces the process of self-evaluation, and demonstrates a dedicated approach towards the sustained and continuous improvement of the playgroup.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- improving the two way flow of information with parents, this specifically refers to updating the playgroup’s welcome pack to include good quality information on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Significant priority is given to safeguarding and protecting children. Staff are competent and demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and know who to contact should they be concerned about a child in their care. There are effective recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable people. Induction procedures for new staff are effective in ensuring staff are fully aware of their roles and that they fully understand the playgroup's comprehensive policies and procedures. All staff demonstrate an exceptional understanding of health and safety issues within the playgroup. Detailed risk assessments are completed, reviewed yearly and cover all aspects of the learning environment. Daily checks are completed to ensure both the indoor and outdoor areas are safe and free from hazards. Written fire procedures are in place and staff ensure that children engage in regular emergency evacuation procedures. Staff routinely verify the identity of all visitors and are vigilant about the safe arrival and collection of children.

The deployment of resources is outstanding. Staff are successfully deployed throughout the playgroup day to ensure children are supervised safely at all times. Resources and equipment are made accessible and, as a result, there are excellent opportunities for children to make choices and take shared responsibility for their own learning and play. The highly inspirational team work exceptionally well together and strive to improve their practice. The playgroup's self-evaluation system, together with parent questionnaires, help staff to identify the playgroup's strengths and areas for improvement. There is a shared vision for inclusive practices, ensuring that every child can achieve as well as they can regardless of their background. As a result children are fully included and integrated into playgroup life. Staff are committed to continuing their own professional development and regularly attend relevant training courses to develop their knowledge and skills. Consequently, children's care and well-being are further enhanced. Staff work successfully in partnership with other early years professionals, such as the reception class teacher at the host school, childminders and other private providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. As a result, continuity of care for all children is fully supported.

Partnerships with parents are excellent. Parents and carers are welcomed into the playgroup by friendly and approachable staff, who dedicate time getting to know children and their families. The effective key person system ensures that excellent relationships are fostered, ensuring children feel safe and secure in their environment. Parents receive a wealth of information before their child starts at the playgroup. This includes a leaflet 'all about the playgroup team', a 'healthy eating booklet' and a welcome pack. The welcome pack includes information, such as the playgroup's aims, policies and procedures, the key person system and information related to the management committee. However, information regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage framework is more limited. Parents are kept up to date with information regarding the playgroup through newsletters, the
use of a white board and through the daily exchange of information. Parents speak highly of the playgroup and feedback from them during the inspection was excellent. Comments included, 'a fantastic playgroup', 'brilliant staff' and 'my child is always excited by coming to the playgroup'. Parents' comments in the most recent questionnaire included, 'the playgroup has given my child an excellent start', 'communication is excellent' and 'I am thrilled with my child’s progress'.

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

Children are enthusiastic and show great enjoyment in what they do. The environment is planned carefully to allow them to choose from a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities which cover all areas of learning. Staff demonstrate a positive approach to supporting children's learning needs and to enriching the quality of the learning environment. Children interact very positively with their peers and are keen to share their ideas with their friends and staff. All children are valued and treated with equal concern, with any specific requirements being met sensitively through discussion with parents and other professionals. Staff have an excellent understanding of children's needs and interests as they observe children, listen carefully to what they say and record information on a daily basis. Information is evaluated and used effectively to inform future planning. All children have a wonderful 'year diary book', which is an ongoing record of children's learning. They also contain an overview of the activities, stories and songs that their child has been involved in, which enables parents to support their children at home. In each of the playrooms there is a 'Fountain of Achievement', which displays children's achievements from home.

Children access an outstanding range of first hand learning experiences. For example, they learn about the lifecycle of a butterfly, plant fruit and vegetables and dig in the soil for treasure. They talk about how the weather changes each day and confidently identify and predict the weather conditions. Children say 'it's cloudy' and 'there may be a thunder storm'. Children's mark-making skills are fostered successfully, with many excellent opportunities to draw, paint and practice emergent writing during play. They enjoy music and join in with a range of songs and action rhymes. There is great excitement as children tunefully sing 'Five Little Ducks' and 'Mary, Mary Quite Contrary'. They confidently use numbers, size and shapes during everyday activities. For example, they count how many children are present at registration, talk about shapes while building with crates in the garden and compare the size of their footprints in the sand.

Children become absorbed in activities and staff routinely develop their language and communication skills, through sensitive intervention and skilful questioning. They express their creativity through drawings, art and craft work and relish imaginary play. Children thoroughly enjoy being in the fresh air and access a splendid range of outdoor play opportunities. In the garden area a group of children have enormous fun in the sand pit. They take off their socks and shoes and chuckle with delight as they compare the size of their footprints. Children play exceptionally well together and communicate their ideas with their friends. They
vigorously dig, skilfully fill buckets and make sand castles. Their physical
development is successfully supported as they confidently balance on beams, learn
to hoola hoop, ride bikes and negotiate the challenges of the climbing frame.
Children benefit hugely from listening to visitors from the local community, who
help and support their understanding of the wider world. For example, they enjoy
regular visits from the police service and the school crossing person.

Children successfully develop good hygiene habits and have a significant
understanding of healthy eating through topic work and ongoing discussions with
staff. They enjoy healthy snacks and have access to drinking water throughout the
session. Their behaviour is outstanding. They learn to share, take turns and
respect each other. Children are showered with praise and, as a result, they
develop excellent levels of confidence and self-esteem. They develop an
understanding of other people's needs. For example, they share equipment as they
play and help each other to brush off the sand from their feet. Children have
excellent opportunities to learn how to stay safe in a secure and supportive
environment. They confidently approach staff when they need help and support.
They develop an understanding of the wider world as they access a very wide
range of resources that are representative of diversity and also celebrate cultural
festivals throughout the year. They develop a true sense of responsibility and
make a positive contribution within the playgroup. They readily tidy away toys and
help to water the vegetable plot each day. Overall, children demonstrate that they
are acquiring excellent skills that will help them in the future and prepare them
very well for their transition into school.
Annex A: record of inspection judgements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The key inspection judgements and what they mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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? | 1 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 1 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 1 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 1 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 1 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 1 |

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This inspection was carried out under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006