

Polstead Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Polstead Playgroup has been in operation for over 25 years and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and carers. It operates from a community building in north Oxford, which provides a large hall and smaller quiet room. A fully enclosed garden is available for outdoor play. The playgroup has sole use of these facilities during the hours of operation. Children attend the playgroup from north Oxford and some outlying areas.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. They are able to care for a maximum of 24 children in the early years age range and there are currently 38 children on roll. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup operates during the week from 9am until 12pm during school term time. It is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years of age.

The playgroup employs five staff and all hold relevant qualifications, including Qualified Teacher Status. One member of staff is working towards Early Years Professional Status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children flourish in this safe, stimulating and welcoming environment where they make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff interaction is exemplary in supporting children's learning, although there are some weaknesses in the structure of the session. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs and work closely in partnership with parents. They are beginning to establish some links with other early years settings children attend, in order to share relevant information. Self-evaluation processes take into account the views of all staff, parents and children and there is a strong focus on continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the structure of the session, in particular extending the time available for children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environment, to further enhance opportunities for outdoor learning
- develop partnerships with other early years settings children attend in order to share relevant information about their education and care.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding children arrangements are robust. A recent review of the setting's policy has resulted in an increased knowledge of the procedures to follow amongst the staff. Effective recruitment and induction procedures ensure that all staff are suitable to care for children and have appropriate background checks. Detailed risk assessments, daily safety checks and close supervision help to ensure that children are safe. A wide range of policies and procedures, which staff continuously review, effectively support the safe and efficient management of the setting.

Staff work hard to provide a wide range of high-quality resources and stimulating activities, in this community building that has to be tidied after each session. A structured routine allows staff to manage their time and resources in a way that works for them. However, this has some limitations in the time available for valuable free play at the start of the session or, in particular, access to outdoor play.

Staff actively promote equality and diversity. They support all children in making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff work effectively to support children who speak English as an additional language; for example, books in children's home languages are freely available, purchasing CDs in different languages and encouraging parents from different cultural backgrounds to come into the setting to share their experiences.

Staff have well established relationships in place with all parents and welcome them warmly into the setting. They keep parents well informed about their children's learning and development through daily discussion and more formal meetings. Parents are very complimentary about the setting, stating that their children are happy and progressing well. Staff are beginning to make links with other early year settings that children attend; although, partnerships are not yet fully established which has some limitations on providing continuity of care and education for some children.

Staff routinely reflect on their practice. They actively seek feedback through questionnaires from parents and children regarding their views of the setting. All staff contribute to the self-evaluation process; feeding in their ideas for further development, such as improving settling in procedures for new children. The manager is effective in motivating her staff team and there is a generally positive approach to further development.

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

Most children display a strong sense of belonging and those who find separating from their parents difficult receive good support from their key persons. Children engage well in their learning and develop positive relationships with staff and each

other. Behaviour is generally good and staff calmly deal with children when they become boisterous or silly. Children have a good understanding of people who are different from themselves, as they regularly celebrate a range of festivals from different cultures and visit elderly people in the local community.

The wide range of stimulating activities available in the first half of the session provides some very good opportunities for children to make progress in their learning. Children make a train out of chairs and buy tickets from the ticket office. With good support from a member of staff they think about why they have to buy tickets, where they are planning to travel and look at a map to see where different countries are. This effectively supports their knowledge and understanding of the world as well as encouraging their imaginations. A writing activity provides children with a range of mark making equipment and some little books, which they use to record their knowledge of transport. Younger children freely draw in their books. Older children practise writing letters in their books and link these to the correct sounds, with very good support from staff. A group of boys are engrossed in sharing an information book with a member of staff; excellent discussion maintains their high level of interest as they discuss the concept of gravity, jumping up and down with the member of staff to demonstrate how gravity works.

Outside, children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of activities. These include scooters, a slide, a sand tray, writing boards, construction toys, musical instruments and a range of transport toys. They can ask to go outdoors at any time but in practice this is generally not available until later in the session, which has some limitations for children who prefer or need to be outside.

Children show a good awareness about a healthy lifestyle, enjoying healthy snacks and engaging in discussion about hygiene. They take themselves to the toilet independently and remember to wash their hands. They are confidently learning about keeping safe, with staff currently focusing on road safety. Children frequently take part in outings in the local community, which provides good opportunities to learn how to cross roads safely. They engage in stimulating role-play activities in the setting, using cars and traffic lights to further consolidate this understanding.

Staff closely monitor children's development and record regular observations in individual profiles. They use tracking sheets to record children's progress across all areas of learning, identifying any gaps and ideas for next steps. As a team they focus specifically on six individual children each week giving them a good insight into individual needs, capabilities and interests. They use all of this information to help them plan challenging and stimulating activities to further enhance children's learning.

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	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	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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