

Hingham Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Andrea Snowden

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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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Hingham Playgroup was founded in 1971 and recently registered in new premises in 2011. The setting operates from a purpose built building which is located in the village primary school grounds. Children use a large playroom with direct access to an enclosed garden.

The playgroup opens each week day during the school term time. Opening hours are between 9.15am and 3pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and between 9.15am and 12.15pm on Tuesday and Thursday. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions.

The playgroup is registered to provide care for 26 children in total and is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. There are currently 33 children on roll. The playgroup provides funded early education for three and four year olds and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The playgroup is managed by a voluntary group of parents who employ a team of five staff to work with the children. Of these, three staff, including the manager and the deputy, are qualified to NVQ at Level 4 and two are qualified to NVQ at Level 3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are making good progress in their learning and development and are very well provided for within the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are safe and secure and they thrive in this stimulating setting. Good partnerships have been fostered with parents to ensure children's needs are met, but partnerships with other providers are not sufficiently effective. The playgroup has used self-evaluation well to bring about improvements to benefit the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve planning systems for individual children to ensure parents are further encouraged to contribute to children's continued learning and development
- improve working relationships with other practitioners delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure playgroup children benefit from continuity of learning and care between settings
- develop the self-evaluation system further to ensure the views of all involved in the setting are taken into account.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are exceptionally well cared for in this setting where staff are well qualified and have an in depth understanding of issues, such as, safeguarding and promoting children's health and safety. All staff in the setting have been vetted and are suitable to work with young children and are confident in procedures to protect children from abuse. Policies and procedures are robust and ensure the smooth running of the setting, whilst providing a framework for staff to care for children effectively. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place to ensure hazards are minimised, both on the premises and when on outings and as a result, children can play and learn in safety. Resources are clean, bright and well maintained. They are well organised and encourage children in choice and independence, whilst extending learning opportunities. For example, the home corner has been placed next to the play dough to enable children to 'cook' their play dough cakes in the home corner oven.

The playgroup staff support children with specific needs exceptionally well and have developed secure and trusting relationships with them. As a result, children are flourishing. They are confident and happy and fully engage in the same range of activities beside their peers. Staff have obtained specific furniture and equipment to promote the needs of all children in the setting and through working closely with professionals, parents and other agencies children's physical and emotional needs are very well met. The playgroup uses some resources and engages in activities and discussions to help children understand the wider world. Parents are invited into the setting to share their experiences and tell children of their countries and cultures, providing them with meaningful opportunities to learn about similarities and differences.

Parents are welcomed into the setting and initiatives, such as, the 'Healthy Families' lunch enables them to be involved in activities in the setting. Parents receive good information with regards to their children's progress. For example, termly reports and opportunities for meetings with key workers facilitate the sharing of children's achievements. Parents inform staff of children's current interests or plans for activities at home, but these are not regularly recorded in their learning journeys or always effectively acted upon. Additionally, partnerships with other practitioners in early years settings attended by the playgroup children are not wholly effective. As a result, children do not always benefit from continuity of learning and care between settings.

The playgroup staff, lead by the manager, have completed a formal self-evaluation document and highlighted strengths and areas for development. This, along with their vision and well-placed long term plans for the setting, are incorporated into an action plan to ensure timely action is taken to bring about improvement in the outcomes for the children. However, the self-evaluation system has not yet been fully developed to take into account the views of the committee, parents and the children.

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

Children are very settled in the playgroup. They are confident because the environment and staff are extremely warm and welcoming and they are supported by committed staff who know them well. Staff plan a wide range of activities based on what children enjoy and request. As a result, they are eager to learn and engage in activities with enthusiasm. Staff make good use of questioning to promote problem solving skills and are reassuring to children who are a little uncertain. Next steps are planned to provide children with opportunities for purposeful learning and consequently, they are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are acquiring the skills to support their future learning. They enjoy one another's company and friendships have clearly formed as they play in pairs or small groups, chattering about what they are doing with one another. They manage personal tasks well, such as, getting dressed in wellington boots and coats for the outdoors and are confident to ask for assistance when struggling. They are becoming familiar with numbers as they count at circle time and in normal daily routines. Children recognise numerals from the number line and practice writing these on the white board. Puzzles provide children with problem solving skills and the water tray enables children to explore floating sinking, volume and estimation.

Children enjoy books with staff and are introduced to new words in the stories, such as, 'porcupine' and 'aardvark', trying to pronounce these words following lead of staff. They join in enthusiastically with well known songs, such as, 'Seven days in the week' and generally speak and listen well in group time. Pre-writing skills are encouraged as writing media is freely available, along with paper and pads. Children demonstrate some basic knowledge of history and explain that the king and queen and the knights live in the castle. They enjoy role play and create models from building blocks. The 'windy day bag' provides children with fabric scarves and sails to see the effect of the wind and they squeal with joy as the gusty conditions blow around them outside. Children's use of electronic equipment is well supported with the provision of touch screen and conventional computers, which children handle confidently. Children use rockers, scooters and wobble seats in the garden to foster their physical skills, whilst using a safety knife to cut fruit, along with other small tools, such as, glue sticks which helps to develop their fine motor skills.

Children show a heightened understanding of personal safety. They understand the risks involved in using equipment, such as, knives to cut up the fruit and remind staff they need to be careful. Children develop some understanding of ways to protect themselves and are confident to tell staff of their worries and are reassured that this is taken seriously by staff who respond sensitively. Equally, children are exceptionally well aware of the need for personal hygiene and healthy lifestyles. They explain that fruit and vegetables need to be washed because of germs and talk about healthy eating at snack and meal times. They routinely use soap and water at the hand basin when washing and eagerly access the garden

and enjoy exercise and fresh air.

Children's behaviour is excellent. They play together, sharing and taking turns and because staff give them responsibility they develop respect for their environment. Their self-esteem is high through regular praise and positive strategies used by staff to help children learn right from wrong. As a result, the atmosphere in the playgroup is harmonious and calm and conducive to children's play and 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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
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

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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	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	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met