

River Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

River Pre-School Playgroup has been established for more than 30 years. It is a registered charity and is run by a committee of parents. It operates from the Methodist Church Hall in the centre of River, near Dover. Children have access to a small secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 2.45pm during term time. The group serves the local area and surrounding area.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 50 children aged from two and under five years on roll, some in part-time places.

The pre-school provides funded early education for children aged two, and for three and four year olds. They support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs 11 members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards a qualification. They receive support from the local authority's early years advisor, the local children's centre and are members of The Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy positive relationships with staff who know their individual needs very well. They are making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff have a clear understanding of how to implement the framework and provide a range of stimulating play activities. Staff strive to provide an inclusive service for all children and their families and work extremely well with other professionals to ensure children's individual needs are met. Capacity to improve is good because the manager has high ideals and she and her staff work together as a team to identify areas for improvement and build on existing strengths.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider how parents can be more involved in their children's developmental records and contribute to the written assessments
- continue to develop the environment and use of the resources so that children can be as independent as possible.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The committee of the pre-school are fully involved in the running of the group and confidently delegate the day-to-day organisation to the manager. Staff have a very good understanding of safeguarding procedures and a high regard to promoting children's safety and well-being. The child protection policy is effective, up-to-date and shared with parents so they understand the pre-school's role and responsibilities. All staff have attended recent safeguarding training. Staff ratios are high, rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures are in place, all adults are suitable to work with the children and procedures for visitors are robust. The recent recruitment of an administrator is beneficial leaving the manager more time to work with the children.

Children's welfare and safety are high priorities for all staff. They carry out risk assessment each morning and throughout the day to ensure children play in an environment which is safe and secure. This is a pack-away pre-school where staff arrive early to set out the hall. Despite some considerable constraints they manage to provide an environment which is welcoming and conducive to children's learning. Children have access to a good range of resources, including those promoting diversity and positive images. Although self-selection is difficult due to lack of storage, staff have developed alternative systems to enable children to help choose toys through a book of photographs.

Equality and diversity are promoted well and staff have a very good understanding of children's individual backgrounds. Any children who have specific learning requirements are well supported because staff are quick to obtain support and actively work with other professionals; for example, speech therapists. Partnerships are a key strength of the pre-school. There are strong links with the local school that make some of their facilities available to the children. Shared assemblies, playtimes and regular visits throughout the year help children's transition when the time comes. The senior staff have been proactive in establishing exceptionally good relationships with other providers and professionals involved in the care of the children. For example, some children attend another pre-school in the village and the three-way sharing of information, both verbal and in writing, are hugely beneficial.

Partnerships with parents and carers are positive and well established. When children first start, they are allocated a key person who works with the parent to find out as much information as possible about what their child can do and establish their starting points. Staff continue to keep parents informed through the newsletters, home contact books, daily discussions, the sharing of the children's 'learning journeys' and parents evenings. Some parents play their part in communication by completing 'Good News from Home' forms, where they record things their children have done at home. The pre-school is very keen to gather parents' views and opinions. This is achieved through questionnaires, discussions and formal meetings. All the mandatory records, policies and documentation are regularly updated and readily available to all parents. When asked for feedback parents express positive views and are happy with the service provided.

The manager is clear about her aims, includes staff in the process of identifying strengths and weaknesses, and as a result they are eager to look at new ways of working and making changes. Staff are fully committed to the manager's high ideals and vision for the future. They are experienced, share a range of complimentary skills and are beginning to take on particular roles and responsibilities within the pre-school. There is a good commitment to staff development, in-house training and the updating and sharing of skills. Previous recommendations have all been addressed, the use of self-evaluation and good team work have significantly raised the outcomes for children.

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

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning. They clearly understand how children learn and encourage activities where children learn and have fun. They have a positive approach to supporting children during play and plan a good balance of activities taking into account children's abilities and interests. The majority of activities are child initiated. Having established children's starting points staff continue to monitor progress through observations and tracking systems. The key person system works well and the observations made are used to plan the next steps in children's learning and development. The 'learning journey' folders are well presented, with plenty of photographs and samples of work to back up the detailed observations. These records are shared with parents periodically and compliment the verbal discussions about children's progress. However, some parents do not contribute to their child's assessment record, which means they are not fully able to support their children's learning at home. The planned introduction of 'My Unique Story' folders will further help to keep parents informed and involve them more fully in their child's learning and development. Overall children are making good progress in their learning and are developing their skills for the future.

Children are confident communicators and staff encourage speech and language by talking to children clearly and listening well. Children move about freely choosing what they do and enjoy the free-flow into the outside area. Many of the resources are labelled, they recognise their names on their coat pegs and cards at snack time and there are posters and displays at eye level. There are good supplies of books and the reading area is comfortable. A good range of easily accessible mark-making materials encourage children to practice writing and various arts and craft projects. Plenty of resources encourage children's numeracy and counting. Several children enjoy playing with the train track. One child makes a circle while others work together forming patterns and making bridges. They work out that some pieces will not link unless they all work together. The game expands with lots of children joining in. Other children have great fun with the mechanical dinosaur which moves and makes a roaring noise when the buttons are pushed. An older child explains to a younger child how to make it work. There are several other resources which help children understand how things work. Two children enjoy listening to a story using the headphones and compact disc player,

managing to operate the knobs and controls independently. Children have a wonderful time with the large snails in the tank. They know they eat fruit and have helped to feed them. They enjoy handling them and discuss what it feels like. They spray some water onto their hands to help the snail move and remember to go and wash their hands afterwards. Children use their imaginations well and enjoy dressing up and playing in the role play areas. They make good use of the props while acting out various scenarios.

Staff enhance children's enjoyment by joining in play whilst allowing children to make their own decisions. When it is time to tidy away children readily help and this helps them learn about keeping their environment clear. They show concern for others, understand about where other children are, and take part in regular fire drills. Children clearly understand about their own safety and this is reinforced during play by the staff. When three children are on the rocker and one gets off they find it will not balance and they begin to tumble off. They discover that by rearranging themselves they can resume their game safely. Children are learning the importance of good health and hygiene practices. They know why they wash their hands and partake in various projects for example a visit from the dentist. In hot weather they all have their own sun hats. Children enjoy nutritious snacks, choosing when they eat. They help themselves to fresh fruit, discussing which they like best; they pour themselves a drink of milk or water and wash up their cups and plates when finished. Children have a good understanding about where food comes from. They regularly enjoy walks to the local greengrocers to collect fruit and vegetables. On these outings in the community children learn about the wider world. They walk up to the school to use their facilities. They go to the post office, shops and often visit the local nursing home. This encourages children to understand about others and to make a positive contribution. During play they demonstrate a caring attitude and respect for others, enjoy very good relationships with staff and communicate and express their feelings well. Children are fully engaged in the activities, are involved in making choices and decisions and they receive excellent individual attention from staff. As a result, children's behaviour is very good.

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	1
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	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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