

Lordswood Under 5s Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	103823
Inspection date	23/11/2011
Inspector	Susan Scott

Setting address	Rear of 181 Ballens Road, Chatham, Kent, ME5 8PG
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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*.

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Description of the setting

Lordswood Under Fives Playgroup is owned by parents and is committee run. It opened in 1976 and operates from two rooms in a single storey building. It is situated in a parkland setting, in Lordswood, Chatham. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. The playgroup is open Monday to Thursday from 9.15am to 3.00pm and Fridays from 12.30pm to 3.00pm, term time only. There are currently 44 children in the early years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The group currently supports a few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who have English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs 9 members of staff, 8 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and one who is working towards a qualification. The group receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The uniqueness of each child is recognised by staff who provide good support for individuals and their families. Children's individual interests and skills are observed and assessed and used efficiently to plan for their progress in all areas of learning and development. Children feel safe because there are good systems in place to safeguard their welfare and promote their health. Overall, they benefit from the welcoming environment and the close relationships between the staff and their families. Staff use self-evaluation to identify improvements they can make and they attend training in order to continuously improve the service offered.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- share the enable parents to review their children's progress regularly and contribute to their child's leaning and development record
- use the Ofsted self-evaluation form and quality improvement processes as a basis for ongoing internal review to assess what the setting offers against robust and challenging quality criteria.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The managers, staff and committee form a strong and welcoming team who are keen to build upon the positive experiences children have here. The staff are vigilant and have a clear understanding of their duty to safeguard children from harm. The setting has the required policies and procedures in place to safeguard children and to ensure their welfare and these are regularly reviewed. The staff protect children's welfare by ensuring all adults who come into the building are vetted or do not have unsupervised access to children. There are risk assessments to enable children to be kept safe both inside the building and when they go outside to play. The certificates of registration and insurance are displayed and the policies and procedures, including one for complaints, are available to visitors and parents.

The managers and staff evaluate practice to ensure children have good experiences here. They have taken positive action to address all previous recommendations and to keep improving the provision. The staff have completed self-evaluations although these are not available in one place. They use feedback from parents to identify improvements they can make. Staff attend training and share what they have learned to bring about improvements. For instance, they have successfully used their training to identify and support children who need speech and language therapy. Children celebrate some festivals which support their understanding of different cultures and make good use of a variety of resources reflecting diversity to ensure they develop a balanced view of society. Children benefit from playing in a stimulating and appealing environment that offers good opportunities for challenging outdoor play. They can access a selection of toys and resources that are interesting and these are varied by staff who respond to their interests and ideas, this successfully maintains children's interest in their own play and learning.

The staff are keen to obtain advice and information from specialist and other organisations such as specialist teachers in order to provide effective support for all children. They adapt their provision to ensure children's needs can be identified and supported effectively. Staff note children's development from the time they start here and there are procedures in place to support the individual needs of all children and families who attend the setting. Children have learning and development records which contain photographs and observational assessments on their progress but there is no system to ensure they are regularly shared with all parents. Parents express their positive feelings about the service their children receive and have confidence in the staff who deliver an enjoyable experience for their children. Several of them serve on the management committee and some come into the setting to help staff. Parental contributions are valued and information is gathered when questionnaires are used, so that any individual ideas and concerns are addressed. This enables staff to support and include all children successfully.

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

Children enjoy a varied range of play activities to support their progress towards the early learning goals. Adults work closely with them, listening to what they say and enabling them to express their own ideas and interests. Children are able to choose activities from some resources in low units and staff vary these toys and items from store cupboards. The system to use observational assessments to enable children's progress identifies the next steps across every area of learning and development. Staff plan for the children's learning using the learning priorities from their observations of their play and achievements well. Staff support children well, developing their skills through activities and routines and using sensitive comments and suggestions to extend their learning and progress.

Children benefit from good procedures to protect their safety as they are cared for in clean, well-adapted premises where there are good safety measures in place. They are confident enough to ask staff for help whenever needed and there are well practised procedures to evacuate the premises if needed. There are good security measures in place and effective safety measures taken when they venture out into the woods surrounding the premises.

Children enjoy facilities for outdoor play every session, using a range of equipment that encourages an active lifestyle. For example, they use the play house and confidently access the sit and ride toys. Staff encourage children to extend their physical skills by exploring the woods and collecting twigs or sweeping leaves safely. Children are accustomed to independently washing their hands, helping themselves to soap and they are able to prompted to use wipes after eating lunch and to use tissues to wipe their noses. They understand that these have to be binned after use and they are becoming familiar with the routines to collect waste food for recycling. This promotes their good health and helps them understand not to be wasteful. Snack routines provide staff with opportunities to promote discussions about healthy eating and children have grown their own plants to build upon their understanding of food and the natural world.

Children learn desirable behaviour through the routines and positive reminders from staff; for instance, a member of staff says 'I like it when you says please' which prompts children to be polite and well mannered. Children's understanding of right and wrong is successfully promoted through consistent boundaries and positive relationships with adults who praise them and offer recognition for helpful behaviour or achievements. This also develops their self-esteem and confidence.

All children are encouraged to feel settled and confident because there are varied posters, books and imaginative play resources, reflecting varied cultures. Staff also use children's home language to help them settle and understand routines. They experience activities which encourage imaginative responses, such as, role play using adaptable resources and the experiences they enjoy outside in the woods, following the forest school programme.

They engage in art and craft activities and enjoy using the versatile play resources

such as the till which they fill with large pebbles, counting as they go. Children confidently use the computer where they complete challenges identifying shapes and colours. They love to sit and read stories books with staff, and like to share books they have made about their experiences. For example, one book shows a selection of photographs and records information about the experiences of the take home bear who has travelled with children abroad and to the dentist. They particularly enjoy the opportunities to communicate with staff who offer suggestions and ideas to extend their play. Children perform a variety of action songs and even the youngest two year olds have learnt how to recite these with the accompanying actions.

Children access dressing up items and play independently and enjoy playing on their own or in small groups with friends. This reveals their ability to play harmoniously together and make positive relationships with each other. They show genuine pleasure when they see their friends: for instance, two boys call a friend's name with delight and rush to greet him when he joins the afternoon session. There are good opportunities for all children to learn to recognise their names when they use the labels to register themselves.

Children participate confidently in play which they initiate and play experiences planned and organised by adults. For example, they are encouraged to play sing and to listen to stories as a group. They are able to sustain their own play successfully and staff often challenge them to extend their play and learning. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to sing songs when a parent visits to accompany them on his guitar as they sit on logs in the adjoining woodland.

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	2
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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