

Meare Moles Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Mary Daniel

Setting address Meare Village Primary School, St Mary's Road, Meare,
Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 9SP
Telephone number 07870 773537
Email
Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Meare Moles Playgroup has been registered since 1993. It is a parent committee run playgroup and operates from premises situated in the grounds of the Meare Village Primary School in the village of Meare, Somerset. Children have use of a main playroom and toilet facilities. There is ramp access to the enclosed outdoor play areas surrounding the premises.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 20 children aged from two years to the end of the early years age group at any one time. There are currently 14 children on roll. The playgroup provides free early education for three- and four-year-old children. The playgroup is open on Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 12.30pm, term time only. The parent committee employs three staff, all of whom have relevant qualifications or experience in childcare and early years education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are very much welcomed and valued at this friendly playgroup. Staff get to know children's individual needs very well through the ongoing and strong relationships they form with their parents. Staff are knowledgeable and experienced practitioners who enhance and promote children's learning and development exceptionally well overall. Toys and resources are used highly effectively to support children's ideas in their play. Staff and management form aims for continual improvement as they regularly reflect on the provision offered. Overall, this supports an effective provision, although evaluation systems are not yet fully established to regularly monitor all aspects of practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the systems of self-evaluation to help effectively monitor all aspects of the provision and support aims for continual improvement
- develop further children's independence, for example, at snack time.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is supported well. For example, staff are very aware of the clear safeguarding procedures in place to follow should any concern arise. Children's safety is prioritised in the setting and daily risk assessments are completed. For

instance, any collected water is removed from the outside areas and gates are secured. This helps to minimise accidents. Effective recruitment procedures are in place to help the management committee in assessing the suitability of any new staff, for example to ensure criminal record bureau disclosures and health checks are completed.

Children play in a bright and vibrant play environment, which is extremely well organised to provide exciting learning opportunities. Children are able to play freely indoors and outdoors, which helps to effectively support their different learning styles. There is a broad range of attractive, inviting toys that are easily accessible to support children's individual ideas in their play. For example, they have great fun creating their fairy castles or pirate boats using the colourful drapes, sturdy plastic crates and wooden palettes. The role play area becomes a post office, travel agents, hospital, space station or builder's office. Consequently, children have excellent opportunities to develop their imagination and act out their ideas within a safe, familiar environment. Children are extremely well supported in learning about other ways of living and their individuality is clearly respected and considered. For instance, they look at the different homes their friends live in and see many positive images of diversity reflected within their play. This gives a positive approach to how children view the differences within their world and is highly effective in promoting inclusion.

Parents are provided with regular newsletters, which help to keep them well informed of events and changes in the playgroup. Parents and keyworkers regularly share information on children's progress. For example, by contributing to a 'What makes me unique?' form that reflects children's interests and achievements. Positive and ongoing liaison is maintained between staff and other providers children attend. Staff provide information on children's interests and developmental needs and use any responses to support future planning ideas. As a result, consistency is effectively maintained in how children's learning is supported.

Recommendations made at the last inspection have been well addressed overall. For instance, children's enjoyment of books is clearly enhanced through the lively and interactive storytelling sessions provided. They eagerly join in with repeated rhyming words and refrains. Sometimes they use large saucepans and spoons to make their 'silly soup' of rhyming objects, for instance as they add a 'toy fox' and a 'box'. As a consequence, children start to link sounds and letters, which actively promotes their early reading abilities. Staff continually evaluate the effectiveness of the play experiences offered, which clearly promotes children's learning and development. Although routines for encouraging children's independence further through, for example, snack time have not been fully maximised.

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

Children enjoy their play and are very content and settled. They become happily occupied within a range of exciting activities that are clearly aimed to help them learn through play and investigation. For instance, they show great curiosity as

they go on a hunt together around the 'mini beast jungle'. They explore the fallen leaves and branches and find a ladybird and a caterpillar. They listen carefully to the different birdsongs they hear and try to identify the songs made by their interactive cuddly toy birds. They examine a tub of tadpoles with interest and learn how these grow into croaking, leaping frogs. As a result, they learn very effectively about their natural world. Children form strong bonds with staff who give emphasis to them having fun at their playgroup and learning through their play. Children clearly recognise the various jolly songs staff sing, such as to indicate different daily routines. For instance, they sing a 'greetings' song in circle time to welcome everyone or a 'washing hands' song before meal times. Children use play resources very imaginatively in their play. For example, chocolate box inset trays are added to the play dough table, along with different shape cutters and tools such as scissors. Children use these carefully to cut the dough into little pieces, which they then mould and fit into the inset trays. As a consequence, they develop their small muscle skills and control required for their early mark making activities. They show excellent concentration as they produce wonderful drawings and art designs. For instance, they begin to form recognisable shapes, letters or images of their family. They have great fun using some squirry paint bottles to make a colourful rainbow in the puddles in their playground. This helps them explore colour and texture within their play.

Children are extremely confident and enthusiastic learners who achieve and enjoy through their play experiences at a high level. Planning is highly detailed and effective in covering all areas of learning and is based on observations of children's interests and abilities. For example, when staff see children eagerly developing a pirate role-play game and talking about finding some treasure, they provide further play resources such as a 'treasure chest' full of colourful beads. They also create a treasure map that involves children matching written numbers and number cards together. As a result, children develop their skills through highly effective practice, which enhances the learning opportunities in their play. Children benefit from the excellent interaction from staff who skilfully support them in developing the confidence to think for themselves. This effectively encourages them in starting to find solutions to solve simple practical problems and try out new experiences. Consequently, children are extremely well supported in developing their future skills and reaching their full potential.

Children develop a good awareness of healthy living lifestyles through their play. For example, they play in their 'healthy eating role play cafe' where they serve their friends nutritious play-food meals. They enjoy healthy snacks such as cucumber, cheese and crackers and are beginning to develop some independence skills in these sessions. However, these are not fully encouraged, for example, through encouraging children to lay the table or pour their own drinks. Children are provided with motivating, purposeful play activities in and outdoors which encourage regular exercise. For example, they learn to jump with both feet together or apart and balance very well across the stepping stones obstacle course. They eagerly follow the actions of trotting, cantering and galloping to a favourite action song. Staff provide enthusiastic role models, which makes the activity fun for children. Children benefit from the gentle reminders staff give to promote their safety. For instance, they tell them 'both feet on the ground, safe and sound' to help them sit safely on their chairs. Children enjoy meeting the

visiting policeman who shows them how he uses his walkie talkie to get help. They meet the local lollipop lady who tells them how to cross the road safely. Children behave exceptionally well. Staff give gentle guidance to children to help them make appropriate decisions in resolving any unwanted conflict. Children are praised frequently for their efforts. They show pride when they are chosen to sit on the special chair at circle time for being kind or helpful. They form friendly relationships with their peers. As a result, they develop positive self-esteem and have great fun at their friendly playgroup.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
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	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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