

Stratton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Naomi Wright

Setting address The Scout Building, Thessaly Road, Cirencester, GL7 2NG

Telephone number 07749647722

Email

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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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

Stratton Playgroup opened in 1972 and registered at the current premises in 2006. It is committee led and serves the local area. The playgroup operates from the Scout Head Quarters located next to Stratton Church of England Primary School, in Cirencester, Gloucestershire. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during local authority term times, between the hours of 9am and 12 noon. During the summer term, the playgroup remains open for a further hour to enable older children to have lunch, in readiness for their transfer to school. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and, at the time of inspection, on both the compulsory and voluntary part of the Childcare Register. It offers free early education for children who are aged three and four years old. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time in the early years age group, over the age of two years. There are currently 29 children on roll. A team of six staff work with the children; all hold or are working towards appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's needs are met well; they are happy, secure and motivated in their learning. Children's welfare is supported well overall. The staff get to know the children thoroughly, providing them with interesting and challenging learning experiences. As a result, all children make generally good progress in their learning and development. The playgroup leadership has devised effective procedures to monitor and evaluate the provision and has successfully addressed the previous inspection's actions and recommendations. Consequently, they are strongly placed to make continuous improvement, providing positive outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide information to parents about what can be stored safely in lunch boxes and about appropriate food content
- improve use of the outdoor space, so children can be as physically active and exuberant as possible and develop skills such as climbing and sliding.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff responsibly promote children's safety, well-being and good health. There is a strong emphasis placed on safeguarding children; consequently, all staff have very

secure up to date knowledge of their child protection responsibilities. Even staff that do not work directly with children know what to do if they are concerned about a child's welfare or another member of staff's conduct. Appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures are in place so that adults are checked as being suitable to work with the children. Robust induction and appraisal programmes support members of staff, so that they are competent and well motivated to work. The record of risk assessment is thorough and updated when new activities are undertaken, new resources are used or when going on planned outings.

The parent-led committee and staff work together to review and assess what they do, although there are no systems in place to seek views from other parents to assist evaluation. The staff team constantly strives to enhance the quality of the care and learning offered to the children through means such as targeted training and responding to advice given during visits from outside professionals. The committee and staff share a strong sense of purpose. Working together, they successfully improve outcomes for children and make well-targeted plans for the future.

Good quality resources engage the interest of the children so that they consistently achieve the planned goals in their learning and development. Inspiring visitors and an exciting variety of different outings further extend opportunities for learning. Staff use indoor space effectively to promote children's learning and development, but the outdoor area is not used as well as possible and so restricts physical play.

Supportive systems are in place to help identify children who need additional help with their learning, as early as possible. Staff are knowledgeable about the special educational needs code of practice and the graduated approach to follow when required.

There are positive relationships with parents. Parents provide information regarding their children's needs, interests and routines to promote consistency of care between the home and playgroup. Parents can access a wealth of quality information about the playgroup and comment that they feel well informed and involved. They enthusiastically volunteer for parent helper duties; when they do, their child is also given special responsibilities.

Staff have useful links with the adjacent school, to which most of the children will transfer eventually. Links to other schools, early years settings and other partners are not as well established in order to promote consistency of care and learning for children who may go elsewhere.

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

Children enjoy their time at playgroup. Each child is paired-up with a named member of staff. This 'key person' is responsible for making sure their particular needs are met, which works very well in practice. Children also build good

relationships with each other. When a child finds it difficult to join friends who are playing an imaginary game an adult skilfully supports them. With this support, they soon find the confidence to become actively involved and the others fully include them in their game as the 'bus driver'. Others are more self-confident, and happy to approach visiting adults. A child explains they are 'catching bugs' and points out the best places to find them. Children play in safety and start to recognise risks for themselves.

Children understand when they need to wash their hands and most do so effectively, without prompting. They also know that after using a tissue it must go in a bin. Staff-led group activities help children to learn the difference between active exercise and relaxation, through engaging in dance or using stretches and deep breathing. Children can attend 'lunch club' the term before they go to school to develop their experience of such routines. Parents provide a packed lunch. Information about what can be stored safely in lunch boxes and about appropriate food content is not shared with parents, in order to maintain children's good health.

Children behave very well. They develop effective social skills, are active independent learners and demonstrate confidence. All children practice their self-care skills, progressing well in gaining these. Most children achieve routine tasks such as hand washing, pouring drinks and getting dressed into sports kit independently; some need adult support, which is offered only when required.

Children can choose and easily obtain what they want to play with. They make their own decisions about when to play outside. This helps them to become more independent and gives them a sense of belonging, consequently promoting their self-esteem. Children show excitement and high levels of involvement during a visitors' interactive music session. They listen, enthralled, while the flute is played and think that the sounds made remind them of 'hic-ups'!

The key persons make regular observations of children's progress. They find out what children are interested in doing and what they need to learn next, discussing this frequently with parents to gain their views and comments. Individual learning records help to show the achievements and progress children are making. The records are invitingly stored so that children and parents are encouraged to look at them and can do so whenever they want. Parents contribute information to these so that the key person's knowledge of their children increases.

Picture cards guide children in understanding the daily routines and the location of specific toys but there is less use of print to support early reading skills. Changes to the room layout have provided 'cosy' spaces that encourage children to chat together, so developing their language skills. Children practise their information and communication technology skills using age-appropriate software, suitably restricted internet access and printing facilities. Staff ask suitable questions to prompt children to think. Overall, children progress well in gaining useful skills for their future lives.

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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

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