

Lysander House Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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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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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

Lysander House Playgroup opened in 1996. It operates from a purpose-built building situated in a residential area, for serving personnel in the Royal Air Force in Ickenham, in the London Borough of Hillingdon. It is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 16 children aged between two years and five years may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 9.30am to 12.30pm during term time. The playgroup is also registered as a play scheme that operates during some school holidays for children under eight years. These sessions are also from 9.30am to 12.30pm. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor area. There are currently 20 children on roll. The playgroup is funded to provide some free early education to children aged three and four years. Children attend a varying number of sessions a week. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are four staff employed to work with the children at each session. Of these, three hold relevant qualifications at level 3 and one is working towards that qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and enjoy excellent relationships in this welcoming playgroup that gives exceptional priority to keeping children safe. Children make good progress overall in their learning and development, working exceptionally well independently. Parents are welcome in the life of the playgroup and their views are included in future plans. Good partnerships with outside professionals benefit all children, helping to meet their needs. The playgroup has good potential to maintain continuous improvement, based on mainly accurate evaluation of its provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend opportunities for children to see adults writing and encourage children further to experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, using personal writing symbols and conventional script
- develop further the staff's ability to support and challenge children's thinking by getting more involved in the thinking process with them, during play.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

In this playgroup, staff regard children's safety as being of utmost importance. Members of the staff team have extensive knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues. The manager ensures that staff update and refresh their knowledge by attending up to date training regularly. Staff make sure children know how to evacuate premises in case of emergency through regular drills. A comprehensive risk assessment, coupled with thorough daily checks, mean equipment and resources are in excellent condition and safe for children to use. The playgroup employs effective systems to minimise risks during outings by studying the journeys to be undertaken in advance.

The manager is well organised and leads a friendly staff team which works very well together. Staff have not only addressed all the recommendations for improvement from the last inspection effectively, but have initiated other useful developments from their own evaluation of their provision. They have undertaken training to use signing that aids better communication and are participating in 'Attention Hillingdon', a local authority initiative to develop listening skills in children. This shows that the manager and staff drive improvement successfully. Staff use generally effective systems to monitor children's progress in all areas of learning and development. Staff use good quality resources and the available space effectively to promote children's learning and development. Interesting resources prompt both children's imaginative play and encourages them to experiment. As a result, children are making good progress overall, although experiences for some children lack sufficient challenge and they are ready to learn more.

Staff and parents work together well to ensure that children enjoy their learning and lead a healthy lifestyle. The playgroup has initiated a useful home school link to engage parents in their children's learning and consolidate this collaboration. The manager and staff offer parents regular opportunities to discuss children's progress. Parents' views are taken into account by the manager and the staff, and incorporated in future development plans.

The playgroup has effective collaborations with the local authority early years team which help enhance children's learning because staff act on the advice of these professionals. Staff extend their knowledge of new methods to help children gain further skills such as a signing system that enhances non-verbal communication. All the children in the playgroup benefit from this. The playgroup is very inclusive so that the majority of children's needs are met fully. Planning of activities is flexible, and staff readily follow many children's interests and daily events.

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

There is a generous ratio of adults to children and this allows each child to be well cared for, listened to and valued. Children work particularly well by themselves, selecting play experiences freely and eagerly taking on tasks such as tidying up. Interactions between children and adults show that there is mutual trust and respect. Well organised routines help all children feel confident and they show an extremely strong sense of security in the playgroup. Parents bring in packed lunches with healthy snacks, such as fruits, yoghurt and sandwiches, following the playgroup's policies. Children know about personal hygiene and that they need to wash their hands before and after meals, doing so independently.

Resources enable children to learn through experiment and to follow their interests during their play. For example, the role play area, when set out as a 'Ticket Office', encourages children to travel on a pretend bus ride. Staff provide sturdy bus tickets that children share out and a book in which they can note who is coming on board. Adults support children's learning through play well overall, but there are some missed opportunities to encourage children's early literacy skills, such as through staff showing children how to write. At the 'space station' table children are inquisitive, wanting to test the giant magnet to see which object will stick to it. There is interesting equipment provided, such as a magnifying glass and kaleidoscope, both of which prompt children's curiosity and eagerness to learn.

Play areas and resources are well organised and set out, making it easy for children to reach out and select their toys or tidy up at the end of sessions. Adults respond to children's needs well and are there for the children. Plans for activities reflect what children enjoy doing best. Staff provide plenty of interesting and stimulating experiences, but some children are still not challenged sufficiently to think during their play, and to extend new skills, particularly in literacy.

There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Adults lead a singing and dancing session around the sound of letter 'H' and most children join in, some more engaged than others. It is evident that children know the songs well, singing all the words and enjoying themselves. Once a day, each child joins an activity in a smaller group of up to six children, led by an adult who is the 'key person' for this group. One such group play skittles outdoors and the children are able to count the fallen skittles thus practising their counting skills. The key person is responsible for monitoring the progress of the children in her key group and regularly discusses this with the parents.

Children show their good progress in practicing healthy lifestyles by taking regular outdoor exercise, eating healthy foods and drinking water throughout the day. In the playgroup garden there is a planting area where adults and children grow a few vegetables and fruit. The children participate in harvesting these and use the produce when making sandwiches and fruit salads, gaining an understanding of the origins of food, and showing staff commitment to sustainability.

Children's behaviour is exemplary; they are exceptionally considerate towards one

another. They negotiate around resources that they need to share, taking account of each other's needs and feelings. Adults regard children equally and with respect. Children know what is expected of them and behave accordingly.

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

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| 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

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|--|---|
| 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 | 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

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| 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

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