

The Gingerbread Cottage Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Karen Cooper

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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

The Gingerbread Cottage Playgroup is a registered charity and is committee led. It was registered in 1993 and re-registered in 2012. It is one of two settings run by the provider and operates from a mobile classroom in the grounds of Launde Primary School in Oadby, Leicestershire. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 38 children aged under eight years may attend the setting at any one time and of these, not more than 12 may be under three years of age. The setting currently takes children from two to five years of age. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 8.10am to 12pm and from 1pm to 4.30pm term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting serves children from the local and surrounding area.

There are currently 87 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The majority of children are in receipt of funding for early education. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

There are seven members of staff, including the manager, who work directly with the children. Of these, one holds a degree in Early Childhood Studies, one holds a Higher National Diploma in Early Childhood Studies, four hold a qualification at level 3 in early years, and one is currently working towards qualification at level 2 in early years. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and settled and demonstrate a strong sense of belonging within the security of this welcoming setting. They have access to an excellent variety of quality toys and resources which are exceptionally well organised to support their good progress in learning and development. The setting is well maintained and most hazards have been identified to ensure children's safety is protected. Children are valued and their individuality respected. Excellent partnerships have been established with parents and positive links with other early years professionals ensure children's individual needs are met well. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and generally well organised. Staff demonstrate a strong capacity for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the risk assessment record to include anything with which a child may come into contact; this specifically refers to the kitchen area
- ensure staff are fully aware of the need to maintain confidentiality; this specifically refers to the displaying children's personal details.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are effectively safeguarded because staff are fully aware of their role and responsibility to protect children in their care. Staff have either attended safeguard training or information has been cascaded from the management team to ensure their knowledge is up-to-date. Robust vetting procedures ensure staff working with the children are suitable to do so. Staff are well deployed resulting in a good standards of care. Children are organised effectively into small groups with their key workers. This promotes consistency of care and enables the staff to get to know individual children well. The setting is exceptionally well organised which appeals to children. It provides a wealth of toys, resources and learning opportunities which are easily accessible and stimulating. This enables children to extend their play and develop their independence. Staff have a good awareness of security and they regularly undertake visual and written risk assessments to identify most hazards within the setting. However, the risk assessment does not cover all appliances within the kitchen area to ensure children's safety is fully protected.

Staff are committed to raising outcomes for children and they are dedicated towards improving their own professional development. They work well together and regularly attend further training and workshops to update their skills and knowledge. They effectively use the self-evaluation process to identify where changes are required. Staff are responsive to suggestions from parents and the committee, and information gained in staff meetings also feeds into the process. Documentation is generally well organised and policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. However, procedures for sharing some of the children's personal details, are not entirely effective in ensuring confidentiality is fully maintained. Children who speak English as an additional language are totally supported in this inclusive setting. Staff foster good links with children's own culture and language involving parents. They go to a great deal of effort to ensure that the individual needs of all the children in their care are met. This sometimes involves learning familiar words in other languages.

Outstanding partnerships are in place with parents and carers, with many opportunities for shared discussions regarding their child's progress. Parents speak highly of the levels of care their children receive. It is evident from discussions with parents that they appreciate and value the staff and the care and learning they

provide. For example, several parents state that, 'staff are very caring and friendly and the setting is fantastic'. The children's learning journals are used as a joint process between the setting and home to ensure that parents are fully included and informed of their child's progress and development. Other information is shared informally through newsletters, formal meetings, mother and father weeks and details posted on the notice board. Excellent induction procedures for new arrivals include the opportunity for parents to stay and play for a time to help their children settle. Staff are fully aware of the value of working with other professionals. They have established good links with the local and surrounding schools that some of the children also attend. This helps provide consistency of care and learning for all children.

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

Children are happy and settled and have formed good relationships with each other and staff. Behaviour is very good in the setting. Children are well mannered, share and willingly take turns. Staff praise and encourage children frequently; this ensures they develop confidence and self-esteem. Staff are calm, consistent, and respectful and children follow their example. As a consequence, children are happy and settled. Children enjoy themselves and are helped to achieve because staff are focussed on the development and achievement of all children. They plan a good variety of activities to cover the six areas of learning and clearly demonstrate that they know the children well. They have robust arrangements to monitor and evaluate children's progress and they act on the findings in order to maximize learning opportunities. Photographs and samples of children's work are attractively presented in individual learning journals and throughout the setting. This helps provide children with a sense of belonging.

Children are engrossed in activities which they choose. For example, they have great fun exploring household and natural materials, such as wood, drain pipes, logs, crates and empty boxes. They confidently use saws to cut up wood and know how to handle tools, such as a hammer, screw driver, snipes and pliers. They talk about volume, consistency, colour and texture when playing with sand and water. They love to join in with craft activities. For example, they make good use of recycled plastic bottles to create musical instruments by filling them with dried rice, sand and pasta. Children's mark-making skills are fostered with a range of materials available on a daily basis. They enjoy looking at books and concentrate well when listening to familiar stories. Books are attractively displayed within the setting to entice children to use them. Homemade books encourage older children to discuss and think about imminent life changing experiences, such as, going to school. Children's simple problem- solving skills are encouraged through everyday activities. For example, they compare and sort as they use jigsaw puzzles and build with small and large construction toys. Children have good opportunities to develop their understanding of technology. They use touch screen technology and a variety of electronic and programmable resources and work exceptionally well independently and with their peers, showing excellent negotiation and cooperation skills. These opportunities help children develop important skills for the future.

Children enjoy being active and have free flow access to the well-equipped and securely enclosed outdoor area. They use a wide range of equipment with gusto and have good control over their bodies. Children enjoy joining in with role play and love to take their imagination outside to the play area where they use large empty boxes as space rockets. They are developing a good understanding of the world they live in through their play and have planted seeds and observed them as they grow. An excellent range of activities, celebrations and festivals are planned to enhance children's awareness of the wider world. For example, children regularly participate in fundraising events and have access to a broad range of resources and play opportunities which positively reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences.

Children learn about keeping themselves safe through the discussions and activities provided. They regularly join in fire evacuation practises to ensure that they know what to do in an emergency. They are encouraged to follow good hygiene routines and know when to wash their hands. Children are actively learning about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through effective discussions and daily routines. Children enjoy a wide range of healthy, nutritious snacks and they are encouraged to learn about a healthy diet. Fresh drinking water is readily available. Snack times are relaxed, social occasions when children sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each other's company.

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	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	1

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	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