

Slip End Playgroup

The Village Hall, Markyate Road, Slip End, LUTON, Bedfordshire, LU1 4BU

Inspection date	21/05/2013
Previous inspection date	10/11/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Children make some choices with regard to toys and also enjoy participating in adult-led activities. They play independently and interact with other children, developing a positive attitude to play and learning.
- Children explore a range of early technology toys and equipment, and use role play areas to create imaginary games together. As a result, children are engaged and motivated learning to work together.
- The provision uses good strategies to engage and work with parents and other settings. As a result, they support learning in the home and other settings, and contribute to positive moves for children between settings.

It is not yet good because

- The information gained from observing and assessing children is not always consistently rigorous to provide learning experiences that are fully matched to children's needs in order to foster good progress.
- Access to the outdoor area to develop opportunities for children's energetic play, exploration of natural materials, and the natural world, including living creatures, is not fully incorporated into the daily planning to maximise learning.
- Children are not consistently given enough opportunity to explore their thinking and extend their learning by making decisions and becoming independent as they undertake activities and self-care tasks.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the hall and the outside area. The inspector also spoke with the manager, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a selection of policies, procedures and information provided by the provision.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector reviewed a selection of children's observation and assessment development files with key persons.
- The inspector spoke with several parents in order to seek, and take account of, their views of the provision.

Inspector

Lynne Talbot

Full Report

Information about the setting

Slip End Playgroup opened in 1992 and has been registered with Ofsted since 2001 on the Early Years Register. The provision is situated in the village hall in Slip End, close to Luton in Bedfordshire. It is managed by a committee and serves the local area and wider community. The provision is accessible to all children and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The provision employs three members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, and the manager has a level 3 qualification. The provision opens on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during school term times. Sessions on Monday, Tuesday and Friday are from 9.30am to 12.30pm, with an optional lunch club from 12.30pm to 1.30pm. The Thursday session operates from 9.15am to 12.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 13 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The provision provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- improve the planning and guiding of activities in order to reflect on the different ways that children learn, and reflect these in staff practice.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- extend the use of the outdoor learning environment to offer a range of materials which children can use and combine in their own way to meet their own purposes. For example, provide objects, materials and living things to help them to explore features of their own immediate environment
- help children to think of ideas, and find ways to solve problems, by modelling the language of thinking and building opportunities into activities for them to develop increasing levels of independence.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are happy and secure in the setting, and consequently make satisfactory progress in their learning and development given their starting points. Staff plan experiences and activities to help to prepare children for their move on to school. For example, they provide a broad range of play equipment which is accessible to all children within low-level storage units labelled with both picture and text that identify the contents. This means that children can self-select equipment and begin to associate written words with their meaning. Children begin to recognise the letters of their own name when they self-register or identify the helper of the day as displayed on the snack board. Children access pencils and paper in all areas and this helps them to explore their writing skills. All children enjoy story sessions where they join in with simple repetitive rhymes. For example, when sharing a favourite book, they eagerly complete familiar phrases and recall the repetitions within the story. This encourages them to explore early literacy.

Children enjoy outdoor play where they kick balls, roll and spin hoops, and dig in the raised planting bed. However, the outdoor area is yet to be fully incorporated into the daily planning to maximise the learning potential. For example, there are few opportunities for children to explore objects, materials and living things, or a range of natural materials to use in their own way. The materials are also limited to those set out each session for children, which guides and limits individual choice. Some gardening activities are planned, for example, to plant seedlings, but staff do not make consistent use of such activities to provide time for children to think of ideas or question what they are finding out about, or how to manage it themselves. Children are fascinated when they find worms and ants during planting activities, but staff do not maximise the learning by identifying this interest and using it to pursue new knowledge.

Observation and assessment builds from an initial assessment that parents also contribute to. Ongoing assessment systems are generally linked to the 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' guidance, and staff have some idea of the next steps to promote children's further learning and development. However, some next steps are general and not drawn directly from the observation and assessment completed. Therefore, the planning does not always consistently reflect the needs of the children. Where a child asks for or shows an interest in a particular activity, the staff incorporate it into the weekly planning. In this way, children can influence and choose what is on offer. However, this is not always used regularly and consistently to reflect children's interests. Staff complete a progress check at age two for children, which is thorough and fully shared with parents to support learning. It is clear from the evidence of progress made by children attending that they are making sound progress. However, although staff assess children's learning, it is not always consistently rigorous. This occasionally results in learning experiences that are not fully matched to children's needs or do not have sufficient challenge. Therefore, the guiding and planning of activities does not consistently reflect the identified needs of all children.

Children choose some ways to do things and plan together because some staff follow the ideas children are thinking about. For example, when playing with the discovery cube, a staff member follows the children's lead and asks questions that result in the play developing into a trip to the seaside. Children talk about making sandcastles with a bucket and spade. As a result, some children begin to explain their thinking and rationalise their thoughts, extending their communication and language skills. However, some staff are not

secure in this approach, and at other activities fail to follow children's lead or build on children's own approach towards their game. As a result, children lose interest and opportunities to extend communication are not always optimised.

Children become confident in the use of everyday technology because they have regular access to items to explore. For example, they use toy laptop computers, talking robots and interactive books. Children are fascinated as they operate buttons to make lights flash and sounds play. They show visiting adults how to operate the laptop, demonstrating their confidence within the provision. Children involve staff members within their role play. For example, they play in the 'post office' area and with dressing-up costumes. The staff member helps them to explore the different sizes of the parcels and talks with them about the different hats available in the dressing-up area. However, staff's eagerness to support children in their play means that they do not always have the chance to find things out for themselves. An example of this is when children try to post the parcels through the letter slot; staff's intervention in suggesting they post them through the larger door means children do not have the opportunity to think of a solution themselves. Some children do, however, continue to try to find a solution by lifting the whole top off of the post box and placing parcels inside that way.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The small group numbers and the close relationships built with key persons ensure that children form secure emotional attachments. Settling-in procedures are thorough and include the opportunity for children and parents to join the provision before attending, at the open mornings. This is supported with an induction meeting for new families. The key person finds out about children's care needs from parents so they can support children effectively; therefore, children's individual needs are met. Staff model social behaviour for children and offer frequent praise throughout the session. Children learn to manage their own feelings, and to consider those of others, by taking part in discussions. When the group sit together during snack time, they talk about achievements and what the children have been doing. This is enhanced by the slips completed by parents entitled, 'At the weekend at home I have', which help the staff to share events or news from home. These methods support children's sense of security within the provision. Children have opportunities to learn about and respect other cultures. They access a range of resources, including dual-language books and cooking utensils from various countries. Several popular festivals are explored through planned activities, and children link with the local school and nursery to explore events within their local community. Consequently, they become aware of the society around them.

Children generally develop self-care skills and an understanding of healthy eating. They are well nourished as parents provide a packed lunch for those attending lunch club, and the provision provides a snack. A daily menu shows children what is for snack each day, and they enjoy discussing the fruits that they prefer. Some children help to pour their drinks at snack time and can help themselves to their named water bottles during the session if they are thirsty. In this way, they become aware of their own needs regarding the intake of fluids for good health. Children can wash their hands unassisted, and the displayed posters help them to consider good hygiene. However, the practice by staff is

inconsistent and they often complete the care tasks for children rather than providing them with the opportunity to make choices or judgements for themselves. For example, when sitting for lunch club the children play no part in retrieving their own lunches or accessing them themselves; they sit and wait while a member of staff sets the food onto plates for them to eat. Children are also unable to reach their coats, and staff make the decision for them about whether it is cold, or not, when playing outdoors.

Children learn to take risks within a safe environment when they use physical equipment. When using the activity cube, for instance, staff remind children what may happen should they bang the pegs with their hands; it may result in the pegs flying across the room and hitting someone. As a result, children learn to play with equipment in a safe manner. Children enjoy outdoor play in the secured play area; this means that they benefit from fresh air in a safe environment. Transitions are managed very well and, as a result, children's progression to other settings is smooth. All children take part in a visit to their new school in the term before they move on. They meet their teacher, visit their classroom, and become familiar with the new surroundings and find out about the new building. As a result, children make the transition smoothly and easily supporting their self-confidence. Each key person meets with the children's new teacher to provide information that enables them to build on the progression made in learning and development. Transitions into the provision are also managed well. In addition to the open mornings, younger children are welcomed at the lunch club to help them to become familiar with the building, the staff and other children. In this way, they are already comfortable in the provision before they start attending, and consequently they settle quickly and thrive.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and committee expect there to be a good quality of care offered to children and families. A review of all policies takes place to ensure that the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. Arrangements to safeguard children are robust. All staff have completed safeguarding training and, where necessary, this is reviewed at staff meetings. As part of the safeguarding procedures, there are appropriate recruitment and suitability checks which result in a sound induction for any new staff. As a result, the provision ensures that children are protected. Staff create an environment where children engage in a range of activities safely. The environment is very safe; closed circuit television and sensors on the interior doors mean that no person may enter or leave the premises unannounced. The provision carries out detailed assessments of risk which cover all areas of the premises and any excursions. Consequently, children are safe. In addition, a risk assessment is completed for every child with a dietary or medical need of any kind. Therefore, all measures are taken to support and protect children's welfare.

Staff members take part in professional supervision and annual appraisals. The staff group are committed to developing their practice and attend training courses each year, as well as taking on designated roles within the provision. These roles include the designated person for, amongst other areas, safeguarding, two-year-olds and special educational

needs. The manager is aware of the practice that takes place and completes observations during sessions. Immediate feedback helps staff to reflect on their practice and strive for continually good standards. Parents become involved in the practice of the provision. For instance, the 'wow' board, the slips to complete at home, newsletters, questionnaires and a suggestion box help to involve parents. The meetings with parents help to provide information to them on how children learn, and offer ideas for learning in the home. Parents comment that, 'ideas for activities at home are provided and feedback about the children is very good', and that, 'the staff share their development files on the children and this helps us to know what the children are doing'. Parents clearly value the provision and the staff. The staff group work well with other settings, including childminders, to make sure that they are working consistently on specific next steps and objectives for children. The provision implements reflective practice which involves all staff and committee members. They work with external advisers to review their practice and use a secure plan of action to improve the practice. Children are secure, enjoy their time in the provision, and are self-confident within the care of the staff. Consequently, they are suitably prepared for new learning and experiences.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	219242
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	876318
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	13
Name of provider	Slip End Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	10/11/2009
Telephone number	01582 728865/07958 587595

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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