

# Friars Centre Playgroup

Friars Community Centre, Constable Way, Shoeburyness, Essex, SS3 9SW

## Inspection date

11/07/2013

Previous inspection date

08/11/2011

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is good

- Exciting, stimulating and well-resourced activities are largely based on children's interests, therefore, they remain interested and engaged as they play and learn well.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well catered for. Their unique needs are well understood by staff who work with outside professionals to ensure that all support is in place to enable children to make progress.
- There is high quality supervision and monitoring of staff to ensure that professional development needs are addressed, in order to continuously raise standards of teaching and learning.
- Children form strong attachments and relationships with the staff because of the good settling-in process at the playgroup. As a result, they settle quickly into the routine and make good progress.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to improve ways of engaging all parents in contributing ideas and suggestions to aid children's development and progress.

## **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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## **Inspection activities**

- The inspector interacted with, and observed, children at play and during snack time and circle time.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and chairperson, and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation including evidence of staff suitability, certificates, and children's developmental records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection.

## **Inspector**

Sarah Williams

## Full Report

### Information about the setting

Friars Centre Playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee. It opened in 1974, operating from two rooms in Friars Community Centre, adjacent to Shoeburyness Library. The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Session times are Monday and Friday, 9am to 12 noon and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9am to 3.30pm. Children attend for full day or half day sessions.

The playgroup is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 42 children in the early years age range on roll. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. Children come from the local community and surrounding areas. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs 10 staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications; two at level 2, seven at level 3 and one at level 6. The playgroup receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- seek additional ways to improve and support the engagement of all parents in their child's ongoing education, by adding ideas and contributing to planning.

## Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress in all areas and are well prepared for their next stages in learning. They have a good range of well-considered activities and play materials provided, many offered as a direct result of staff talking to children about their interests and ideas. This inspires them to use their creativity and imaginative thinking as they devise games and play scenarios using small world toys, messy materials such as compost, and art and craft materials to make pictures, collages and practise their writing. All adults, including staff and various students on placement, engage with the children in a supportive way, to help them gain from the activities. For example, a student patiently models how to thread shapes so that a small child can see how to do it.

Children are encouraged and enabled to be active learners, who structure their own play.

A floor mat was set up with saucepans and cooking implements for children to explore sounds and music-making. They enjoyed this for a while and then had the idea of combining these resources with the box containing compost to create a pizza kitchen. A group of children organised themselves, delegated tasks, took orders and 'cooked' happily until tidy-up time. This intensive, child-initiated style of play complements the adult-led parts of the session, such as circle time and snack time, when children sit together in small groups with an adult.

With no permanent attached outdoor space, staff are imaginative in providing children with varied and appealing options indoors to help them develop their movement skills and body control. A sectioned-off area is set aside for physical play where children can tumble and roll on the floor mats, use rockers and ride-on toys, and develop balancing and dance skills. Provision has been made to use facilities at a nearby primary school with a large sensory room, wild garden and open space where children can move freely. These outings are made more exciting as children form a 'walking caterpillar' using a special rope which aids their safety when crossing the road, accompanied by staff.

Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is excellent, and a real strength of the playgroup. Their unique needs are very well known to both the Special Educational Needs Coordinator as well as their key person. This enables specialised care and learning plans to be put in place to ensure that all children are included and able to access the full range of activities offered. Parents are actively involved in the regular reviews so that they are aware of how their child is progressing and what steps are needed next.

When children are about to enter the next stage of their education the staff help to prepare them by discussing their visits and talking about what changes and new routines they can expect. The optional lunch club gives children a chance to develop their independence as they manage their lunch boxes.

Staff have a secure knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They understand that children learn best through play and provide a stimulating environment to encourage their play. They obtain information from the parents about their child's likes, preferences and capabilities. They use this information effectively along with their initial observations to form their 'starting points'. As a result, staff can plan activities that are of interest to the children and they settle quickly into pre-school life. Planning is based on what children want to do as their ideas are listened to and responded to. Staff continue to teach, observe and assess the children while they play. They use the information gathered to identify children's learning intentions and inform planning. Children select what artwork and evidence they would like to include in their books. Having ownership of their record gives children a strong sense of self and an understanding that they are supported both by the setting and their homes. However, not all parents choose to contribute with comments and ideas of children's interest areas at home in order to have a shared approach to children's learning. Staff complete the progress check at age two to determine any areas where children may need additional support to develop in the prime areas. Parents are able to share the outcome of the progress check so they are fully informed at this important stage of their child's development.

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

Children form strong attachments to the adults caring for them. All children are assigned a key person who builds a relationship with the child and their immediate family. They gather good information from parents to meet children's needs. Children are therefore happy, settled and eager to come to the playgroup to see their friends and try new activities. Children's good behaviour is promoted through the reinforcement of clear rules and boundaries and through staff offering regular praise and encouragement. This promotes children's self-confidence and self-esteem.

Children's safety and security is well-considered at all times. No child can leave the setting unseen and all are only released into the care of a known adult as the session ends. When out and about, visiting the library or local park, children follow clear procedures to keep them safe. A grab bag is kept ready containing everything necessary to support the children on any outings. They practise a fire drill so they know what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Children enjoy healthy snacks, which include fresh fruit and vegetables, and a drink of milk or water to keep them nourished and hydrated during sessions. Sitting in small groups with an adult allows time for discussions about likes and dislikes and which foods are 'good for you'. Hand-washing routines help children learn about simple hygiene routines that will protect them from germs. At snack time children help prepare the food and decide how much they want. They help tidy up when they hear the cues from staff and are eager to meet their parents to talk about their day. Children have a strong sense of belonging and positivity, due in part to the staffs' easy and open approach. They know that support is there should they need it. For example, children needing help with hand washing before snack are assisted and reminded of the routine.

The environment is structured to allow children to access resources and play materials to challenge them and promote learning. Any items not being used are removed and replaced with something new, so children are stimulated and interested. Children move freely between activities and the two spaces. They use the carpeted lobby or 'quiet' area for browsing books and come together for circle time at the end of the sessions. By providing plenty of choice for children they develop independence and self-confidence, which gives them the skills needed for their eventual move onto school.

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

Children at the playgroup are well protected from any harm or abuse as all staff and management have a very sound and clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in regard to child protection. The manager has attended specialised training in regard to safeguarding to enable her to take a lead role in ensuring all staff are enabled to act to keep children safe and respond to any concerns. Information for parents is clearly displayed on the parents' noticeboard so they are aware of the playgroup's approach to dealing with concerns. Robust recruitment procedures ensure staff are suitable to work

with children and any significant events are promptly reported to Ofsted.

The recently appointed manager has worked extremely diligently with the committee and the local authority development team to raise standards at the setting by reviewing all routines and updating the planning in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Children's progress is now tracked and their achievements are recorded in expertly produced records which are shared with parents. These are very detailed with observations, photographs and next steps in learning carefully and clearly set out. Parents spoken to expressed their appreciation for the level of care taken to observe and record their child's progress.

All staff are involved in planning the week's educational programme. The manager encourages all staff to try out activities and uses the regular supervision sessions to analyse the success of their ideas and how they may be able to improve on these. The manager assists a less experienced staff member with a cooking activity, so that children remain interested while waiting for a turn at mixing or adding ingredients. The teamwork ensures a smooth flow to the sessions and maintains a harmonious ambience so that children can discover and explore their environment freely and safely as they play and learn.

The committee members are very actively involved in the day-to-day management of the playgroup. The chairperson attends daily and helps out with a range of duties as well as being on hand to discuss matters with the manager or any staff member who wishes to speak to her. The committee are involved in recruiting and appointing staff and carry out appraisals to ensure that professional development is addressed and training needs are identified. Daily supervision and mentoring of staff is carried out by the manager and deputy. This gives them a clear picture of how staff are performing and any weaknesses can be addressed promptly.

The partnership with parents is a very strong feature of the playgroup. It has been established in the community for a very long time and many children are second or third generation attendees. Families value the understanding of their individual circumstances and appreciate the approachability of staff, who are willing to discuss any childcare related matters with them. Advice on behaviour management, sleep and feeding problems are given and parents are signposted to where they may obtain further professional help if they so wish. Some parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities express very deep gratitude for the support and guidance they have received. They say they feel empowered to seek out specialist help for their children after discussions with the manager and Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Well-presented notice boards, and regular newsletters, ensure parents are informed of events and activities and other matters concerning the setting. Children who attend other settings or are cared for by a childminder have continuity of care as the playgroup establishes links to ensure that information is shared as required.

By considering future plans and developments the playgroup appraises its strengths and weaknesses and takes effective action to continuously improve. For example, negotiating to use the facilities at the local school which enhance children's educational experiences.

The decision to employ an administrative assistant frees up the manger's time to spend on matters directly related to the staff and children.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119478
<b>Local authority</b>	Southend on Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	915235
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	30
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	42
<b>Name of provider</b>	Friars Centre Playgroup Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	08/11/2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 292516

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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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