

Thatto Heath Playdays

2 Govett Road, Nutgrove Community Centre, St. Helens, WA9 5NH

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

19/07/2013

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

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

- Children are confident communicators, who enjoy sharing their thoughts and ideas with staff, consequently, staff get to know them very well.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported in their care and learning and make good progress.
- Children are becoming adept at calculating because staff demonstrate how to add numbers together and ask challenging questions. For example, they ask, 'if you move six spaces and then move one more, how many spaces have you moved?'
- Children are becoming very independent. They manage their own care needs well, are curious and keen to explore. As a result, they become deeply absorbed in interesting activities.

It is not yet outstanding because

- While staff are good at extending children's learning by following their day-to-day interests closely, there is sometimes a lapse in time between the observations they make and planning for their next steps, to help children make even better progress.
- There is scope to further develop the methods of staff appraisal by adding specific guidance in areas where staff may be less confident and so help them to support children's learning even more effectively.

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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including planning, observations and assessment records. She also looked at a range of policies, including information used to assess the suitability of staff, staff rotas and attendance registers.
- The inspector observed activities and care practices in the playroom and within the outside play area. She conducted joint observations with the manager, looking at the practice of staff.
- The inspector spoke with children and staff. She also held a meeting with both managers, who are also the providers.
- The inspector also took into account the views of parents and carers spoken to during the inspection and read their comments in children's learning records.

Inspector

Valerie Aspinall

Full Report

Information about the setting

Thatto Heath Playdays was registered in 2013 at new premises and is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The playgroup was first registered in 2000. It is situated in purpose-built premises in Nutgrove, St Helens and is managed by the registered providers. The playgroup serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a designated playroom and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The playgroup employs six members of childcare staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 2.45pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions and there are currently 53 children on roll. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- refine the process of observation and assessment further to identify children's next steps in learning more frequently and demonstrate how these are incorporated into planning
- enhance the existing staff appraisals by offering specific guidance in areas where staff may be less confident, so they can even more effectively help children to make good progress.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff know children exceptionally well. They gather information from parents and carers about their children's needs, abilities and interests when they start at the playgroup and throughout their time there. They do this through detailed 'All about me' documents and regular verbal feedback. Most frequently, staff support children's progress by knowing their current interests and using them to extend their learning. For example, when children show an interest in a story book, staff take the opportunity to introduce numbers and instigate discussions about the wider world. Seasonal themes, such as 'going on holiday', further extend each child's potential for learning. Staff make short observations and assessments of children's play and use these to plan for the next steps in their

learning. However, these are collated at the end of each term and so some time may elapse before specific activities are planned. This means that, sometimes, the next steps in children's learning are not planned for as quickly as possible to further support each child's good progress.

Parents and carers are encouraged to continue children's learning at home with home link books containing information about activities that children have been involved in at the playgroup. In addition, parents are invited to special events throughout the year, such as a nativity play and leavers' graduation ceremony, to see first-hand how confidently their children perform. Parents and carers contribute to the assessment and planning process through their comments in children's termly reviews, informal chats with staff and pre-arranged parent evenings.

Staff interact especially well with the children during the sessions and take many opportunities to ask them open-ended questions to extend their thinking and understanding. For example, during a small group mathematics activity, children are encouraged to calculate. They roll two dice and are encouraged to count the spots on each and add them together, when staff say 'if we have a six and a one how many do we have?' Consequently, children are adept at adding numbers together. All children make good progress in their learning and development from their individual starting points. Where children are recognised as requiring additional support, adults work with parents and other professionals to make sure each child's individual needs are met and develop individual educational plans. Consequently, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning. As a result, they are very well prepared to move on.

Children become highly involved in their play; they are motivated and very interested in the planned activities. For example, they are highly enthusiastic and motivated during a water play activity outside. Children competently use the tap to fill various containers and experiment with ways of transporting water. They pour, fill, mix and feel as they explore how adding food colouring changes the colour of the water. Staff ask challenging questions and extend children's ideas; consequently, children are thoroughly absorbed in their learning. Children freely access books during the sessions. They listen to stories with obvious pleasure and enjoyment, discussing what they can see enthusiastically. Children's physical development is supported very well and they move around the playroom and outside play area with good control and confidence. Frequent opportunities are taken to extend physical skills as children freely access the outdoor play area, where they can be active and benefit from exercise in the fresh air. They handle tools skilfully, such as scissors, in the creative area and when playing in the sand and water trays. Children form strong friendships and enjoy activities in small and larger groups, as well as playing alone. They behave well, share willingly and take turns. For example, children wait patiently for their turn to collect their graduation certificate from the vicar when they attend a leavers' ceremony in the adjacent church.

Children have free access to computers and resources, such as a CD player, which help to develop their awareness and understanding of technology. Children sing with great pleasure and enthusiasm to music and engage in pretend play, which helps to foster their imagination and creativity.

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

The very effective key person system ensures that children are supported well and develop confidence in the playgroup. Children are animated, curious and independent and keen to talk about what they have been learning. They form very strong bonds and attachments with the adults who care for them and with each other. They enjoy exploring the garden; developing their large muscle skills as they run around and play outside. The range of resources available allows children to take measured risks, supported by staff and so they learn to persist with challenging activities. Children have many opportunities to make choices throughout the sessions. They benefit from the very wide range of good quality toys and resources that are freely available to children, both inside and outdoors. Children have healthy snacks and develop independence in their personal hygiene and self-help skills. They wash their hands before snack and independently put their shoes and socks on after playing in the water area.

New children are invited to an open day, are offered flexible settling-in sessions and parents receive comprehensive information about the playgroup in advance of enrolment. Detailed enrolment information collected from parents includes individual care needs, likes, dislikes and development milestones. As a result, staff get to know children quickly and swiftly plan to help them make progress. Staff are positive role models for the children. They treat them with care and respect and calmly reinforce appropriate boundaries within the playgroup that ensure children are safe and well cared for. Consequently, children are well behaved and the atmosphere is calm and productive. They know when it is time to help tidy up, because staff turn off the lights for a few seconds as a signal. Children are aware of how to care for themselves, for example, a child explains that 'we can't eat the green strawberries'. They learn how to share and cooperate because staff regularly play board games with small groups of children and model cooperative behaviour.

The playgroup has established effective links with the adjacent school, which some children move on to, in order to support their move to reception class. Prospective teachers from local schools visit children in the playgroup prior to the new school term, so they get to know each other. In addition, a display of reception class teachers' photographs and different school uniforms help children to become familiar with their new school. As a result, children are very well prepared for the move to reception class.

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

Children are safeguarded very well as all staff have undergone the necessary checks to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. The playgroup has appropriate policies and systems in place to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and a clear knowledge of how to report concerns appropriately. Regular risk assessments are completed for the premises, resources and outings, which helps to monitor the safety of the environment.

Staff have a very secure knowledge of the learning and development requirements, which enables them to support children in making good progress in their learning. Children's achievements are tracked against the early learning goals to monitor their progress. The manager collates tracking data to identify if any particular groups of children have gaps in their learning, so that appropriate interventions can be planned. Strong partnerships with parents contribute to a coordinated approach to children's care and learning. Policies and procedures are thorough and support staff very well in providing a very welcoming and highly stimulating environment for all children.

The managers of the playgroup set very high aspirations for quality and are actively working to develop this further. Priorities for improvement are identified through consultation with parents, children and staff. For example, as they have recently moved into new premises, they want to develop the outdoor area further by adding more planting areas. There are effective recruitment and induction procedures. Staff performance is monitored through individual review meetings, regular staff meetings and frequent informal discussions. However, for a small number of staff, who have asked for specific support, guidance is not always specific enough to help them become even more confident in supporting children's learning. Staff feel their professional development is important. The managers are aware of the impact of supporting professional development and, as a result, all staff have ongoing training to regularly update their knowledge.

Information regarding the group's policies, procedures and activities offered are shared with parents in a variety of ways, including a newsletter, prospectus, displays, home link books and daily discussions. The group has established good relationships with health professionals and others, such as local cluster groups, to share knowledge and good practice. Relationships with reception class teachers effectively support children's move to school. As a result, children develop confidence and independence and are very well prepared for moving on.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory 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

Unique reference number	EY454146
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	903406
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	53
Name of provider	Gwynneth Chorley and Julie Kenny Partnership
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	07903524443

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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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