

Pierremont Playgroup

Holy Trinity Youth Centre, Pierremont Road, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 6DG

Inspection date	25/03/2014
Previous inspection date	14/02/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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 make good progress in all areas of learning and development, in relation to their starting points. This is because staff are skilful in building on children's interests and what they already know and differentiating between children who need extra support or challenge.
- Children settle in easily and make positive relationships because staff are flexible and sensitive to meeting individual needs. This allows children to quickly become confident with those around them.
- Safeguarding practice is fully understood by all staff. As a result, children are well protected and safeguarded in the playgroup.
- Children's learning, development and welfare needs are consistently well met between the home and the setting because staff have created strong relationships with parents and carers.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to provide further regular opportunities to enhance the older children's early writing skills and knowledge and understanding of linking sounds to letters.

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 throughout the session.
- The inspector looked at children's records, observation and assessment files, planning documentation and a selection of policies.
- The inspector spoke to the playgroup leader, staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents spoken to on the day and information obtained from the setting's self-evaluation.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the playgroup leader.

Inspector

Janet Fairhurst

Full report

Information about the setting

Pierremont Playgroup was registered in 1999 on the Early Years Register. It operates from Holy Trinity Youth and Community centre close to Darlington town centre and is managed by committee. The playgroup serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The playgroup opens Monday to Thursday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.30am to 11.30am. There are currently 26 children attending who are in the early years age group. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- increase even further the opportunities for older children to practise their early writing skills by encouraging them to make their own marks when completing their artwork

- enhance older children's understanding of linking sounds to letters by providing more frequent opportunities, which build on the children's current knowledge and skills.

Inspection judgements

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

Teaching is good because all staff have a good understanding of how children learn and they create an environment that enhances learning well. Staff are confident in their approach to children's learning and provide interesting and challenging experiences that meet the development needs of all children. Activities cover the seven areas of learning and staff closely monitor children's learning through regularly observing and assessing them. Individual learning journals show children's achievements and progress over time. Staff then use this information to identify the next steps in children's learning, so they then can effectively plan future play experiences. Consequently, activities and play experiences are planned, which identify the developmental needs of individual children to ensure they make good progress in their learning. Parents contribute to their children's progress records by sharing what their children are learning at home. They know who their child's key person is from the initial visits that take place and have daily discussions with staff about their child's development and what they are learning. This helps them to

support their children's learning at home and their continued progress towards the early learning goals.

Within the playgroup, there is a constant buzz of conversation with staff chatting easily to children, helping them to be increasingly confident and articulate. For example, during snack time, children and staff sit together and their discussions include events at home. Staff are effective in the way they question children and talk to them in detail about what they are doing. This deepens children's thinking and develops their language and communication skills well. All children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and this underpins their good achievement. Much of the play is child-initiated or unobtrusively directed by staff. This freedom to choose what to play with and where, makes children highly independent learners, full of enthusiasm, curiosity and with the skills they need for future learning. Children participate in role play, re-enacting scenes from their favourite movie. Staff interact well and ask open-ended questions, encouraging children to extend their play and curiosity. For example, children find a length of fabric and a member staff asks 'how do you think we could use this for the [yellow brick] road', offer their ideas and promptly work together to stretch the fabric out on the floor, walking proudly over it once they have achieved their goal. Daily activities help support children's early writing skills. For example, they create patterns in the sand and have access to pencils, paint and crayons. Staff explain why they must record children's names on their artwork and this helps children to develop an understanding that print has meaning. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to enable children to do this for themselves. Furthermore, they do not always take every opportunity to build on children's prior skills with regards to sounding out the phonic letters of their name. Children thoroughly enjoy sharing books and stories with each other and the staff. They listen well and join in with familiar phrases, talking about the pictures and answering questions about the characters.

Staff promote children's mathematical skills well. They achieve this by skilfully weaving counting and colour recognition as they play. For example, children count the number of eggs they find in the straw and identify the colour of the chicks they find inside. Staff give the children lots of praise for their achievements and recognise when children work together to solve problems, saying 'well done, you worked that out together'. Children make good progress in expressive arts and design. They use their imagination and develop their creativity as they paint and stick. Children concentrate well as they create their own Easter bonnet dribbling the glue across the paper plate and selecting materials, such as feathers, sequins and ribbons to stick. Staff plan a range of opportunities for children to develop a good awareness of the world in which they live. They learn to be kind and caring towards living things as they dig and observe bugs and spiders. Children begin to learn about multicultural Britain as they celebrate festivals, such as Chinese New Year. This ensures they start to develop an understanding of the wider world. Staff provide children with good opportunities to develop their understanding of how things work through the use of electronic and programmable resources, such as a light box, computer and walkie-talkies. Through experimental activities, children begin to investigate solids, such as ice and how through melting, they can become liquids, testing out their theories to see if they are correct. Children's physical development is well promoted. They have access to an interesting and stimulating outdoor area, which contains a selection of challenging resources. As a result, children are developing a good range of physical skills.

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

Each child is greeted at the start of each session with a smile and friendly welcome. There is flexible settling-in procedures, which help children to adjust at a pace that successfully reflects their needs and parental requirements. Children's starting points and other relevant information is gathered from parents at the beginning of the placement. This helps staff to make an initial assessment of children's capabilities, likes and dislikes and contributes towards their tailoring of provision to meet individual needs. As result, children form good relationships with staff and feel secure in the playgroup. They show this by confidently coming in at the start of the session, quickly joining in with activities and happily waving goodbye to their parents. Children are able to reach equipment themselves and move toys around to where they want to use them within the well-presented playgroup. This flexibility encourages children to be independent and encourages them to think about how to use things safely.

Staff implement a range of positive methods to help children manage their own behaviour. They are good role models, use clear explanations, are consistent and offer encouragement and praise. Children learn to negotiate, share toys, take turns with equipment and show consideration for others as they play together and as a result, children's behaviour is good. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through the discussions and well-established routines. For example, regular fire drills are carried out, in order to increase children's confidence and familiarity with the emergency evacuation procedures. Staff ably support children who attend more than one early years setting and are making effective links with other carers, such as childminders. Staff talk to the children about their move to nursery, read stories and encourage parents to share their children's learning journals with teaching staff. As a result, children are well prepared and confidently move to the next stage of their learning.

Staff promote a healthy lifestyle and are good role models to children. For example, they sit with them during snack times talking to them about the benefits of healthy eating and encouraging them to try new foods. Children sit well at snack time and enjoy the social occasion. They talk to their friends about topics that are important to them, such as their judo skills and how milk helps them to become big and strong. Staff promote effective health and hygiene procedures, such as hand washing as part of the daily routine. Gentle reminders from staff ensure that children have a growing awareness of how to keep themselves safe as they play. For example, they know that they must hold the trampoline bar with two hands and that they must not run indoors. This helps to promote a safe environment where children feel comfortable to learn. Children have good opportunities for fresh air and exercise in the playgroup garden, where they make effective use of the climbing and balancing equipment and have space to run around, which enables them to begin to manage risks safely.

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

The playgroup leader and staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in promoting the safety and welfare of the children. A broad range of written policies and procedures, including a safeguarding policy, support the safe and effective management of the provision. Clear recruitment procedures means that staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. Good priority is given to safeguarding children. All staff undertake regular training and have a secure understanding of child protection issues. They are aware of possible symptoms of children at risk and know the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child in their care. Induction is robust and is effective in informing new staff of their roles and responsibilities. Regular staff meetings are held, allowing the playgroup leader to discuss any key issues and for staff to air any concerns they may have. Appraisals are used to assess staffs' ongoing suitability as well as to identify any areas for improvement. There are good risk assessment procedures, both inside and outdoors. Daily checks identify any potential hazards as they are found and staff effectively take action to remove them. As a result, children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. The playgroup leader and staff have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements and work well together, regularly sharing information to help them support children's developing needs. The educational programme, along with the quality of teaching, are monitored well by the playgroup leader. She does this effectively because she works alongside her team on a daily basis, with all staff members contributing to the weekly planning. Therefore, she has first-hand knowledge of what the staff and children do.

The playgroup has established good relationships with parents and shares information on a daily basis about children's routines and the activities they participate in. Parents receive detailed information about the setting and have access to the policies and procedures. They build strong links with their child's key person, enabling good information sharing to support children's developing needs. Staff value parents' communications, which help them to provide consistency and link children's experiences at home to those they enjoy within the setting. Regular newsletters are sent home providing details about current events, topics and themes. This helps to keep parents well informed and allows them the opportunity to carry on their learning at home. Parents say they are delighted with the care and learning opportunities that are provided for their children. They find staff approachable, caring and knowledgeable about their child's individual needs. Parents also value the many opportunities that they have to speak with their child's key person and to look at and to contribute to their child's learning journal. The playgroup has good relationships with other settings the children attend or are moving onto.

The playgroup leader and staff have a clear vision for the future of the group and have identified areas for improvement and development. These include more parental involvement in the group and completing a recognised accreditation reflecting on quality improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These will have a positive affect on the children and their learning environment. The staff group is very committed to continuous improvement and regularly discuss areas for development to enhance the outcomes for children. A formal self-evaluation has been undertaken and includes feedback from parents. Since the last inspection, the playgroup has taken steps to address the recommendations raised. For example, they now have systems in place to ensure that relevant information about children's learning can be shared with other provisions. This demonstrate the playgroup capacity to make continuous improvements.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	301170
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	876653
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	26
Name of provider	Pierremont Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	14/02/2011
Telephone number	01325 461561

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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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