

# Sparrow Playgroup

Ascension Hall, Michaelson Avenue, Torrisholme, MORECAMBE, Lancashire, LA4 6SF

<b>Inspection date</b>	19/05/2014
Previous inspection date	15/10/2008

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	1
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is outstanding

- Teaching is excellent and staff have exceedingly high aspirations for all children. Children are motivated to learn as they experience stimulating and challenging activities, both indoors and outdoors. Consequently, children make rapid progress in relation to their starting points.
- The excellent range of accessible resources and outdoor learning opportunities inspire children, igniting their curiosity as they explore, investigate and become active learners. As a result, high levels of learning take place as they become more confident and self-assured.
- Children are safeguarded exceedingly well because comprehensive policies, procedures and risk assessments are in place and strictly adhered to. In addition, the managers and staff have a secure understanding of how to deal with concerns, helping to protect children from harm or abuse.
- There are highly effective partnerships with parents in place. This contributes to successful information sharing, collaborative working and continuity of care and learning for all children.
- The managers and staff are highly reflective and aspire to continually improve outcomes for children and families. As a result, recent developments are creative and inspirational, benefitting children emotionally and educationally.

## **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 main playroom and during outdoor play.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff and the children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, relevant policies and procedures and the self-evaluation for the setting.
- The inspector viewed children's files, assessments and planning documents.
- The inspector spoke with parents and took their views into account.

## **Inspector**

Janice Caryl

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Sparrow Playgroup registered in 2008 on the Early Years Register. It is situated in a church hall in Morecambe, Lancashire, and is managed by voluntary committee. The playgroup serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a large hall and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The playgroup employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2. The manager holds a relevant BA Honours degree and has Early Years Teacher Status. Sessions run during term time only from 9.30am until 12 noon on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and 12.30pm until 3pm Monday to Friday. The setting offers dedicated outdoor learning opportunities during the Tuesday and Thursday afternoon sessions. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 72 children attending who are in the early years age group. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of 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:

- enhance staff's professional development even further so that training plans are enriched, for example, by sourcing other training opportunities and undertaking research.

## Inspection judgements

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

The staff at this vibrant playgroup have an excellent knowledge and understanding of how children learn through play. As a result, the environment inside and out is planned to promote active, autonomous learning, igniting children's curiosity and imagination. Information gathered from parents when children first start and subsequent initial observations, form accurate baseline assessments. In addition, staff observe each child's unique learning style, closely matching activities and opportunities to suit their individual needs. Consequently, children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. There is a strong focus on promoting communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. This means children are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in learning, in preparation for school. The manager, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, works with a local authority screening programme. This programme, which is conducted on all individual children in collaboration with parents and carers, is highly effective in helping to assess speech and language development. Following assessments, targeted intervention is put in place for children deemed as needing extra support. Furthermore, staff successfully work with parents and

carers to share and support any intervention strategies, contributing to continuity through shared learning experiences. Practitioner observations are collectively shared at planning meetings. As common themes around children's learning and their interests are recognised, focus work groups are planned to enhance specific areas of development. For example, children showing an interest in shapes are provided with small group opportunities to learn more complex shapes, such as nonagon and decagon. Consequently, children are provided with optimal challenge that contributes to high-level learning.

The quality of teaching is consistently of a very high standard across the playgroup. Children are animated as they enter the setting, immediately engaging in the highly stimulating activities available. They develop their early literacy skills as they find their name and pop it into the post box as a means of self-registration. These skills are reinforced as they identify their nametag on their coat hooks and when they have snack. Consequently, opportunities for children to recognise their name in print are plentiful. Staff ensure that defined areas of play are attractively set out. The boxes and areas are labelled, promoting early reading skills further. Additional resources are accessible and available so that children can enhance their own learning opportunities as they play. For example, children independently work together at building the train track. They develop their social skills, communication and language skills and learn to make decisions as they chat together, deciding what else they would like out of the drawers. Furthermore, the open-ended resources help to extend children's thinking. There is an excellent balance between child-initiated and adult-focused play. Children enjoy painting and taking part in craft activities as they freely express themselves through art and design. The colourful displays exhibit children's work, contributing to a strong sense of belonging and feeling of self-worth. For example, children confidently explain the features on the sea creatures that they have created, such as the tentacles on the octopus and the jellyfish. Staff are extremely skilled in gaining children's attention as they read stories and take the register. Children concentrate and join in with the actions as the practitioner tells the story of a gingerbread man. Children follow the story animatedly, join in with key phrases and predict what comes next. As a result, they develop a love of stories and books in fun and imaginative ways.

The outdoor learning environment is equally inviting and inspiring. Children explore the mud and make cakes out of it, adding water and other materials as they investigate its properties. They enjoy the sand, taking their shoes off and benefiting from the sensory stimulation. Staff challenge children's thinking skills by asking highly effective open-ended questions, such as, 'what can we do?' and 'what will happen if...?' This helps to engage children in deeper level thinking, which results in deeper level learning. Children develop their physical skills through pedalling the trikes, throwing and catching the balls and playing football. Staff offer lots of praise as they encourage children to play and work together supporting personal, social and emotional development. Children are effectively challenged and their needs are effectively met because the wide range of equipment is well matched to suit the different ages and abilities. For example, younger children use push-along bikes and trucks, and older children are able to practice their skills using two wheeled bikes with stabilisers. As a result, children's development of their physical skills rapidly increases as they gain confidence in practicing on different equipment. Staff inspire children to investigate and find things out for themselves. Children show adults the insects

they have found, using the laminated research sheets as a form of reference. They are encouraged to use the magnifying glasses to investigate further and make a note of what they have found. This not only supports self-discovery and research skills, but also promotes early literacy as they learn that writing is for a purpose.

Parents are highly respected and valued at the playgroup. There is wealth of information in the entrance hall for parents and carers to read. This includes photographs and information about staff, their training and qualifications. In addition, there is information about speech and language drop in sessions, local children's centre activities, fathers' reading week and the childcare and social care information contact numbers. Information and messages are also available on a social networking site, where parents and carers can receive and leave messages, making non-confidential information sharing even more effective. Parents are kept well informed of how their children are developing through the home link communication diary and regular parent meetings. They are invited to share learning at home and to help with specific learning intervention targets. This benefits children and families because it ensures effective continuity and strengthens positive relationships.

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

Children are exceptionally well supported through effective key person relationships. The manager and key persons visit children and their families in their home prior to children starting at the playgroup. This helps to establish secure attachments from the beginning as staff, children and families forge a bond. Children, parents and carers are greeted warmly by their key person when they enter the setting and open communication channels contribute to highly effective message sharing. Furthermore, children's emotional well-being is strongly supported because key persons attend to all the personal and intimate needs of children, such as nappy changing. This means that children feel safe and comfortable with adults who know and understand their needs and feelings well. Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are highly skilled in teaching children to manage their feelings and behaviour. They support children in understanding rules and boundaries so that they are intrinsically embedded. Children demonstrate their awareness by readily responding to instruction and following routines safely and with ease. Staff work closely with parents to agree strategies and ensure consistency. Consequently, children quickly learn the difference between right and wrong.

The managers and staff are extremely efficient at promoting healthy lifestyles. They have worked alongside national schemes, such as 'Change for life', to promote healthy eating and fostering positive attitudes to being active. The positive messages are reinforced through sharing information with parents in the home link diaries. Children are taught to understand where their food comes from and how to make healthy choices through activities, such as, visits to the farm and the local supermarket and cooking. Staff readily respond to children's interests and requests, valuing and respecting their ideas. For example, children talk about how they love spaghetti Bolognese. Staff help children source the ingredients, prepare them during one session and cook the meal in another session. Children are excited as the meal is shared between everyone during the outdoor learning afternoon, the following day. Consequently, children remain enthusiastic and motivated as

they benefit from first hand experiences, which help to consolidate their learning. Children's independence and physical skills are further promoted as they regularly take part in preparing fruit and vegetables for snack. They pour their own milk and help themselves to water. Staff teach children the basic rules of hygiene. Children demonstrate this as they independently, and many without prompting, use the soap dispenser and wash their hands before having meals and snacks and after using the toilet. Furthermore, a recent visit by the dental hygienist helped to teach children the importance of good dental hygiene. One parent comments on how useful this has been. The manager and staff make children's safety a high priority, while teaching them to manage the environment and assess risks themselves. They vigilantly observe children practicing new skills, such as balancing on the sand pit edge, but do not intervene unnecessarily. As a result, children gain more confidence as they learn to manage their own risk.

The stimulating environment both indoors and out, coupled together with the highly skilled and sensitive staff team, helps children develop a raised self-esteem and high levels of confidence. This is because they feel safe and secure as they play, interact with others and choose freely. They are exceptionally well prepared for any transitions onto school or other early years providers. This is due to staff making close links with local schools, where teachers are invited to come in to meet the children. Consequently, children are emotionally prepared as they become familiar with other adults and learn about new routines. The settings established links with other early years providers mean that information is shared effectively and consistently. This contributes to meeting children's needs as they are supported further with any transitions.

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

The leadership and management are superb. Arrangements for safeguarding children are excellent because it is seen as a high priority at the setting. The managers are trained to a high level, meaning they are knowledgeable and confident to follow safeguarding procedures should there be any concerns over children's welfare. Extensive risk assessments for all areas of the premises are carried out daily to ensure children's safety remains paramount. The managers and staff constantly review hygiene and health and safety procedures in the setting. Consequently, children are kept safe and well cared for at all times. Highly efficient deployment of staff means that ratios are effectively maintained, so that children's safety is never compromised. They constantly monitor whether children are inside or out, adjusting staff ratios accordingly to ensure children's needs are effectively met. Policies and procedures are well written and strictly adhered to by all members of staff. They are updated annually and readily available for parents and carers to read, contributing to the safe and efficient management of the setting. The leaders and managers ensure that staff recruitment is robust. All staff are checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service check system and a rigorous induction procedure means that staff and students understand their roles and responsibilities when providing care and education for children.

Annual appraisals, monthly staff supervision and regular observations are carried out by the managers and focus on the roles and responsibilities of staff, the quality of teaching

and children's needs. Consequently, outcomes for children constantly improve through a team of dedicated and committed staff. Continuous professional development is highly valued at the setting, with the manager recently obtaining an Honours degree and Early Years Teacher Status. As a result, of her newly acquired skills, leadership is excellent. Staff attend training whenever possible, cascading information to others which contributes to their first rate practice. However, there is scope to enrich their professional development even further, by improving their knowledge and understanding of contemporary issues in early years childcare and education. Self-evaluation is at the core of everything the playgroup does. Parents are consulted through the use of questionnaires and children provide feedback in their play. Staff continually reflect and support management in making constructive changes to routines and the environment. Parents are consulted about whether they find any changes beneficial, for example, concerning the dedicated outdoor learning environment. Parents have found, on reflection, following questions from staff, that children are eating and sleeping much better since this came into operation. Furthermore, the managers show their commitment to continuously developing and improving as they work towards the Lancashire Quality Award.

The managers and staff have a superb overview of the educational programme because they have an excellent understanding of the learning and development requirements in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Monitoring is ongoing through daily discussions and regular planning meetings helping to ensure that children make rapid progress. Assessments on children are monitored rigorously and identify precisely the specific needs of children. This then informs the planning to ensure it is suitably challenging, successfully helping children work towards the early learning goals. The managers and staff work closely within a multi-agency framework. Relationships with other professionals are very astute, helping to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents are extremely complimentary about the staff, their key person's and the management. They comment on how well their children are developing and highly recommend it to others.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY366291
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	857785
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	20
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	72
<b>Name of provider</b>	Sparrow Playgroup
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15/10/2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 833 165

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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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