

Crescent Under 5's Playgroup

c/o Alfred Sutton Primary School, Wokingham Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 1JR

Inspection date	05/06/2014
Previous inspection date	07/11/2013

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		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

- Staff have an excellent knowledge of how children learn. They provide a rich, varied and imaginative educational programme, with precise assessment and planning for individual children. As a result, children make excellent progress.
- Robust systems for monitoring the delivery of the educational programmes mean children's needs are quickly identified and met through timely interventions.
- The strong skills and capabilities of all key persons ensure children feel safe and secure. Staff skilfully support all children to develop high levels of confidence and independence, ensuring children are well-prepared for the next stages in their learning and school.
- Excellent information sharing engages all parents in their children's learning in the setting and at home. Children's individual needs are exceptionally well-met through highly effective partnerships between the setting, parents and external agencies.
- The manager is proactive in developing the staff team and makes excellent use of the services available to support and develop the provision. There is a well-documented drive to strongly improve achievement for all children over a sustained period of time.

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 observed children's activities in the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, talked to staff and key persons and carried out a joint observation with the manager of an adult-led activity.
The inspector looked at various documents, including policies and procedures, children's records, planning, observations and assessments and evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector took account of the views of a parent spoken to on the day of the inspection.

Inspector

Melissa Cox

Full report

Information about the setting

The Crescent Under 5's Playgroup opened in 1975 and registered in 2001. It operates from the grounds of Alfred Sutton Primary School in Reading, Berkshire and has full disabled access. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. Children attend from the local surrounding area. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning to speak English as an additional language. There are currently 31 children on roll aged from two to five years. The playgroup opens each weekday during term time only. Morning sessions are from 9am to 11.30am. The children have the opportunity to attend the lunch club from 11.30am to 12.30pm. Afternoon sessions operate from 12.30pm to 3pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Children that attend the setting on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday can attend for full day care from 9am to 3pm for three days a week. The playgroup is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. The playgroup employs ten members of staff who work with the children. Seven of the staff hold recognised early years qualifications at levels 2 and 3. The playgroup receives support from the local authority and has strong links with the host primary school.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider the implementation of an emotional literacy programme, such as SEAL to further support children's emotional well-being.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are enthusiastic, inquisitive learners who play a dynamic role in the nursery. Children follow their interests, make choices and confidently explore the environment. High regard is given to supporting children to learn in different environments, for example, promoting their free choice and independent access between indoor or outdoor provision. This extends and enhances children's learning and responds to children's individual learning styles. Planning is relevant to every individual child's needs and staff are extremely skilled at adjusting activities to ensure that every child receives a balanced and suitable learning experience. Staff make excellent use of observations by using these as a team to plan experiences for children that match their learning needs and help them to progress. There are precise systems to monitor assessments of children's learning in order to help staff plan the best possible learning experiences based on their observed progress. A strength of the playgroup is the knowledge of children by their key persons, as this enables childcare staff to provide highly individual support for their learning. Staff

recognise children's individual learning needs and patterns and provide an extensive range of activities to support these. They have implemented the progress check for two-year-old children to enable them to assess children's development and act on any areas if there are concerns. As a result, all children receive consistent challenge in their learning, no matter what their progress or age, to maintain their development and motivation. This also means that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose starting points were initially below those expected for their age and stage of development, make excellent progress and the achievement gap is narrowing.

The quality of teaching is outstanding and staff are always interested and enthusiastic when supporting children's play, such as when they play the part of a patient in the hospital role-play area. Teaching is clear, well-paced and sharp, showing an in-depth understanding of children's overall and specific learning needs. Staff use highly effective questioning to develop children's thinking and imagination, such as 'When is the doctor coming?'. This supports their play and they ask children what the toy doctors' equipment is for, to encourage children to describe what they are doing with it. As a result, children have their own ideas about how to play with resources and the opportunity to develop their creativity. The outdoor area is exceptionally well used to provide a stimulating resource through which all areas of learning are covered. Staff plan imaginative active physical experiences for children, which takes account of their stages of development. Children experiment with pouring water into the top of long pipes, following it as it flows along. They dig in the sand, experiment by mixing it with water and enjoy sculpting shapes. Children become absorbed as they work to produce their own creations in the superbly resourced malleable and workshop areas. Children produce three dimensional models, showing persistence and creative thinking, due to the resources offered. For example, one child spends much of her morning designing a cat model from recycled materials by cutting sticky tape, sticking on sequins and designing whiskers and a tale. Staff allow children to become deeply involved in their play without being fearful of 'making a mess'. This means children can experiment, explore and fulfil their natural curiosity and inquisitiveness.

Children throughout the playgroup are making exemplary progress in all areas of learning. Priority is given by staff to developing children's communication and language skills. Staff have applied the ideas and values from training to ensure that all children are able to communicate effectively either through speech or gesture depending on their age and ability. Staff provide visual images, timelines and symbols, and sign language to give additional support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported extremely well through excellent partnerships with parents. Staff work closely with parents to find out words in their home language so that they can understand children's needs and also to fully support their learning of English. Children's literacy skills are also excellently promoted. The environment is rich in language with displays that exhibit children's work. Supported well by staff, older children learn that print carries meaning. Most of the older children can recognise their names and write them with varying degrees of efficiency. Their early writing skills are enhanced further due to the numerous opportunities for mark making in everyday activities. For example, outside they use buckets of water and brushes; they make patterns in the sand or engage in small group writing work. The environment is also rich in numbers and children can be heard to spontaneously count items for fun as part of

their free play. Older children count competently and are beginning to recognise familiar numbers, such as those that represent their age. They recognise numerals and understand number value. All children show a consistently high level of involvement in activities across the playgroup and staff are highly effective at using strategies to maintain this. As a result, children show excellent concentration, including when working in small groups or on their own and this ensures children are extremely well-prepared for the next steps in their learning and school.

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

A well-established and extremely effective key-person system operates throughout the playgroup. Staff provide highly successful settling-in procedures and this results in children showing an extremely strong sense of security. Parents complete a comprehensive booklet prior to children joining the playgroup, so that staff have a wealth of information in order to support children's care and education during the early weeks of their attendance. Support from translators is also sought in order to make sure there is effective communication with parents whose first language is not English. Staff highly value the information shared by parents and understand this is crucial in helping them to get to know each child and their family in great detail. Equality of opportunity is a real strength and all children are welcome in the playgroup. Positive images are displayed around the setting and major celebrations from a variety of faiths and cultures are celebrated in playgroup. Staff are a valuable resource in this setting and they use their personal experiences to take time to find out and embrace other cultures and provide activities for children which reflect their home customs. Every key person knows their children exceptionally well and can clearly demonstrate how they are helping them to move forward and make excellent progress. Effective deployment of staff enable children of all ages to form secure emotional attachments.

The playgroup provides an excellent, highly inspiring environment where children can play and learn both indoors and outside. The resources indoors and outside are exceptionally well arranged and varied. Resources are plentiful and stored at low level to enable children to select and, therefore, become independent and active learners. Children confidently make their own decisions about whether to play inside or outside. They are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility, such as helping to cut up the fruit for snacktime or dry off the outdoor resources after the rain. This promotes development of children's independence skills and enhances their opportunities to make choices about their play.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are skilled in supporting children's behaviour and are adept at finding and implementing solutions to ensure that positive behaviour is supported and encouraged. Staff work with children on a one to one basis in order to support them when they are going through periods of change such as a new sibling or parental separation. Staff are beginning to introduce resources such as books to support emotional literacy although have yet to place more focus in using these opportunities to further support children's emotional well-being further. However children are very settled and learn how to share and take turns with older children often helping their peers to

complete tasks within their play. For example, during outside play an older child observed that a new child was waiting for a turn in the play car and allowed her to have her turn first. In group activities children often share resources readily with their friends. This shows that children have a responsible attitude towards working with others and is as a result of staff consistently reinforcing the concept of turn-taking. Children use all resources safely indoors and outside, showing an excellent regard for their welfare and that of others. As a result, children form very positive relationships with both adults and their peers, working happily alongside each other.

Children's health and well-being are given high priority. There is a stringent and robustly applied medication and accident policy. Care details for children, such as regarding food allergies and intolerances, are available to all staff to protect children's health. Staff encourage children to develop an understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Children enjoy very nutritious, healthy snacks which they prepare for themselves at snacktime. Children take part in planting and growing activities, cooking and baking. This helps them understand about the food cycle and broadens their experiences regarding different types of food and how it is prepared before they eat it. Whenever possible, staff support children to develop independence, such as reminding them to get a tissue for their nose, dispose of it in a bin and then wash their hands. Children are physically active and have tremendous fun in the outdoor areas all year round. They are extensive opportunities for them to climb, balance and negotiate obstacles in their play. The playgroup has an extensive range of policies and procedures to protect children's welfare and support their physical and emotional well-being.

Transitions from the playgroup to the school are smoothly managed due to exceptionally close partnership working, including passing on detailed information about children's progress. Staff from the host school and other local schools visit to observe children before they transfer into full-time education. Additionally, the playgroup regularly organises information exchanges with staff in reception class, in order to plan and provide more challenging work for children who show an aptitude for an area of learning, such as mathematics. This helps children who transfer on to the school to be familiar with the staff and helps to maintain children's emotional well-being when they join reception.

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

Safeguarding procedures are secure. Highly comprehensive systems are in place for recruitment of staff, along with induction of new staff, trainees and apprentices, in order to protect children. All staff are checked thoroughly before being employed and complete yearly declaration forms for both criminal records and health. Any concerns relating to staff conduct are immediately acted upon and assessed to ensure that all staff working with the children are of a high calibre and are suitable. Staff receive regular updated training in safeguarding and have an excellent understanding of procedures so that they can manage any concerns they may have about a child's welfare. Designated staff are responsible for leading safeguarding and health and safety, so that roles and responsibilities are clear. Risk assessments and safety checks are robust and regularly

reviewed so that children can move safely and freely in the indoor and outdoor environment. All documentation related to safeguarding and welfare requirements are completed to an exemplary standard to support the safe and effective running of the playgroup.

Leadership is inspirational and the robust process of self-evaluation is extensive and well-documented. It highlights the strong emphasis on maintaining high levels of achievement for all children and focuses on the impact of teaching on children's learning. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified and targeted development plans are in place to secure continuous improvement. This includes the ongoing development of the outdoor environment and also revisions to the induction and recruitment policies. The manager is very hands on and supportive of all staff. Systems for staff performance management and identifying training needs are highly effective in supporting them to perform to the very best of their capabilities. This is achieved through high quality professional supervision, appraisals, continual reviews and extensive monitoring of practice. Peer observations are consistently undertaken to help staff to share their knowledge and expertise and learn from each other, which ultimately enhances the quality of teaching and learning. The manager encourages staff to reach their full potential and take on additional responsibilities within the playgroup. This helps to maintain consistently outstanding and precise planning for children's learning. Additionally, the playgroup has frequent discussion with the host school, in order to exchange strong practice that benefits both settings and supports continuity when children transfer to full-time school.

The playgroup has a very strong commitment to providing first-hand learning experiences for children, in order to motivate them in their learning. There is an exemplary approach to evaluating the learning environment in order to ensure that children are provided with a wealth of fully accessible resources. This supports them to make independent choices about what to play with. Rigorous monitoring of observations, assessments and planning by the manager ensures children continue to make progress in all areas of learning. Data gathered from individual progress trackers of all children in the nursery is collated to ensure that any gaps in particular areas of learning are quickly identified. Interventions are sought at the early stages for groups of children at risk of falling behind their peers or achieving below their expected level of development. Staff subsequently adapt their planning to incorporate further activities to support those children and the areas of learning identified. As a result, children's individual needs are consistently met effectively through early involvement of relevant external professionals and agencies.

Partnership with parents is exceptional. Parents are wholly valued and their views are sought and respected. Parents are extremely happy with the nursery and comments received are very positive. Information exchange between the playgroup and parents is a successful and on-going process, with parents feeling very well informed about their children's progress and welfare. The playgroup displays a broad range of information about local services and amenities for families, as well as information about the Early Years Foundation Stage and the current topics and themes that children are learning about in the playgroup. Regular updates on children's progress through verbal and written routes mean that parents are exceptionally well informed about their children's development. The playgroup staff are flexible and uses methods of communication preferred by parents that meet their needs, including the use of staff members who act as

translators. Children's views about activities are also important to staff and their ideas are also taken into account when planning first-hand learning experiences. This helps children to see that their views are valued, developing their sense of self-worth. Excellent partnerships with other professionals involved with the children, such as speech and language therapists, helps them to reach their development goals. Above all, children thoroughly enjoy the time they spend in this playgroup and the skills they learn help them to prepare them for school readiness and lay firm foundations for the future.

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	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	116827
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	963068
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	31
Name of provider	Crescent Under 5's Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	07/11/2013
Telephone number	0118 901 0012

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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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