

Sparrows Playgroup

St. Peter & St. Paul, High Street, West Mersea, COLCHESTER, CO5 8QD

Inspection date

13/10/2014

Previous inspection date

09/02/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

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| 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 well-protected from harm as practitioners demonstrate good knowledge of safeguarding procedures. Clear written safeguarding policies are regularly updated and shared with parents. Practitioners effectively risk assess the premises to ensure that children play and learn in a safe and secure environment.
- The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners understand how children learn and provide a wide range of planned and freely-chosen play opportunities to enhance children's development across all areas of learning.
- Children are settled, comfortable and relaxed in the playgroup environment. They form close and caring relationships with their key-person and the other adults caring for them.
- Partnerships with parents and others are strong. Clear ongoing communication between practitioners and parents ensure that parents are able to play an active role in their children's early education.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities for children to make free choices about whether they learn indoors or outdoors are not fully maximised, for example, the outdoor area is used less often in inclement weather.

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 had a tour of the playgroup.
- The inspector observed play and learning activities and spoke to children and staff in the indoor environment.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and looked at and discussed a range of policies, procedures and documentation.
- The inspector looked at evidence of the suitability checks used to assess all adults who work with the children and viewed a range of certificates and evidence of practitioners' qualifications.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to at the time of the inspection.

Inspector

Lynn Hughes

Full report

Information about the setting

Sparrows Playgroup was registered in 2011 on the Early Years Register and is managed by a committee. It is located within the in West Mersea area of Colchester in Essex. It serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The playgroup employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and above. The playgroup opens Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 11.45am on Monday and Friday and from 9am until 2.45pm on Tuesday and Thursday. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 24 children attending who are in the early years age group. The playgroup provides funded early education for 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:

- extend the opportunities for children to experience learning in the outdoor environment in all kinds of weathers, for example, through the provision of protective clothing, to enable them to explore puddles, mud, wind, rain and snow.

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup. They actively participate in a wide and exciting range of learning opportunities, tailored to meet their individual learning needs and requirements. Practitioners understand how children learn and provide an exciting educational programme, which is based on children learning through play. Key-persons observe the children in their care and use their observations to identify children's next steps in learning. The planning is completed by the team of practitioners weekly and includes focussed activities for specific children as well as general activities which the practitioners know all children will enjoy. Practitioners are skilful at identifying and following children's interests and communicate effectively with parents to ensure they remain well-informed of changes to the children's interests, home life or capabilities. Key-persons use effective systems for assessing children's progress and encourage parents to play an active role in this process. Development records show that all children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make secure progress in their learning.

Children are keen, excited and motivated. They have fun exploring an interesting range of cardboard boxes and pop-up tents. They build towers with the boxes and use them as vehicles. Practitioners watch, make suggestions where required and intervene to introduce

and extend children's language skills. They also understand that children sometimes need to guide their own learning and provide them with the space in which to do so. Children's language and communication skills are proficiently promoted by practitioners speaking to children clearly and encouraging them to think critically about what they are doing. Children develop physical skills when they enthusiastically participate in a fruit cutting activity. Practitioners introduce the whole fruits to them during the circle time and follow this learning with a story about different types of fruit. The activity is based around children making faces from their cut fruit, which prompts a discussion about what features of the face they could use each type of fruit for. For example, children excitedly tell practitioners that they could use grapes for eyes and bananas for a smiley mouth. Children carefully cut their fruit using safety knives and arrange their fruit to create a face. Once completed or sometimes before, they enjoy eating the fruit and talk about what it tastes like.

The wide range of resources and activities available to children enable them to develop skills across all seven areas of learning. They also prepare them well for their next stages of learning. For example, during their playgroup life, children are provided with good opportunities to develop independence skills. They learn to sit together in a group for circle and story time and to develop good listening skills. Children practise putting their coats and shoes on when they prepare to play outside and when they get ready to go home at the end of the playgroup session.

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

Children are happy, confident and settled in the playgroup environment. They move around the provision with ease, accessing the wide range of resources and learning opportunities available to them. Children form good relationships with the practitioners and especially with their key-person. Practitioners are very knowledgeable about the children in their care and tailor both their learning and care needs to meet each child's individual requirements. Children understand the playgroup's rules and boundaries, as practitioner gently remind them how to walk carefully indoors, how to place their chairs back under the table and how to be considerate of each other's feelings. Practitioners act as good role models for children, speaking to them in a caring and kind way and valuing their contribution to discussions and ideas. For example, children listening to an audio tape of a well-known children's story, want to develop this to enable them to act out the story. A practitioner listens to their requests and facilitates their ideas, enabling them to become the characters of the story and to interpret it in their own way.

Children play in a clean and well-organised environment. Practitioners present an exciting range of resources and equipment each morning, based on their knowledge of the individual children attending. For example, the role play area is regularly changed and adapted to follow the current topic or to follow children's ideas and interests. Practitioners focus their attention on role play as they have some children who are extremely imaginative and creative. The role play environment enables those children to develop skills across all seven areas of learning, for example, when covering a topic on people who help us it is used as a doctors surgery, a fire station or a post office. Effective use of appropriate equipment and resources enables children to become thoroughly engrossed in

their play and to express their ideas with their peers. Practitioners are always on hand to support children's use of the equipment.

Children learn about keeping healthy and safe, as practitioners remind them of the importance of good hygiene practices. For example, before cutting up fruit for a planned activity, children are reminded to wash their hands using the portable hand-washing unit presented close to the activity table. Children enjoy healthy snacks during the playgroup session and remain well-hydrated as they independently access fresh drinking water. Children's individual health needs are effectively met by key-persons working closely with parents to establish clear knowledge of the children's needs and requirements. For example, children with intolerances to various foods have their food kept separate in plastic containers in the playgroup kitchen. Children enjoy keeping fit and active when they play in the playgroup garden. They make good use of a wide range of physical play resources and generally play outdoors each day. However, practitioners do not currently maximise opportunities for children to play outdoors throughout the year and in different types of weather. This inhibits children's exploration of wind, mud, puddles, rain and snow.

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

Children are effectively protected from harm as practitioners and managers demonstrate a secure knowledge of how to safeguard children. Practitioners regularly update their safeguarding knowledge through appropriate training. The designated person for safeguarding children who holds responsibility for dealing with all safeguarding concerns has completed a relevant training course. All adults working with children are appropriately vetted and proof of the checks used to assess their suitability are available for inspection. Visitors to the playgroup are effectively monitored. Children play and learn in a safe and secure environment, as practitioners effectively risk assess the environment. Practitioners conduct daily safety checks each morning, to ensure that the premises are free from hazards indoors and outdoors.

The playgroup is a long-established early years provision, which has operated in the area for many years. The current team of practitioners have worked together for a number of years and demonstrate a firm commitment to continuing to provide good quality childcare in this small village community. The team of practitioners are managed and supported by a voluntary committee. The manager supervises and oversees the day to day operation of the playgroup, which includes close monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. She works alongside the other practitioners, providing her with opportunities to observe practice and to review the consistency of the educational provision for children. Practitioners demonstrate secure knowledge of how children learn and use their expertise to provide an educational programme that is challenging and stimulating for all children. The manager frequently reviews all children's learning through purposeful discussions with the key persons. They evaluate the success of the educational programme and use the key person's observations and assessments to identify any gaps in the provision for children's learning. Practitioners, managers and parents are involved in the playgroup's self-evaluation process and help to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Recent

improvements have resulted in the playgroup updating some of its resources and reviewing the way in which children's progress is recorded. Practitioners demonstrate a commitment to further enhancing their knowledge and expertise through appropriate training courses and use their newfound understanding within the playgroup. For example, a recent course on working with children who are on the autistic spectrum, has provided practitioners with a greater insight into this condition and how to identify the needs of children who may show signs of being on the spectrum.

Partnerships with parents are secure. Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection express their confidence in the practitioners and comment on their friendliness. They feel their children make good progress because practitioners know them well and tailor learning to meet their individual needs and learning styles. Practitioners work well with the local school and other early years settings, which children attend. They liaise effectively with the key-persons from other provisions, when children attend both settings, to complement the learning that takes place in all aspects of children's lives.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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 | | There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration. |
| Not met | | There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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

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| Unique reference number | EY429923 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 874538 |
| Type of provision | |
| Registration category | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Age range of children | 0 - 5 |
| Total number of places | 24 |
| Number of children on roll | 24 |
| Name of provider | Sparrows Committee |
| Date of previous inspection | 09/02/2012 |
| Telephone number | 01206 384 380 |

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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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