

Crescent Playgroup (The)

St.Lukes Church Hall, The Crescent,Bricket Wood, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL2 3NF

Inspection date

21/11/2014

Previous inspection date

18/10/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

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

- Staff implement the learning and development requirements well. From the start they observe children's skills and plan purposeful activities across the seven areas of learning to support their progress. Therefore, teaching is good and children develop well.
- Staff organise the learning environment so children are able to independently initiate play. They provide children with effective adult-led activities that meet their learning styles and promote their school readiness.
- Staff teach children about healthy lifestyles. They provide them with nutritious snacks, daily exercise and consistent support on how to independently manage their personal needs and hygiene.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Staff participate in child protection training and are very secure in their knowledge of how to keep children safe and protected.
- Staff participate in induction, supervision meetings and appraisals. They benefit from regular team meetings and training to continuously improve their practice.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not regularly obtain information from parents about their children's home learning. Therefore, children do not fully benefit from the continuity of support for their learning between home and the playgroup.

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

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities and children at play throughout the inspection. She conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector interacted with children and spoke with staff during the inspection.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation, including policies, the self-evaluation form, evidence of the staff's suitability and safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector looked at children's assessments and planning records
- The inspector had a tour of both the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- The inspector sought parents' views through discussions on the day of the inspection and through written feedback in questionnaires.

Inspector

Karinna Hemerling

Full report

Information about the setting

The Crescent Playgroup was registered in 1993 and is on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from the St Luke's Church Hall in Bricket Wood and uses the main playroom, kitchen and toilet facilities. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The playgroup supports children who speak English as an additional language. It opens Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am to 11.45am on Mondays, 9.15am to 12.15pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and 9.15am to 2.30pm on Fridays. There are currently 26 children on roll in the early years age group. All children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. There are currently seven members of staff working directly with children, six of whom are qualified at levels 2 and 3. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- implement the new procedures in place to ensure staff regularly obtain information from parents about children's learning at home, in order to maximise the continuous support for their learning between home and the playgroup.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements. They obtain information from parents about their children's skills on entry and observe them during first weeks to identify their starting points. Staff regularly observe children's skills and interests and plan purposeful activities to support their progress. They effectively link children's interests to their individual planning to ensure they engage in activities with interest. For example, children are interested in playing with cars. Staff plan activities for them to develop skills across the seven areas of learning using the 'car' theme. Children make cardboard vehicles, count cars and separate them in groups of different colours. Staff encourage children to develop their interest in activities by bringing cars to the drawing table, painting, sand pit and water tray. Children learn about science as they create ramps using pipes and push their cars up and down through them. Staff effectively conduct the progress check for children aged two and three years. They evaluate children's skills and recognise the stages of their development, in order to identify their emerging needs and provide them with appropriate support. Staff care for a number of children who speak English as an additional language and effectively promote their learning. They work with parents to create individualised strategies to promote children's language acquisition. For example, parents share key words in their home language and

staff share with them specific vocabulary they teach to children in English. Staff engage parents in celebrating festivals, such as St. Patrick's Day, Diwali and Chinese New Year. They are very inclusive and effectively adapt their approach to meet the needs of children. Staff keep records of children's development in their learning journals, where they consistently record information about their learning and progress. They maintain detailed assessments and comprehensive planning routines for all children. Therefore, children make good progress from their starting points.

Teaching is good because staff effectively provide children with opportunities to learn and develop skills in the seven areas of learning. They skilfully organise the learning environment with a variety of resources and toys for children to independently initiate and lead their play. Staff promote a good range of direct teaching activities that are purposefully planned to teach children skills and prepare them for the next stage of their learning. Staff support children in being independent. For example, before going to the garden, children learn to take off their indoor shoes and put on their wellington boots and jackets. Staff teach children important literacy skills throughout their time at the playgroup. For example, children self-register as they arrive at the playgroup and as they sit down for their snack. Staff organise a daily group discussion time and children discuss their feelings, sing and talk about the weather and activities of the day. They plan interesting and challenging activities that fully engage children's interest. For example, children play in the sand pit and use different funnels and containers. Staff engage children in reflecting on how much sand they need to fill up a container. Children try different ways of using the funnels and persist on successfully using them to accurately transfer the sand into containers. Children demonstrate the characteristics of effectively learning as they explore, play and learn. Staff allow children time to play and they extend their play across all the areas available to them at the playgroup. Staff effectively support children's different learning styles and provide them with a variety of experiences that support them to develop the necessary skills to ensure their readiness for school.

The initial partnership with parents positively contributes to children's early assessments and planning. For example, staff ensure children have access to resources and activities that their parents identify as their interests on entry. Staff maintain regular discussions with parents about children's well-being and interests. However, they do not regularly obtain information from parents about their children's ongoing learning at home. Therefore, the continuity of support for their learning between home and the playgroup is not maximised. Staff provide children with good support and actively contribute to their learning because they understand children's needs, interests and stages of learning and development.

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

Children settle well. They are confident, comfortable and happy at the playgroup. Staff provide children with a welcoming environment, where they cooperatively play and contently participate in activities and routines. Staff promote a flexible approach to the settling-in sessions and organise them according to the needs of individual children. They encourage parents to stay and play with their children until they are comfortable to stay on their own. Staff gather all the relevant information from parents about their children's

routines and care needs prior to their starting date. They tailor the playgroup routines to meet the needs of children. For example, staff set up the snack table and inform the children when it is served. Children choose when they would like to have their snacks. The key-person system is effectively implemented and positively impacts on children's well-being. For example, key staff actively participate in welcoming children and parents into the playgroup. They form strong bonds with their key children and demonstrate a great understanding of their individual needs and preferences. All staff work together in providing children with a safe environment to play and learn. Children benefit from attentive staff and an individualised approach to their personal needs.

Children behave well and play with their peers in harmony. Staff are good role models of positive behaviour and regularly praise children to motivate them to behave well. During the daily group discussion, they teach children about what is right and wrong and reinforce the playgroup rules to ensure children understand their boundaries. Staff teach children to respect their peers and their environment and consistently emphasise good manners. Staff work with parents to monitor and support children's emotional development. For example, when children demonstrate challenging behaviour, staff immediately engage parents in observing and identifying strategies to support their children's emotional well-being at the playgroup. Staff set up the learning environment on a daily basis and provide children with a wide variety of age-appropriate resources and equipment. Children freely explore activities, take decisions, make choices and actively participate in organising the play area. They learn important social skills as they have fun and play. Staff closely monitor how children use the playroom and regularly review the areas to interest and challenge children.

Staff effectively support children to learn about healthy living. They teach children how to manage and communicate their personal and hygiene needs. For example, children freely access paper tissues to wipe their noses and staff remind them to wash their hands afterwards. They independently wash, rinse and dry their hands. Children are confident and display a sense of trust towards staff. They approach adults when they need to use the toilet, which is located outside the playroom. Staff take children to the toilet and effectively support their independence by allowing them to take care of their personal needs according to their age. Staff provide children with healthy snacks and each week a different member of staff is responsible for snack time. They organise the menus, share them with parents and ensure children are provided with nutritious options. This strategy effectively ensures children are provided with good opportunities to try different food and flavours. Staff organise daily opportunities for children to enjoy fresh air and play outside. They plan daily exercise sessions for children, such as music sessions, when children learn the importance of being healthy and keeping fit. Staff effectively teach children about their personal safety and support them in learning to take risks. For example, children explore different playground equipment outdoors, such as slides, climbing frames and riding toys. They are very eager and confidently challenge their physical skills. Children learn to manage their space and to avoid obstacles as they explore the outdoor environment. They effectively listen to instructions and share their thoughts with staff while playing. For example, staff tell children to use their 'walking feet' indoors and children tell each other that they may only run outside. Staff maintain links with local schools and include a 'school' theme before the end of the summer term. They invite school teachers to visit the children at the playgroup so they can get to know children and learn from staff about their

needs. Therefore, staff effectively support children's emotional well-being when they move on to school.

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

The safeguarding and welfare requirements are effectively implemented in practice. The manager prepares a thorough induction for parents and staff to ensure that they are aware of the procedures to maintain the good management of the playgroup. She regularly reviews policies and maintains well-documented practice, in line with current legislation, to ensure children's safety. The manager promotes a safe recruitment procedure and maintains records of evidence of the staff's suitability and qualifications. Staff suitability is reviewed regularly to ensure children are cared for and educated by competent adults. Staff benefit from regular training and hold first-aid, safeguarding and food hygiene certificates. They participate in training to enhance their knowledge and to provide children with good quality teaching and learning. Staff conduct daily risk checks to ensure children are able to safely explore all areas available to them. The manager effectively deploys staff to ensure they are able to supervise, monitor and attend to children's needs at all times. For example, first aiders are always present. The manager's effective organisation of the playgroup allows staff to have designated time for planning and regular team meetings to discuss practice. She delegates important responsibilities amongst staff, for example, they are trained to be safeguarding and special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinators. Designated members of staff provide great support for other staff, children and parents. Staff display good knowledge with regard to the steps to take should they become concerned about children's welfare. They have a secure understanding of child protection procedures and know where to go if they are concerned about children in their care. Staff display posters with relevant contact numbers and safeguarding children services in the area. They maintain a close relationship with the local authority and maintain accurate referral procedures. Staff are experienced and confident in their practice. Their priority is to safeguard children and to ensure they achieve to their full potential.

The manager regularly monitors the quality of teaching and learning at the playgroup. She regularly checks children's learning journals and mentors key staff in assessing and planning for their key children. The management team supports staff in tracking their key children's progress and every term they conduct an overall tracking of all children's development to reflect on the effectiveness of practice. Staff have a good understanding of how to identify children's needs and next steps of learning. They provide children with prompt support through effective teaching. There are good links with local children's centres and outside professionals to support the needs of children.

Staff promote an open-door policy for parents, who are welcome to participate in their children's sessions. They provide regular opportunities for parents to join the activities and events at the playgroup. For example, staff invite parents for consultation days and cultural festivals, such as Christmas, when staff, children and parents sing festive songs together. Most aspects of the partnerships with parents are effectively promoted and staff develop strong relationships with them. The manager effectively engages staff, parents

and local authorities in reflecting on practice. For example, parents complete regular questionnaires to share their expectations and suggestions. The manager and staff ensure parents' input is taken into consideration in practice. For example, parents recently noticed that during drop-off time the main door to the building is left open. The nursery manager and staff promptly acted on their concern and delegated a member of staff to greet parents at the entrance door and ensure the door is closed for further security. The manager regularly reviews the Ofsted self-evaluation form and maintains her own action plans to continuously improve practice. There are effective links with the local authority early years advisory team, who the manager works with to evaluate the services provided to children. Staff are knowledgeable and effectively implement the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage in practice. Therefore, children are safe and benefit from good care and education.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

The requirements for the voluntary 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. 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

Unique reference number	123582
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	874759
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	26
Name of provider	Crescent Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	18/10/2010
Telephone number	07879 850713

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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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