

Cottage Pre-School Group

Christie Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1PL



Inspection date

6 March 2015

Previous inspection date

30 September 2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Requires improvement	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Requires improvement	3
The setting does not meet legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- Staff do not gather information on children's development and achievements from parents when children first enter the setting, or use it to help clearly identify the children's starting points in learning. Consequently, staff are unable to build on children's starting points immediately.
- The planning of large group activities does not effectively meet children's individual needs. Therefore, children are not always fully engaged and interested.
- Systems to monitor staff performance are not fully effective. Therefore, the quality of teaching is variable.
- There is not always enough information available to parents to help them understand the Early Years Foundation Stage and how this supports their children's learning and development.

It has the following strengths

- Staff are interested in children and use questions to extend conversations and critical thinking skills. As a result, children are developing good communication skills.
- Staff work effectively with other agencies in supporting the children with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities, and children learning English as an additional language. This makes a good contribution to meeting children's learning and development.
- Children develop a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle as they choose when they wish to eat snacks and play outside.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure information regarding children's starting points is gathered to enable staff to effectively build on and extend children's knowledge and skills
- improve the planning for group activities to enable all children to fully participate and to effectively meet their individual learning needs
- improve the monitoring systems further to enhance staff practice and continually improve children's outcomes.

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

- review the range of information available to parents to increase their awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector examined a range of documentation, including a sample of policies and procedures, including safeguarding.
- The inspector held ongoing discussions with the staff, the manager and children throughout the inspection, including discussions about safeguarding.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents spoken to on the day.
- The inspector observed staff interactions with children inside and outside.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Jacqueline Walter

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This requires improvement

The staff make regular observations of children. However, they do not gather information on children's development and achievements from parents when children first enter the pre-school. This means staff are not able to clearly identify the children's starting points in learning. Consequently, they are initially restricted in building upon children's learning. Staff challenge children to explore movement in different ways using balancing equipment. This helps children to gain confidence and skills in their physical development. However, the planning of large group activities does not effectively meet children's individual needs. For example, during a story time session to develop children's understanding of numbers, staff did not consistently support the younger children to identify and count the numbers. In addition, when more able children expressed interest about the characteristics of the book, staff did not respond appropriately. Consequently, some children became bored and disengaged.

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

Staff have created an effective key person system, which promotes children's confidence and security. Settling-in sessions for children and parents successfully meet individual needs, giving good support for children's start at the pre-school. Consequently, children are developing secure emotional bonds. Staff provide a well-organised, child-friendly environment that provides lots of opportunities for independence. Staff have effective strategies to promote safety and help children manage their behaviour. They are polite and courteous and use lots of praise for both effort and achievement. This encourages children to be motivated and builds their self-esteem.

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

The provider does not fully understand the learning and development requirements. The weaknesses in the range of information collected from parents when children start means that staff are unable to plan effectively to support children's progress from the start. The management has some evaluation strategies to help identify weaknesses and set targets for improvements. However, weaknesses in the monitoring of the staff's practice have not been identified. As a result, the variations in the quality of teaching limit improvement in the outcomes for children. Staff work in partnership with parents, they encourage them to come into the pre-school and look at children's learning journals. However, although staff speak to parents daily, parents are not always fully informed about the Early Years Foundation Stage and how it supports their children's learning because written information is not always readily available.

Setting details

Unique reference number	109404
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	835822
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	30
Name of provider	Friends of the Cottage Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	30 September 2009
Telephone number	01273 476177

Cottage Pre-School Group registered in 1990. It operates from a hall in St. Mary's Social Centre in Lewes, East Sussex. It is open during term time on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9am to 3pm and on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9am to 12pm. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years of age. The provision employs five members of staff. Of these, three members of staff, including the manager hold a recognised childcare qualification.

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.

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