

Early Days Playgroup

Oughtonhead School, Mattocke Road, HITCHIN, Hertfordshire, SG5 2NZ



Inspection date

23 March 2015

Previous inspection date

29 March 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Requires improvement	3
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:

- The provider does not fully implement the Early Years Foundation Stage. Ofsted has not been informed of changes to the committee in a timely manner.
- Staff do not always address identified risks swiftly enough to fully assure children's safety.
- During large group activities, staff are not consistently mindful of children's differing abilities. They do not always provide the appropriate level of challenge for each child's individual needs to enable them to make the best possible progress.
- The provider does not routinely enable staff to attend training courses in order to extend their good knowledge of how children learn.

It has the following strengths

- Staff have built strong partnerships with parents. They put strategies in place to support the family as a whole, in order to improve outcomes for the children. The provider has implemented a library system and home learning kits, and encourages parents to borrow these to further promote children's learning.
- Children are made to feel important and loved by the very caring and enthusiastic staff. They are confident and eagerly share their thoughts and feelings with others.
- Staff work collaboratively with professionals from other settings and they meet regularly to discuss children's individual needs. Therefore, staff effectively promote good continuity of learning and care.
- Staff complete clear and precise assessments of children's learning and regularly share these with parents. They plan well for children's next steps, in order to support them to make good progress.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure that identified risks are swiftly minimised or removed, in order to consistently protect children's safety.

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

- enhance the good quality teaching during large group activities, such as circle time, and target the specific learning needs of each child's varying abilities, in order to provide the appropriate level of challenge to support children to make even better progress
- extend the good knowledge of staff, for example, by enabling them to regularly access available training, in order to enhance the quality of their teaching and support children to make the best progress in their learning.

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- ensure that the premises, including the outdoor area, are safe and suitable for childcare (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that all necessary measures are taken to minimise any risks to the health and safety of children (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- inform Ofsted of the appointment of new management committee members as soon as possible, but always within 14 working days (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that the premises, including the outdoor area, are safe and suitable for childcare (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that all necessary measures are taken to minimise any risks to the health and safety of children (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about this provider.
- The inspector observed children taking part in a range of activities, and spoke with the staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager and held a meeting with her.
- The inspector checked evidence of Disclosure and Barring Service checks and suitability, qualifications and training of staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies, procedures and children's assessments.
- The inspector spoke to a small sample of parents and has taken account of their views.

Inspector

Katherine Hurst

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

The quality of teaching is generally good and children make consistent progress in their learning. Staff engage children actively in the current topic of growing. They talk to them about what elements their plants need to grow. Children are excited when staff produce magnifying glasses and binoculars to explore the garden with. This helps children to learn about the world they live in. Staff engage children in conversations to enhance their speaking skills and regularly read stories to them. However, staff deliver circle time in large groups and do not always fully consider children's varying abilities. For example, for younger children, the discussions are occasionally too complex. The manager regularly monitors children's progress. She meets with staff to review children's assessments and identify any gaps in their learning. Together they plan activities that support all children, including those who have additional needs, to develop the skills they require for future learning and eventually, full time school.

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

Staff are not always alert to potential risks in the environment. The provider is aware of the recent damage to the garden shed and this is due to be repaired. However, staff have not been proactive enough in restricting children's access to this area to fully assure their safety. Nevertheless, children are very happy at the playgroup and enjoy their time there. Staff support new children to settle in with confidence and spend time playing with them to nurture the relationship. Staff promote children's healthy lifestyles. For example, they encourage parents to provide nutritious food in children's lunchboxes. Children enjoy daily opportunities to play outside in the fresh air. There is a range of resources that helps children to develop their physical skills. The provider identifies that the garden is in need of refurbishing and there are plans in place to develop this. Staff are currently fundraising to develop the outdoor area, in order to enhance the learning experiences for children.

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

The provider has not informed Ofsted of changes to members of the management committee in the required time frame. They have, however, ensured that all staff and committee members have Disclosure and Barring Service checks completed, and these have recently been updated. The manager and staff have appropriate knowledge of child protection issues. They are aware of the signs and symptoms that they need to be vigilant of and there are effective systems in place to report their concerns. This protects children's welfare. The provider supervises staff performance and gives them constructive feedback about how they can improve. Staff are well qualified and this has a positive impact on children's learning. However, due to current staffing constraints, the provider does not make the best use of available training courses to enable staff to extend their knowledge even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	146754
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1009114
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	67
Name of provider	Early Days Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	29 March 2011
Telephone number	01462 437643

Early Days Playgroup was registered in 2002. The setting employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, all staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including one with a degree in Early Years. The setting opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 3.15pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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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