

# Inspection of Fittleworth & District Playgroup

School Lane, Fittleworth, Nr Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1JB

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Inspection date: 1 December 2022

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## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Inadequate**

The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Good

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is inadequate**

Children's safety and welfare are compromised at the playgroup. Staff are not aware of the correct person to contact should they have concerns about an adult working with children. This is because leaders are unclear of their roles and responsibilities. Despite this significant weakness, children are settled and happy at the playgroup. They demonstrate meaningful relationships with staff, who know them well and excitedly greet them at the beginning of the day.

Children receive support in developing some independence skills; for example, as they self-register their attendance and hang their own bags and coats up.

Children enjoy a range of activities that the manager has planned with her clear knowledge of what she wants children to learn. They participate in activities from external providers, such as dance, physical education and music, which broadens their learning and experiences.

At times, some staff give children messages about behavioural expectations, such as not to run inside. However, this is not consistent, and other staff ignore it. Children often get out lots of books, toys and equipment and are not encouraged to understand why they should be tidied away after they have been played with. This happens increasingly throughout the morning, and the floor becomes unnecessarily cluttered. As a result, staff trying to move quickly across the room, to attend to children, for example, cannot do so safely without multiple trip hazards.

## **What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?**

- The nominated individual does not fulfil her role. Leaders are unorganised and frequently fail to make notifications about significant individuals to Ofsted. They acknowledge the ongoing pressures the playgroup is under but are fully aware of the ongoing breaches that should have been rectified. For example, individuals become involved with the playgroup without having their suitability checked as outlined in the statutory requirements. Staff think these persons are the playgroup leaders and therefore share information with them. This significantly compromises children's welfare and safety.
- Staff know and understand the playgroup mobile phone policy, which requires no phones to be permitted in the areas where children are playing and learning. However, when parents come into the playgroup for extended periods, they are not always reminded of this. As a result, parents freely use their phones while playing on the floor with children. Staff do not take swift and appropriate action to halt this. Important safeguarding policies are not consistently followed to safeguard children.
- The special educational needs coordinator has a good knowledge of how to

identify and support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She works with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to ensure that children are supported as much as possible in furthering their learning.

- Children participate in a range of different activities that follow their interests and engage them for short periods. They delightfully run, jump, slide and balance in the exciting outdoor spaces. This self-initiated play allows them to grow their physical skills and manage risks for themselves. However, staff are not always clear on what their key children are working towards or how to support them. Consequently, intentional learning opportunities throughout the day are limited, and children are not always supported in achieving the very best outcomes.
- When children are playing imaginatively in the outdoor mud kitchen, staff join in to offer some new language and fun conversations, building on children's vocabulary. For example, children enjoy putting mud cupcakes in the pretend oven, and staff talk about the immune-boosting benefits of blueberries as they make pretend medicines.
- Parents share that they appreciate the pictures and updates they receive about their child. They know who their child's key worker is and find the whole staff team friendly and approachable. However, parents are not fully aware of what children are working towards and therefore cannot support this learning at home.
- Expectations of children's behaviour are not always applied consistently and fairly. For example, at the snack table, some children are encouraged to ask politely before they leave the table. However, other staff appear rushed and allow children to come and go as they please. As a result, behavioural expectations are unclear, and experiences are varied. Children do not always understand rules or follow them.
- Babies have their own designated space for play and care. However, when staff try to facilitate free-flow access to the outdoor area, babies and young children's needs cannot be consistently met. This is because some of them want to stay inside, but staff are not deployed effectively to support this. As a result, babies become upset, and staff are overwhelmed.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The leaders of the playgroup fail to ensure the safety and welfare of children. Despite knowing that they are not meeting requirements, they continue to not take the necessary actions. Leaders allow individuals who have not had their suitability checked to have significant involvement in the playgroup. Through this weakness, the manager has not equipped staff with the correct information they need to keep children safe. Although some staff know the appropriate process to follow should they be concerned about a child or an adult working with children, they often share that they would make their initial report to a person who is not connected to the playgroup registration. This puts children at risk.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

**The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.**

**We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:**

	Due date
ensure that all committee members undergo checks with Ofsted to ensure they are suitable to fulfil their roles and responsibilities	05/01/2023
ensure the nominated individual improves their understanding of the requirement to notify Ofsted of any changes to the committee members	05/01/2023
ensure all staff receive training that improves their understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures, including how to report any concerns	05/01/2023
ensure staff understand and implement the mobile phone policy and procedure at all times	05/01/2023
improve staff deployment in the outdoor play area to ensure children's individual needs are met at all times.	05/01/2023

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113489
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10263357
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	1 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	44
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	44
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Fittleworth and District Playgroup Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP522724
<b>Telephone number</b>	01798 865 777
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 April 2017

## Information about this early years setting

Fittleworth & District Playgroup registered in 1992. It is managed by a voluntary committee. The playgroup operates from premises next to the primary school in Fittleworth, near Pulborough, West Sussex. The playgroup is in receipt of funding for the provision of early years education for children aged two, three and four years. The playgroup is open Monday to Friday, during term time only, from 8am until 3.45pm. A team of eight staff work with the children. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications above level 3, including the manager, who is qualified to level 5.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Nicola Houston

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual and the manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation during lunchtime.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

We carried out this inspection 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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