

# Saplings Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 221814  
**Inspection date** 17/03/2009  
**Inspector** Lynn Lowery

**Setting address** Saplings Pre School Playgroup, Beechwood Avenue,  
Bottisham, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB25 9BE

**Telephone number** 01223 813226

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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## Description of the setting

Saplings Pre-school Playgroup is run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It opened in its present location in 1995 and operates from a single storey building situated in the grounds of Bottisham Primary School in Cambridgeshire. It has good links with the nursery at the school. It is accessible to children and adults with disabilities via a ramp. A maximum of 17 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday, except Wednesdays, from 09.15 to 11.45 during term times only. It opens on Wednesday mornings for children between the ages of two and two and a half years who are accompanied by their parents or carers. The pre-school also opens for afternoon sessions between 12.45 and 15.15 when there are sufficient children on roll. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 24 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language. It is on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are four suitably qualified members of staff.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Provision at Saplings Pre-school Playgroup is satisfactory. The setting meets the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage satisfactorily. Staff provide a safe, supportive and interesting learning environment which means children come in enthusiastically and are reluctant to leave. Children are happy here and develop good social skills as they take part in a wide range of enjoyable activities. The playgroup is inclusive and provides good support for children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language. Staff have accurately evaluated the quality of provision and regularly attend courses. As a result there is good capacity for continuous improvement.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve planning so that it identifies what it is children of different ages and abilities are expected to learn
- increase the opportunities for children to develop information, communication and technology skills
- extend the range of activities which develop communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills, in a fun way.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Very good working relationships between staff, parents and children result in a strong sense of 'teamwork' that underpins the success of this playgroup. Parents say they find the staff very friendly and approachable. They value the advice and support staff are willing to provide and feel they are kept well informed about their children's progress. They know what activities will be covered each week, but have yet to receive information about the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager, supported by a local authority adviser, has accurately evaluated the quality of provision and understands where improvements can be made. Staff willingly undertake additional training in order to improve provision and all the recommendations made at the last inspection, 18 months ago, have been addressed. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Risk assessments are regular and children are carefully supervised by staff who all hold appropriate first aid certificates. Links with the nursery on the site are developing well and children have opportunities to visit the nursery on a number of occasions before they transfer. For example, the joint picnic is a very popular occasion.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Weekly planning indicates that there is an interesting range of activities which ensure all six areas of learning are covered. However, although the playgroup is now including more opportunities for children to develop their language and mathematical skills, these are not always sufficiently challenging for the more able children and they make less progress than they could.

Learning takes place indoors and outdoors and there are good opportunities for children to choose from a selection of activities. Improved planning ensures that children's interests are taken into account when activities are planned. In addition, staff are assessing pupils conscientiously and identifying and providing for their next steps in learning. However, planning sheets do not specify the intended learning outcomes for each activity and it is not clear how expectations vary for children of different ages and abilities. Staff realise that if this was in place, it would help them assess children more accurately and ensure that all children were appropriately challenged.

Children are encouraged to be independent and enjoy selecting their own resources and activities. Social skills are well developed and children are generally polite and well behaved. Children happily take responsibility when given the chance. They tidy away very well, pour their own drinks at snack time and offer fruit to their friends. They quickly gain confidence and play happily together, taking turns and sharing. The atmosphere is calm and purposeful because children are engaged in their chosen activities.

Children enjoy listening to stories, singing songs and making mother's day cards. Painting is popular and during the inspection the children thoroughly enjoyed making up their own games as they explored and played in cardboard boxes of various sizes. Throughout, children are constantly engaged in conversation with

adults and this helps to develop their speaking and listening skills. There are opportunities to develop early reading and writing skills, but staff recognise the need to extend these, particularly in the light of the ideas gained at recent training sessions. Number rhymes are used to develop children's understanding of number, but opportunities to promote an understanding of simple mathematical terms, shapes and measures need to be included in activities both inside and out. There is a computer which the children use sometimes, but the range of programs is very limited and this restricts development of information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Outside, children get plenty of exercise as they run, climb, balance and ride on wheeled toys. They also learn about the environment as they plant and care for their bean seeds. They have the chance to play with sand and water and love playing with pasta in the sand tray, scooping it up and pouring it out using containers of various shapes and sizes. Children move around safely and sensibly and understand the importance of washing their hands after playing outside and visiting the toilet.

Children have 'key workers' who take particular responsibility for their welfare and learning needs and liaise well with parents. They conscientiously observe the children's achievements so they can be recorded and shared with parents, as well as identifying the next activities to help move the children on. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and their individual education plans are well written. External support is sought when appropriate.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	3
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

## **Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted**

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

### **Detail of the complaint/s**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.