

Southampton Opportunity Group at Hardmoor

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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 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.

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Description of the setting

Southampton (Hardmoor) Opportunity Group and crèche is a committee run group. It is a registered charity and opened in 2001. It occupies two rooms in the Hardmoor Early Years Centre in the Bassett area of Southampton. It serves the local and wider area. The setting specifically supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The setting also welcomes brothers and sisters of these children.

The setting is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Accommodation consists of a very large main playroom and another large room that includes a kitchen area. There is space for comfortable chairs and a quiet area for parents, for example, to enjoy advisory sessions with visiting professionals.

The playroom has its own toilet suite as well as a changing room. In addition, there is a multi-sensory room for children to explore light and sound. There are several secure enclosed outdoor areas including a sensory garden and extensive woodland walkways. These are shared with the nursery on site. The setting has excellent links with the nursery. The setting receives support from the Pre-School Learning Alliance. It does not receive funding.

The nursery is open each week during term time on Tuesdays from 1.00pm to 3.30pm and on Wednesdays from 9.15am to 11.45am.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. Of these, no more than 16 children may be under three years and no more than eight children under two years. There are currently 19 children under five years on roll.

The group employs three members of staff. Two, including the manager, have National Vocational Qualifications at level 3 or the equivalent with one member of staff studying for an Early Years foundation degree. The third has level 2. All are qualified to use the Makaton system of communication. In addition, three members of staff employed by the nursery on site regularly support and accompany children to the Opportunity Group sessions. One assistant has a teaching degree and is also a registered special needs nurse. Another has obtained a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 while the third member of staff is working towards level 3.

The crèche is a facility that may open to provide care for children when parents and carers attend training sessions at the centre.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The quality of provision is outstanding and partnerships with parents, outside agencies and the nursery on site are strong. The uniqueness of each child is fully considered by all staff. Excellent systems in place ensure children enjoy a very wide range of exciting and imaginative activities. All children make first rate

progress. The manager and staff have effectively addressed the issue from the previous inspection and capacity for continuous improvement is outstanding.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- identify a second key person to ensure that links with parents continue to be highly effective.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Self-evaluation is informal and very effective. The staff team meet weekly and discuss ways in which they can further improve the setting to meet the needs of the children, their parents and siblings. Planning includes opportunities for individual children to take the next steps in their learning that have been identified by the staff team. This very effective system impacts significantly on the children's progress which is excellent. The required policies and procedures, including safeguarding, are regularly reviewed and updated. Staff members are carefully vetted, alert to health and safety issues and have regular training. Children are well protected. The setting has no second key person to support children and parents when necessary. Resources are plentiful and easily accessible to support all the children. Equipment and accommodation are safe and suitable and used very efficiently to meet the planned goals in the children's development.

All members of staff fully respect the different backgrounds and specific needs of the children. Parents are very appreciative and have great confidence in the staff. They say, 'He has great support here and so do I. It is the best place in the world. He is making such a lot of progress'. Parents are given updates on their children's activities and what they have learned during the day. Parents of children who find parting with their mother or father very difficult are given instant feedback at pick up time and told how their children calmed down and thoroughly enjoyed their time in the setting. Members of staff are noticeably very caring and have a complete understanding of the needs of both the children and their parents.

Links with other agencies, particularly those who specialise in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are excellent. Links with Portage workers, with specialists in, for example, sleeping problems, with the local doctors' surgery, the local Children's Panel and other centres are excellent. Practitioners visit frequently and give individual advice to parents and to members of staff as well as observing the children. Links with the nursery on site are outstanding. Several of the children in the setting attend the nursery also and three members of the nursery staff usually accompany the children into the setting.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

On arrival, most children cannot wait to start interacting with the very wide range of equipment. The ratio of adults to children is very beneficial and children's welfare is promoted well. Excellent methods are used to ensure the organisation is matched to the needs of all groups of children. A few children make snowmen out of playdough material guided by a volunteer and attach bits and pieces of material for hats and other decorations. Others play with water and containers while great fun is had sprinkling star dust on large pieces of paper. Those children who find walking a little difficult are encouraged to use the very large indoor climbing frame and guided up the steps and down the slide. Individual children show they can sustain interest and stay very absorbed in, for example, the small train on rails that is at waist level or when playing in the role play area.

Members of staff ensure that all children enjoy their time in the Soft Area. They are very carefully supervised. Children gain confidence climbing up the steps to the platform and jumping off the platform on to plenty of huge cushions. One session is specially organised for a small group of children who need to learn how to take turns. They are given praise frequently by staff and their social skills improve very noticeably. The children show huge enjoyment playing in this area which is lit by fibre optic lights that make the mirror ball change colour frequently. They squeal with pleasure as they jump.

Children's concentration skills were very successfully encouraged in a group music session taken by a specialist. A few sang along with the simple tunes and words and were given almost one-to-one attention by members of staff. Great enjoyment came from bells to shake. One of the children guessed accurately what was in the 'Listening Box' that they all shook. Almost all the children are able to concentrate very well. They make significant progress in their listening and social skills and this is preparing them well for the next stage of their education.

Snack time is an excellent opportunity for children to learn how to be independent. They have a go at spreading Marmite, for example, on to their muffins. They enjoy their food and drinks. They eat well and learn a lot about being healthy. All help to stack the trolley afterwards. Children were seen trying to push it along to the kitchen and, by doing so, made their own contribution to the setting.

Children are able to develop all their skills both inside and outside. The setting shares the use of a very spacious and well equipped play area. In addition, a sensory garden has been imaginatively constructed to give the children experiences of seeing, touching, smelling and hearing the sounds of hanging musical chimes. A large wooded area has been completely altered by volunteer parents and staff to become a magical place for the children – a true 'Forest School'. There is a reading bench, walk ways, a pretend 'crocodile creek' and special places for the children to hide.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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