

Little Angels Playgroup

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*.

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Description of the setting

Little Angels Playgroup opened in 1984. It operates from the first floor above a church in Sittingbourne Kent. It has its own kitchen and toilet facilities upstairs. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. It serves families from the local community and surrounding area. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 58 children within the Early Years Foundation Stage on roll.

The playgroup is open each weekday, term time only, from 8:50am to 11.50am and on occasions from 12:10pm to 3:10pm to meet the demand for spaces. The setting currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and some children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup employs 10 staff. Of these, three members of staff are qualified to NVQ at level 3; and four are qualified to NVQ at level 2. Seven members of staff are working towards a (further) qualification – the manager studying towards a Foundation Degree, four members of staff towards NVQ at level 3, and two members of staff towards NVQ at level 2. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The provision effectively meets children's needs and ensures children make good progress in their learning and development because staff are experienced and know their children very well. This is partly due to the regular reviews that staff conduct with parents and partly due to the staff's ability to use reflective practice when reviewing activities. Many improvements have been made since the provision's last inspection which have resulted in very positive impacts on the children. For example, an outdoor play space has been created. The Supervisor ensures that all written policies and procedures are reviewed as part of the provision's on going self evaluation and improvement schedule. The provision is able to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review group time activities to ensure each child's individual needs are catered for
- ensure that children's next steps and any subsequent achievements are clearly recorded in their development record

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider relies on the experience of the supervisor to ensure there are clear aims and objectives for the running of the group that are made known to all staff and parents. Every individual policy reinforces the procedures to be used, and reflects upon the impact the policies have on the children. For example, the safeguarding procedures are well known to all the staff. They have all attended updated child protection training. They regularly discuss any concerns about individual children with the supervisor and all staff are extremely aware of the required staffing ratios. They constantly check to see that required ratios are adhered to. Staff are also fully aware of procedures that are used should allegations be against one of them. The provider and supervisor use rigorous and robust recruitment and vetting procedures and are equally rigorous when accepting students onto the premises. The supervisor is adept at monitoring her staff. She is constantly aware of the practice staff use throughout each session and prompts staff when necessary. She has improved communication with parents by delegating the responsibility to keyworkers. This has resulted in much more information about the children being gathered particularly regarding any special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents are more aware of the impact that the provision has on their children. The supervisor has provided more time for staff to discuss these issues with her or her very competent deputy. The supervisor has a clear action plan covering all areas of practice within the provision. It is regularly discussed at staff meetings to keep staff informed of future changes for improvement.

The provision has a good record of working in partnership with parents or carers. Parents views on practice issues are regularly sought and acted upon. The recent improvements in key worker practice has meant that parents are able to spend more time discussing the children's learning journeys with key workers. Parents are encouraged to provide examples of children's activities at home on a home sheet which is included in the record. Those parents, who were interviewed during the inspection, reported that they have found the supervisor to have a wealth of knowledge about services in the area and staff to be extremely supportive, sometimes in quite adverse circumstances. The supervisor has initiated contact with a number of other provision in the immediate vicinity. She has arranged visits for staff to those groups who are keen to ensure children's experiences are varied and are able to compliment each other. There are good relationships with local health visitors, speech therapists and other external agencies in place. Children receive input from appropriate services to help them in their development. The supervisor and her staff also use their own resources very effectively. They have an excellent range of toys and equipment which are used inventively. For example, the home corner can be adapted to become a darkroom so that children are able to experience different types of light which they would not otherwise see. Children use torches, fibre optic lamps and glow sticks to shine in the dark room. This activity has prompted lots of excitement and discussion, and is a firm favourite with the children. Children participate in interesting activities.

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

All children enjoy their time in the provision and are progressing well towards the Early Learning Goals. They are confident learners and show this by being able to use equipment freely and easily, such as, turning the computer on for themselves or adapting the home corner to become an ambulance. They happily request items to enhance play for themselves. For example, requesting different types of sticky tape to help construct items in craft area. Children use mathematical terminology in their everyday speech. For example, they count out for themselves the number of items they want or use 'more than' and 'less than' to indicate the amount of drink they require. Staff cater well for children's individual needs. They are adept at challenging children and extending their individual interests. For example, one child likes construction toys so staff have provided quite intricate construction sets which he can work on periodically. Children who speak English as an additional language are able to use pictures to indicate their needs to staff.

Children show they feel safe in the group as they happily use equipment and are very busy in their play. Those who are still settling-in like to stay near to their own selected members of staff. They are comforted and are encouraged to try activities. During group times, the children are reminded about the safe way to use activities and conduct themselves. However, group times do not always cater for children's individual needs if they want to continue playing, or their attention spans are not yet fully developed. The outdoor play area is a firm favourite with the children and they know they must take turns to go outside as space and numbers are limited. Staff outside, communicate with the first floor play room by using walkie-talkies to further safeguard children.

Children's learning journals are well maintained. Staff conduct initial assessments on new children with the help of their parents. Interesting observations with photographic evidence are included and clearly show the area of learning being addressed. Any next steps identified by staff are added to the wall planning sheet as and when they become known. Key workers are responsible for ensuring that their key children are included in the weekly activity plans and that any adult led activities also cater for key children. Generally, children's next steps are also added to the key worker's own record book and should be marked with the child's subsequent achievement. However, this does not always happen, nor is it clear in the learning journey when a child has had an achievement and needs to move on. Overall, the records show that children make good progress.

Children are encouraged to adapt healthy lifestyles. They have good choices about the food they eat and drink at snack times, and can choose when to visit the snack table. They pour their own drinks and can help staff prepare fruit if they want. They are encouraged to participate in self care when using the toilet and use good hand washing practices. The outdoor area, as well as indoor climbing frames and safety mats, encourage children to engage in physical play. Children know there must always be an adult at the climbing frame before they use it. They also know they must not leave the premises without an adult. They practise the provision's emergency evacuation procedures regularly. Children gain the opportunity to keep themselves safe. Children play well together and are respectful to staff. They share

toys well, but on the odd occasion, staff use sand timers to show children how time is measured and to help them understand when they can have their turn. Staff respect parents' wishes regarding any religious content which may affect their child, such as at group time when the majority of children say a short prayer. Although there are currently a number of children from different religions attending, no parent has raised any objection to their child participating in this so far. All children's home religious celebrations are included in the activity planning. Children's individual needs are being met.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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