

Petts Wood Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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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

Petts Wood Playgroup for Children with Special Needs operates in the United Reformed Church in Willett Way, Petts Wood. The playgroup is committee run and currently holds registered charity status. The playgroup was founded in 1968 and is well established in the local community. The playgroup has ample car parking, excellent transport routes and is within walking distance of local shops and amenities. Accessibility is good and have the use of a base room, soft play room and a small room for individual or group work and therapy. There is also a large hall and several meeting rooms the playgroup may access and an enclosed outdoor area.

The playgroup is run by a highly experienced and qualified manager, who also holds a nursing qualification and is an NVQ Assessor. Two suitably qualified deputies are employed to support and work alongside a team of thirty-seven volunteer staff who are scheduled to work with specific children on specific days to ensure continuity of care. The playgroup also employs two drivers and four escorts, as many of the children are transported to and from the group in the group's mini bus. Many of the volunteer staff hold a valid first aid qualification and have appropriate childcare qualifications including early years teaching, Pre-school Learning Alliance, Level III and degrees. Many volunteers are parents and grandparents of children with Special Needs.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register, compulsory and voluntary part of the Childcare Register and may provide care for up to 15 children under eight years. The group operates term-time only and is open from Monday to Friday from 09:30 to 12:15. (When demand is high there is an additional afternoon session on a Tuesday) All children attending the playgroup have been assessed as having a special educational need and have been referred by health professionals or their parents. There are currently 24 children on roll, ne of these has English as an additional language and 11 children receive nursery education funding.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this vibrant, inclusive and welcoming playgroup. Each child's individuality is recognised and nurtured by staff, who have a secure knowledge of their specific needs and abilities. Children enjoy a wealth of stimulating and challenging experiences which help them make progress in their learning and development. Due to the fact staff know the children so well, their differing abilities are easily catered for within the educational programme, meaning all children can flourish at the playgroup. Staff and volunteer workers are all highly committed and share their expertise and ideas for improvement. Parents' views are actively sought and multi-agency reviews ensure the setting is consistently reviewing its practice in order to best meet the needs of the children attending, therefore demonstrating a high capacity for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further update the terminology used in documentation to reflect the guidance as detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundatin Stage.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Highly effective procedures ensure that children are safe and protected from harm. The committee has rigorous recruitment procedures in place which ensure the suitability of all new staff and students. An informative induction period supports new staff and ensures all are aware of their role and responsibilities. Regular staff meetings, in-house training and staff appraisals help ensure continued suitability and on-going professional development. Staff fully understand their responsibilities in safeguarding children's welfare and designated individuals work collaboratively with relevant agencies to protect children. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and to express their feelings. Robust risk assessments along with ongoing safety checks minimise risks of accidental injury to children. Much consideration is given to children's security. All visitors must produce identification and any unvetted adults are never left alone with children. Safety gates prevent children accessing other areas of the building and high bolts ensure children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. Children are escorted and transported safely on the minibus and registers are maintained ensuring staff know the whereabouts of children at all times.

The manager of the playgroup is highly committed with a true passion for her work and wholeheartedly motivates the staff team. She has high expectations and standards which are embedded across all areas of practice. Along with her deputies, the manager shows a clear sense of purpose and an extreme commitment to offering an exceptionally inclusive environment for all children. Every child attending this setting has moderate to complex special needs and they each benefit from having their own carer and key person. Relevant staff have access to important background information on every child and their individual educational or care plan. Management and staff make exceptionally good use of resources and seek out training opportunities. This results in dedicated, experienced and informed personal care, meeting every child's unique and special needs. All the adults work very well together, morale is high and there is a common sense of purpose, children clearly benefit from the high adult to child ratios and the vast array of skills and experience each member of staff brings.

All children and families are valued and appreciated by staff who are proactive in ensuring the playgroup environment is welcoming and inclusive for all. Makaton

signing is widely used and helps all children and staff to communicate effectively. Staff are committed to working in a framework of equality of opportunity and strive to meet the emotional, physical and intellectual needs of the children. Staff set up areas of play with consideration to accessibility. Appropriate specialist equipment, such as standing frames and specially designed chairs, are available to enable less mobile children to reach the table top activities and interact with their peers. High quality resources are set out with individual children's learning journeys in mind and the activities are changed throughout the session offering the children an ever changing environment. Toys and resources include positive images of diversity which naturally help children learn about the similarities and differences between people in society. For example, during a topic about 'light' children begin to explore the meaning of Christmas, Diwali and Hanukah and that it is not the same for everyone. Children enjoy the interaction with staff and one another exploring in the soft play room and they clearly benefit from the tranquillity of the sensory rooms sound and light systems.

The outstanding partnerships between staff, parents and specialists are instrumental in ensuring that the children receive a high level of care and expert attention. Parent representatives sit on the playgroup committee and all are invited to the annual general meeting. Parents receive a wealth of information about all aspects of the playgroup through various means. For example, there is an informative prospectus, handbook, regular newsletters, well presented notice boards and displays. Key policies and procedures are available in the handbook however, the manager has acknowledged some information is not up-to date and so this is an area for further consideration. Excellent two-way communication is maintained in a format which best suits the individual family. Staff are always available for daily discussions and use contact sheets and/or diaries. These are particularly useful for the families of those children who travel on the playgroup minibus. Parents may view their child's progress files on request and, following a review meeting, receive their child's individual education plan for each term. Open mornings give parents the opportunity to meet each other, socialise and benefit from specialist training opportunities. Because many of the children have communication difficulties parents also receive information about the topics their child has enjoyed and which friends they have been playing with. Photographs and videos of children taking part in activities show parents how settled their child is and helps them learn more about what their child has been doing.

Parents are very complementary about the invaluable support they receive with regard to ensuring their child receives the appropriate care and funding they are entitled to. The management is highly experienced at guiding parents through the various systems of information, legislation and review meetings. The playgroup has developed excellent links with local schools and staff are happy to accompany parents when they are visiting new schools, helping to promote effective and flexible transitions for children into suitable reception classes. The ongoing commitment and high level of support from staff, parents and outside agencies has meant that every child has the opportunity to develop skills in all areas of learning. The playgroup demonstrates a leading role in forging extremely effective partnership with the many outside agencies it works with. Professionals feel welcome and use the setting to observe and assess children, planning strategies with staff and parents to ensure every child receives high levels of support in their

care, learning and development.

The management team strives to improve every aspect of the service through the highly effective systems for monitoring and self-evaluation. These include the input of management, all staff, outside professionals and parents. Children are also involved in this process, for example, they communicate their likes and dislikes and if they feel happy or sad. Through robust systems, the success of children's development is being monitored and evaluated. The playgroup is committed in its pursuit of fundraising. Staff, parents and other organisations in the borough get involved in order to help improve the playgroup environment. Staff use recyclable materials in the children's arts and crafts and parents are given information about toy libraries, all of which help respect the limitations of the environment.

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

Staff place the happiness and welfare of the children at the heart of everything they do, listening to parents and seeking guidance from other professionals involved with the family when gathering information about the children's starting points. As each child has differing needs and abilities, staff continually search for the most appropriate method to record their progress. Some children's progress is very gradual but even small milestones are recorded and celebrated. Staff are highly skilled to ensure no learning opportunities are missed as they continually interact and observe children throughout the day. These observations, along with those of other professionals, are used to inform planning for the next steps in children's learning. Care and Individual Education Plans are of a high quality and routinely reviewed which helps to highlight any gaps in the children's achievement. Much consideration is given to exploring the most effective way to support children as individuals to achieve their potential.

It is clear that children have formed secure relationships with their carers and key persons, as the children rely on them for reassurance and support through their daily routines. There is much laughter, cuddles and warm smiles between the adults and children. Communication is key and adapted according to the child's individual needs. The majority of staff are competent in using Makaton and the environment is rich in signs to remind children of the routines. Children with a visual or hearing impairment are well supported. For example, staff skilfully use touch, textures, light and sound to stimulate and have access to specialist head phones when reading stories or playing group games, to aid communication with children who have a hearing impairment. For instance, when using the 'Surprise Box' game which encourages children to have good looking and listening skills children demonstrate high levels of self control regarding turn taking and get much enjoyment from the experience that covers many aspects of learning.

Staff recognise that children are often more talented than they seem, observing, waiting and listening, encouraging the child to take the lead. Staff follow programmes set by speech and language therapists, providing simple activities such as blowing bubbles to help them form the correct mouth shape for making

sounds. Staff imitate gestures and sounds, describe and exaggerate key words to develop children's speech. Children have toys and books to occupy their time when travelling on the mini bus and take pleasure in looking at books and listening to stories with staff in the comfortable book area. Routine use of name cards help children recognise letters and their own names. There are lots of opportunities for mark making with paint, chalks, pencils and pens. During physiotherapy staff sing songs which help focus children and encourage them to practice using the pull and stand frame and to roll on the soft play equipment. At the end of each session children are excited to come together, as they sing songs along to the piano, take part in action rhymes and play musical instruments.

Children use tools to manipulate dough and have tremendous fun splashing in water and digging in the sand. There are daily opportunities for them to take part in art and craft activities which are usually linked to the topic/theme of the term. For example, gluing and sticking shiny stars, making models using light, reflective materials for the topic of 'light'. Children enjoy using technology such as the programmable floor robots and show excited anticipation as they wait for the balls they have thrown into the ball shower to descend on them.

In the event of an emergency situation the children feel safe as staff remain calm, stay in control and follow clear procedures for evacuation. Children display complete trust and confidence in the staff and the environment. For example, children are relaxed and help themselves to the best of their ability as staff assist them in and out of their standing frames and chairs. Children are happy to help clear toys away before different ones are set out. Children with severe sensory and other disabilities are able to feel safe in the well resourced sensory room and infinity hut, in the soft play room, as they create a calm but visually stimulating environment.

The good health and well-being of every child is actively encouraged. They benefit from the fresh air as they play outside, all year round, in the secure and safe outdoor area. Children eagerly help staff sweep up fallen leaves, laughing as they then scoop them up to throw high in the air pretending it is snow falling. Staff join in with the children's fun as they splash in puddles together and watch as they roll the spiky ball through the water making patterns on the ground. Children enjoy pedalling the specialist bikes and trikes, climbing and playing in the wooden house. Posters, mirrors, mobiles and exciting activities, such as watching sparklers, make this a stimulating environment for the less mobile children. Children participate in many outings, enjoying the sights, sounds and feel of nature. Visiting farms to feed the animals, parks to play on more challenging climbing equipment, waving to the trains, watching fish at the aquarium and enjoying a picnic.

Children are protected from infection as staff ensure the premises, furniture and play equipment are all clean. Stringent routines are followed with regard to toileting and nappy changing and children are learning the importance of hand washing before they eat. Staff follow guidance from health care professionals so children with special diets or those with feeding difficulties are well catered for and during open mornings parents receive useful advice such as how to maintain children's good oral health.

Staff seek out success, praising and encouraging the children, displaying genuine pleasure as children manage a task they have not done before. For example when they put on their own bib or manage to pull their own pants and trousers up after using the potty. Social skills are well promoted at snack time, as children sit together in small groups, interacting with staff and each other. Good manners are encouraged and children are helpful and kind. For example, as one child can not manage to hold his cup unaided another child lifts it for him and encourages him to drink. Staff are calm and consistent setting small targets for each activity so children with challenging behaviour are well supported and managed. Children are helped to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Interactive activities on the touch screen computer encourage children to take turns as they delight in getting an on-screen reaction as they match, sort and solve simple problems. Children have positive experiences of success at their own level, giving them confidence and motivation for learning in the future.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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