

St. Philip And St James Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Nicola Hill
Setting address	St. Philip and St James Playgroup, Kings Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3AR
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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

St. Philip and St. James Playgroup was first established approximately 30 years ago and re-registered under new ownership in 2007. It is a privately owned provision and operates from St. Philip and St. James Church in Fleet, Hampshire. Children are accommodated in a main hall and have use of an enclosed outdoor play area. Suitable toilet and kitchen facilities are available.

The playgroup serves the needs of families in the area and the local community. The group is registered on the Early Years Register only, and is registered to care for no more than 26 children from two years to the end of the early years age group at any one time. There are currently 43 children from two to five years on roll. The group is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years, and welcomes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is open term time only and operates Monday to Friday from 9.15am to 11.45am. A lunch session is offered on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11.45am to 12.45pm, and an extended session is provided on Thursdays and Fridays until 2.45pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are seven staff currently working with the children, all of whom hold a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development Support team and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children's care and development is significantly enhanced by the exceptional organisation of the provision. Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable, and work successfully together to continually evaluate the provision and make improvements, wherever possible, for all children in their care. Children are cared for in an extremely warm, caring and inclusive environment in which staff members are fully aware of children's individual interests and capabilities. The staff demonstrate a clear understanding of, and are highly skilled in delivering the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is evident from the very good progress children are making in their development, their excellent behaviour and positive attitude to learning. The premises are safe and secure and the organisation of resources overall is generally very good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- monitoring children's development records more effectively to ensure they are regularly updated
- improving the deployment of resources in the role play area to ensure children's imagination is fully enhanced.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the adults within the setting at all levels, all of whom receive regular training on safeguarding. In-depth policies and procedures ensure that staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting the children in their care. Children are further safeguarded by thorough recruitment and vetting procedures, including the successful induction of new staff. All aspects of the premises, both indoors and outdoors are risk assessed effectively to ensure children are able to move with confidence and in safety around the premises. Effective planning allows for staff to be deployed well throughout the setting and provide high levels of supervision. The management team effectively motivate staff and enable them to develop through the staff appraisal system and by offering staff every opportunity to attend training. Many staff take on an area of responsibility within the playgroup, which ensures they feel more involved in the running of the setting.

The joint managers have exceptionally high aspirations for quality which is evident through the constructive methods of self-evaluation. The opinions of staff and parents, as well as audits from outside agencies, are listened to and acted upon immediately. Such audits include the local authority self-evaluation joint annual review (SEJAR), for which the group has recently been given an 'overall outstanding provider' letter of recognition. The group's formal self-evaluation is comprehensive and detailed; it shows rigorous monitoring and analysis of what the setting does well and what it wishes to improve. Actions taken by the setting are well targeted and have had a very good impact in bringing about sustained improvement to the early years provision. For example, the group have changed the arrival procedure to reduce anxiety for the younger children separating from their carers, and have improved security of the fire doors by adding door alarms. The development of a new garden is ongoing and parents and staff alike are very excited to see their plans being brought to fruition. Since the last inspection, the group has continued to provide high levels of consistency and all recommendations raised previously have been addressed.

The dedicated staff team work hard each day to lay out and pack away a range of activities, toys and equipment, making the premises their own each session. Children's artwork is displayed, enabling children to develop confidence and self-esteem, and a large variety of resources can be independently accessed by the children, which promotes their independence. However, the deployment of resources in the role play area is not always comprehensively thought out to ensure children's imagination is fully enhanced. The playgroup is highly committed to providing a fully inclusive provision that successfully meets the needs of all children. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully involved as staff seek advice, support and welcome regular visits from outside

agencies to improve their knowledge and ability to ensure all children thrive at the playgroup. Children are helped to recognise and value a diversity of cultures, gender, age and disabilities and find out about how different people celebrate their beliefs and traditions through a very good range of activities and resources.

The excellent partnership working between this setting, other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and other agencies involved with the children contributes significantly to a consistent approach towards the children's care and development. The staff liaise closely with them and the children's parents to share their planning and assessment information and ensure children's individual needs are fully met. Staff have developed excellent relationships with the parents, which significantly contributes to the care and well-being of the children. Parents receive questionnaires regarding the service provided, and are asked for ways in which the playgroup can be improved. The management team efficiently uses this feedback to enhance and further strengthen all aspects of their child-centred provision. Feedback from parents is extremely positive. They comment on the lovely setting and wonderful staff, who support the children in becoming happy, confident and ready for school. They like how the staff interact with the children, the freedom for the children to choose what to play with, and the fact that the staff are always on hand to help. Parents receive a wealth of information about the early years provision and are kept well informed about their child's achievements. They are encouraged to contribute to their child's record of development, known as their 'special book' by writing about their child's interests and achievements at home, which helps staff to find out how the child behaves outside of the setting. Many parents and other family members come into the playgroup to talk to the children about their interests, their cultures and their jobs.

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

The atmosphere at this playgroup is one of harmony and industry. Children are very eager to learn, concentrate well and readily make decisions on where and how they want to play and explore. All activities are child-led as much as possible as the focus is on spontaneous learning. Staff work carefully with parents to gain an initial understanding of each child's individual interests and abilities on entry to the setting. They then continue to make detailed observations of children's changing interests and skills. This enables them to carefully assess individual children's progress towards the early learning goals, although they do not always update the children's 'special books' regularly enough to clearly show progression in learning. Staff consistently identify children's next steps for learning and it is clear how this information is used to inform the day to day planning. The positive outcome of this system is demonstrated by the staff's skilled interactions with children, during which they take many opportunities to ask children questions and adapt activities to enhance their individual learning.

Children respond well to the warm and gentle interaction from staff, which enables them to feel confident in their abilities and enjoy their play. Children are well behaved, polite, kind and respectful to one another. They engross themselves in

painting activities, model with playdough and take photographs of each other with the camera. Some children like to sit in the book corner to look at books with a member of staff, and they all join in the group story later on, copying the actions and joining in with well-know phrases. Children enjoy many opportunities to learn about the natural world through planned activities such as planting seeds, making volcanoes and learning about life cycles by caring for caterpillars and tadpoles. One child chats with a member of staff about the tadpoles and they look at a poster about how the tadpoles are going to grow. Children play an active role in their community as they go on walks around the local area, participate in fundraising events and the local carnival and invite people from the community to visit. Children have easy access to mark making materials and show curiosity in numbers. They engage well in imaginary play, taking on roles that are known to them. For example, one child pretends to do the ironing and another child comes in saying 'I'm back from work'. The child says 'I'm the Daddy, I work over there' and he points to the construction area.

Arrangements for ensuring children's health and nutrition are exemplary. Children develop a very good understanding of healthy eating as they are encouraged to bring in fresh fruit for their snack and a healthy lunch. Staff work with parents to ensure all are promoting a healthy diet. The children thoroughly enjoy the warmer weather when they are permitted to eat their lunch outside and have a picnic. They show a very good awareness of health and their own bodies as they talk about foods that are good for them and help themselves to drinks without prompts from staff. Children's physical development and enjoyment of exercise is promoted very well though a variety of activities. They participate in extra group activities, such as dance lessons, and the outdoor area is open to children throughout the session, which means they can make their own choices about when they play outdoors and benefit from the fresh air. All children show a strong sense of security and feel safe within the setting. They show an excellent understanding of what standards of behaviour are expected and apply these in order to keep themselves and others safe. Staff use constant praise and encouragement to reinforce good behaviour. They are very good role-models and model calm and polite behaviour. Staff consistently provide children with the necessary resources, activities and opportunities they need to help them gain important skills for 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	2
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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